

**Minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting of The Bishop's Meadow Trust  
on 18 September at 10.00am at space2grow, The Old Vicarage**

**Present:**

Lou James (chairing).	Celia Andrew
Nick Green	Darrell Romer
Mick Frank	Judy Romer
Susan Green	Geoff Hollebon
Michael Campbell	Rita Hollebon
Ian Wallace	George Hesse
Alice Butcher	Julie Russ
Brian Blowers	Oliver Deighan
Deirdre Blowers	Phillippa Hoyland
Sue Shaw	Jon King (guest)
Varona Davies	Kate Newton (minute taking)

21 members were present

**Apologies for Absence:**

Brian Cox	Isobel Girven	Patrick Weller
John Beer	Kate Tijou	

**Item**

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| <b>1.</b> | <b>Opening of Meeting</b><br><b>Lou James</b> opened the meeting and introduced herself as did Trustees <b>Mick Frank</b> and <b>Nick Green</b> . Apologies of absence from trustees <b>Brian Cox &amp; Isobel Girven</b>  |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Minutes of Last Meeting</b><br>Minutes of the 2020 AGM were approved as a proper record. Proposed by Pippa Hoyland, seconded by Nick Green.   |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Chair's Report</b><br><b>Lou James</b> delivered her Chair's Report. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were concerns raised in the last AGM of the dwindling membership, but one of the positive outcomes during the last 18 months during the pandemic was the increased use of the Meadows by the local community and with that the subsequent growth in the membership and therefore an increasing income.</li> <li>• <b>Lou James</b> went on to discuss that the greater use of the meadows during the summer of 2020 did see some anti-social behaviour. Young ppl wanted to swim in the river to keep cool and picnic on the open space during lockdown and unfortunately neighbours of the meadow were impacted negatively, they received some abuse and there was lots of litter being left as well as noise and general disturbance. The travelling community were also coming down to water their ponies. The Trust worked behind the scenes, regularly talking to the young people visiting, working with the community Police Officer and with the</li> </ul> |

	<p>neighbours of the meadows. After all the consultations it was given careful consideration that a fence should be put up where the young people were accessing the river, to ensure the meadows are used responsibly and to mitigate the problems that had arisen over the summer.</p> <p>Since the fence has been put up the Trust are happy to report that this has no longer been an issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the positive outcomes of putting up the fence is that the Trust worked closely with the environment agency and got some great help. The trust also worked with an organisation called Skill Mill which helps young people acquire skills and they helped clear the land. Lou reported that coots and moor hens are now back to that section of the river and fish are spawning again.</li> <li>• <b>George Hesse</b> commented that he thought that the Trust went about the whole process with a very good light touch. They did not ignore the problem or aggravate the problem making it worse. He gave his congratulations to the board for how it was handled, and <b>Sue Shaw</b> agreed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Finance Director's report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the absence of the Finance Director <b>Nick Green</b> explained that it had been an expensive year with unexpected costs but as a Charity it did need to spend its money not save it but maintaining a surplus of cover three years of normal expenses. At the end of the last financial year the Trust had a balance of over 5k but that has now increased to about £9k from subscriptions, donation and a legacy.</li> </ul> <p>The acceptance of the Finance Directors report for the past year then formally took place</p> <p>Proposed by <b>Ian Wallace</b>, seconded by <b>Brian Blowers</b>.</p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>UPDATE FROM LAND MANAGER, NICK GREEN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nick Green</b> talked about the plug plants that were planted last year in 2020. Unfortunately due to an incredibly dry April, May and June the clay soil dried out and many didn't survive. However, the project created interest with the signage around the meadows and was a new focus when the meadows were seeing a rise in visitors during the lockdown.</li> <li>• <b>The new fencing.</b> <b>Nick</b> explained that once the new fencing was up the kids climbed over it to still swim in the river. Barbed wire was added to the top of the fence to dissuade climbing over the top. Nick acknowledged that barbed wire was not something that ppl particularly liked to see but it has worked and kept ppl out of that section of the river. The kids have sometimes swum up a few times but not too often.</li> </ul>

