

**Friends of Essington**  
**Annual General Meeting**  
**9<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

**Present:**

Neil Wheeldon (Committee)  
Adrian Nicklin (Committee)  
Clem Whittle (Committee)  
Freddie Homer (Committee)  
Pete Ward (Committee)  
Angie Whittle (Committee)  
Jon Hanson (Committee)  
Wilson Taylor (Committee)  
Paul Wooley (Committee)

**Apologies:**

Dot Radford (Committee)  
Wayne Whitehouse (Outgoing Secretary)  
Colin Richards (Outgoing Treasurer/Chairman)  
Tracey Taylor (Committee)

**Record of last Annual General Meeting (10<sup>th</sup> September 2020):**

Approved by AN, Seconded by PeteW

**Treasurers Report:**

Financial Years 2020 - 2021 and 2021 - 2022 these accounts have been audited and are enclosed. There was little expenditure during these years due to Covid and little being spent on projects. The quizzes were held online and many people welcomed this in the lockdown period. The main income was from the calendar but now we have returned to normality the quizzes are being held in the club bringing in more income.

The current financial year 2022 - 2023 is ongoing and spending on projects resumed.

We have a current balance of just over £7,000.

**Approval of Accounts:**

The audited accounts for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 & 2022 were presented to the committee and approved.

**Re-election of Committee:**

In the absence of the Chair, PW asked everyone to stand down from the

committee. Everyone present was asked if they wished to stand for the new committee. All did (TT sent communication that she wished to stay on committee) and a show of hands approved all these positions.

NOTE: the people who have not communicated are assumed to want to stay on committee but they need to clarify this.

### **Election of Officers:**

#### Chairman-

JH proposed PaulW. **WT seconded**. PaulW accepted nomination. Show of hands was unanimous to elect him.

#### Secretary-

WT proposed NW. **AW seconded**. NW accepted nomination. Show of hands was unanimous to elect him.

#### Treasurer-

PeteW made the point that in other organisations, the role of secretary and treasurer are often combined. The committee discussed this and agreed with the feasibility of the comment.

**WT proposed NW. CW seconded**. NW accepted nomination. Show of hands was unanimous to elect him.

#### Communications-

**Whilst the role of maintaining the website, Church mag entry etc, is not an official position, several people asked if CW & AW would continue. Both agreed.**

### **Nomination of Auditors:**

It is unclear as to if the regular auditor is still available. Need CR to advise.

### **AOB:**

None reported.

### **Committee Report for last couple of years:**

#### Website & Twitter-

The website [friendsofessington.com](http://friendsofessington.com) continues to grow and is frequently maintained showing all of our latest Tweets (720 since it was launched) on the front page. The events calendar is also kept up to date with FoE and other local community events. We have now also added a map of the local FoE bird box locations to supplement the existing projects map.

Major projects (prior to the Covid-19 lockdowns) have been covered in the Events section of the website, along with photo galleries. Please follow us on our website

and twitter for upcoming events and latest news

The @FoEssington twitter account launched in 2014 has steadily grown with a count. All of the tweets are mirrored on the FoE web landing page.

#### Church Magazine-

The monthly contribution to the local Connection magazine is still a popular way to communicate with our neighbours in an old-fashioned way in this world of online social media. Writing the report takes time and gives a period of reflection before hitting send.

Following the 2nd Covid19 lockdown the magazine was only available on line (which is ironic).

Thanks to Kate Risbrooke for her magazine editing skills who sadly left the post last year.

#### Bird Boxes-

The annual bird box maintenance has been completed at Brownshore Pools. New boxes have been installed and the remainder have been cleaned out and repaired. 24 boxes are on site, 19 have been used by blue and great tits.

#### Fred's Bed-

Continue to maintain this area alongside the fence by the church.

#### St Johns School Orchard-

Many visits have taken place this year to maintain the orchard. The trees were pruned in the spring (many thanks Paul for your skill and knowledge). The hedge planted in front of the orchard had become very tall and overgrown, so a team spent time cutting that back to prevent encroachment into the fruit trees. Also, a workgroup consisting of Friends of Essington and School teachers created some safe paths with wood chippings so that the children could get better use from the orchard. Thanks to Emma at St Johns, the children visit the Orchard regularly throughout the year.

We will continue with this partnership to ensure ongoing maintenance and further improvements such as creating a safe path from the orchard to the outside forest classroom.

#### FOE Quizzes-

The FOE quizzes are now back to being held on a regular basis at the Working Men's Club. These are well attended and enjoyed by the participants.

#### Brownshore Crossing-

The right-hand side has been strimmed and more wild flower plugs planted. This is having a maintenance lead appointed for future workings.

#### Millennium Stone-

This has been repaired and cleaned. Surrounding area has been planted out

with a grant from the Parish council.

#### Broad Lane Jubilee Planter-

Sponsored area well maintained by Alvaston Loft Conversions. The four silver birch trees that were planted are growing well and the planter when in full bloom looks very attractive. The wooden planter and signage showing signs of wear and tear.

#### Cannock Road Island-

Well maintained and sponsored by Alvaston Loft Conversions. This attracts many complimentary comments on how it stands out from the other islands along the road.

#### Windmill Hill Bench-

This has had weeding carried out and will be ready for planting out again shortly. The area continues to be litter picked and tidied and the tree canopy needs cutting back.

#### Old Hampton Lane (Bottom)-

We continue to maintain this area, however the cherry tree which blossomed over the last few years has since died and needs replacing. The planting has been changed and this year it has been planted with a selection of Alliums which has produced a fantastic display. The flooding however locally is a problem throwing up spray onto the planted area. The damaged road sign has been replaced.

#### Tree planting-

Several areas in Essington have been planted with trees with the permission of the Highways and the support of Forest of Mercia including 130 on the Bovis Homes site in Essington and 162 on the Bovis Homes site in Wombourne. The areas in Essington will have continuing planting in the future. Total number of trees planted was 337.

The areas are visited by Forest of Mercia checking on the health of the trees.

#### Brownshore Triangle, Blackhalve Gateway & Adrian's Wall-

Sponsor decided to end their sponsorship of these areas and the new sponsor will be Broadlands Golf for 2 of the sites.

#### Calendar-

We produce a calendar each year. The photographs from the local area are taken by some members of the committee and local residents and the 300 calendars we have printed always go very quickly. Thanks to everyone concerned especially our sponsors.

#### Litter Picks-

After the pandemic the spring litter picks resumed and were well supported

with many bags of rubbish being collected. There are also small teams of litter pickers (Essington Wombles and several individuals) in the areas regularly going out to try to keep the litter under control.

#### Summary-

It has been quite a difficult time over the last 3 years. The Covid-19 pandemic hit and with no one able to mix, it hit the maintenance of the sites around the village, as it did across the country and indeed the globe. We are gradually bouncing back from this.

Pete Ward stepped down from chair in the spring of 2022 and Colin Richards stepped in to cover for 6 months or so then Wayne Whitehouse stepped in until present. Thanks to Pete and Colin for their work during their time at the helm.