



Friends of Essington
Annual General Meeting
6th May 2026

Present:

Neil Wheeldon (Committee)
Clem Whittle (Committee)
Pete Ward (Committee)
Angie Whittle (Committee)
James Parker (EPC & Volunteer)
Jon Hanson (Committee)
Freddie Homer (Committee)
Wilson Taylor (Committee)
Paul Wooley (Committee)
Tracey Taylor (Committee)
Steve Jones (Volunteer)
Paul Bosworth (Volunteer)

Apologies:

Ann Fowler (Committee)

Record of last Annual General Meeting (14th May 2025):

Approved by PWA, Seconded by AW

Chairmans Report

Another very busy year. In summary:

A further 420 trees planted at the Nicket, now re-named Jones-Nicklin Wood. The new sign was erected in April, paid for by FoE and ERUFC.

The Miners' Monument was fundamentally completed after a very slow construction process. Just awaiting the hard paving and steps to be carried out.

We took part in organising a 'bit of a do' to raise funds for the Brain Cancer Charity, in memory of Adrian.

Fred and his Occasionals tidied up the Brownshore Crossing.

Many hours have been spent on minor jobs around the village that generally go unrecorded.

We enjoyed a day out on a barge back in Summer 2025 which went really well and is due to be repeated this year.

My fellow committee members will have covered their projects in the separate reports.

Much gratitude to everyone for their help and support throughout the past year.

We go from strength to strength.

Treasurers Report:

Another great year for fund raising, thanks mainly to great calendar sales and the revenue from Jon's quizzes. A great effort by the whole team and Jon especially. Whilst the finances look substantially higher than last year it should be noted that there is still £1042 outstanding to be used on finishing the miner's monument. The major purchase of the year was the finger post (£1013) which came solely from our funds, and hence reduced our balance in real terms.

The South Staffs Lottery continues to provide a relatively effort free income.

Many thanks to all our supporters.

The website continues to be a major expense but the committee all agreed that it was something we should keep in place.

The public liability insurance is also an expense we feel is essential to the group but we recently had a kind offer from Alan Degg to cover this cost for next year. As with all of Alan's support this is greatly appreciated.

Approval of Accounts:

Copies of both the Audit and a full 'Receipts & Payments Report' were circulated for review. The committee voted to approve them.

Re-election of Committee:

The Secretary asked everyone to stand down from the committee. Everyone present was asked if they wished to stand for the new committee. All present did (AC sent communication that she wished to stay on committee) and a show of hands approved all these positions. NW proposed Steve be asked to join committee and PWA seconded. Steve accepted and a show of hands elected him to the committee.

Election of Officers:

Chairman-

JH proposed Paul. TT seconded. Paul accepted nomination. Show of hands was unanimous to elect him.

Secretary-

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

Treasurer-

PW proposed NW. WT 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, CW & AW were asked if they would continue. Both agreed.

Nomination of Auditors:

To be confirmed closer to next financial year end.

AOB:

None reported.

Committee Report for last year:

Pete Ward-

On the site of the Nicket towards the top of High Hill there was a piece of ground adjacent to the allotments, after permission was granted by the owners it was agreed with the Forest of Mercia and Essington Rugby Club to plant a wood on this ground. This would consist of Native trees and would require about 1000 trees to complete the area.

We are very pleased to report that not only was the planting very successful but a further 200 trees were planted recently to enhance the wood, thanks should go out to all the friends and families that helped in the planting of so many trees.

As you may be aware, a monument to the miners of Essington has been erected on the green in the middle of the village. This monument was designed and built at Ibstock Brick at Cannock in the early 2000s and was initially delivered to The Black Country Museum but was never erected, after many years it found it's way to Essington Parish Council where it lay for many a year.

FOE was asked to erect it on the green and it now stands as a testament to the men and women of Essington who worked at Essington Wood and later at Holly Bank Colliery.

Ann Clay-

Adult Safeguarding Awareness Training provided by Support Staffordshire was undertaken by Ann Clay on 17/07/2025.

The current Safeguarding Policy was in line with the current policy with only a few minor changes needed.

The policy was updated with reference to:

The New Care Act of 2016

As a committee we agreed to amend the policy so the need for a DBS check to be done on new volunteers was removed.

Ann Clay agreed to be the Safeguarding representative.

Jon Hanson-

Quizzes have continued to be held on a monthly basis at the Essington WMC and we have a regular set of teams attending. The usual attendance is around 8 teams.

The prizes for the winners are provided alternately by the WMC and FoE. The FoE provide bottles of wine, beer, and chocolate as prizes from the takings.

The total profits made were £591 for the year. The charge is £2 person.

Regular litter picks are held every three weeks and we have up to ten people attend these.

We now have two trollies available for volunteers to use and place warning signs around Essington when a litter pick is being carried out.

A new set of 'hi viz' vests have been purchased complete with the new FoE logo. I am pleased to report that many volunteers are now actively reporting fly tipping to the council on their web site.

We also held the Great British Spring Clean event in March 2026 and there was a total of 42 volunteers came along including our MP Sir Gavin Williamson and several Parish Councillors. This is an increase on last year's total of 32. This was the tenth year we have held the event.

Wilson Taylor-

A time capsule containing various documents, including a letter to the future, a history of how mining had shaped the village, FoE minutes, parish magazine, a 2026 FoE Calander, photographs etc., was sealed inside the miners' monument. These documents were compiled with the help of various historical records, together with information provided by Councillor James Parker.

The time capsule itself is made from stainless steel and is sealed inside the monument. It is not envisaged that it will be opened at a particular date but is meant to be point of reference for those in the future who eventually demolish the monument.

A very interesting project which was included in the larger Miners' Monument project.

Tracey Taylor-

The committee felt that FoE should have a new logo to commemorate our 20th anniversary. Tracey liaised with St. John's Primary Academy to facilitate a competition involving pupils to design a new logo. The final winner and runners-up being chosen by committee members. The new logo was adopted by the FoE in 2025 and is now used throughout FoE activities.

Clem & Ang Whittle-

The website friendsofessington.com is frequently maintained. The latest monthly minutes, constitution and major reports are posted and are available to the general public.

We continue with the success of Friends of Essington volunteers WhatsApp group, the number of volunteers continues to grow. This have proven to be very popular and gets an instant response by keeping an up-to-date events diary when voluntary opportunities arise.

We continue to be featured in the Facebook group Essington Live to promote our events to a wider audience.

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. The format has given us the opportunity to add pictures to our reports, featuring or highlighting current projects.

The bird boxes continue to be cleaned each year. Of the established 36 boxes, 15 boxes appeared to have been used for nesting. Neil constructed 10 new boxes from reclaimed wood. Making a new total of 46 boxes in the Brownshore Pools area. In

addition, 6 brand new boxes have been installed in Black Cat Wood. The committee will continue to monitor their use throughout the year.