- **The Tudor Ditch.** In autumn / Winter 2020 the Tudor ditch got cleared, it runs approximately 130m, so it was a big project. The roots in the bank of the ditch and at the bottom were retained to help retain the structure. Water flows easily and it was a success.
- **Poplar Trees.** There was a realisation that the Poplar trees on the North side of the Meadows needed to be removed. This was an expensive undertaking, but **Nick** pointed out less expensive than if a tree had fallen onto a car. One tree did fall onto a security fence of an organisation, and we were able to work with them to get that resolved and the positive outcome was having a contact to be able to liaise with on future issues with the meadows. There are poplar saplings coming out of the trunks and we will see how they get on, but we will be able to manage the trees and keep them to workable size.
- A risk assessment on trees will now be carried out every 2 years.
- **Weeds.** During the last year the Trust has tried to curtail the growth of nettles, brambles, and other weeds along the public footpaths, but the growth has been prolific whether that's in our own gardens or on the meadows. Nick has employed someone to weed the paths and keep them clear which allows him time for other things.
- **George Hesse** asked whether the weeds could be removed from the bases of Johnathan Durham's trees which line the public path and suggested he would be happy to contribute an amount to extend the line of trees by a dozen or so. Nick pointed out that none of the trees have done too well, or as well as they had imagined. Not sure why they are so poor, it could be the ground they are in. **Mick Frank** pointed out that the water table is remarkably low at that area, at around 10 ft so it is very dry. There is about 3ft of clay on gravel. He thinks that it is probably the clay restricting the spread of the roots which means the trees have not done too well.
- **Pippa Hoyland** asked whether there were any more plans to plant more plug plants. **Nick Green** said one idea would be to clear areas using a rotovator to expose bare soil, seed and fence off the area to prevent dogs and people destroying the work. However, this would require clearing and fencing off the land. **Mick Frank** pointed out that one of the issues was balancing what you might like with what's possible given the soil and the environment. He explained that what we need to do is explore what we could manage with minimum human inputs, a desirable path with the least intervention. He suggested to try different approaches to test what works
- **Rural Payments Agency.** Nick explained he had successfully registered the Bishop's Meadow and we will now receive money for every hectare. Unfortunately, due to Brexit it will be paid out on declining sliding scale over the next 5-7 years, but a new system will be in place after that. The Trust have put in an application for funding for increasing the cattle field – though this still needs to be considered - extending the cattle field

	<p>would cost between £10.5-£12.5k; Surrey Wildlife has explained that it would improve the biodiversity of the land if it is grazed but there is an issue with very few cattle farmers around. An application has been put in to increase the depth and width of the hedges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dog walkers and dog poo.</b> There were discussions regarding the dog poo left by dog walkers not collecting dog's poo. <b>Alice Butcher</b> suggested getting bag dispensers on the Meadows to remind dog owners of their responsibility. <b>George Hesse</b> suggested doubling the size of the bins. <b>Nick Green</b> is looking into this though pointed out the Council said they would simply get equally as full. <b>Pippa Hoyland</b> noted that it was very easy to report overflowing bins on the council's website.</li> <li>• <b>Litter Picking.</b> <b>Sue Shaw</b> mentioned that she did a litter pick on the meadow every Sunday morning with <b>Mark Whitmore</b> and they have a young girl join them who is doing it as a part of her DOfE. More could join if they wished to do so.</li> </ul>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>New Appointments</b></p> <p><b>Lou James</b> announced that she would be standing down as chair as she has now moved to Denmark so not around as much and she appointed <b>Nick Green</b> as the next chair. The Trust is also sadly losing <b>Isobel Girven</b> and both <b>Nick</b> and <b>Lou</b> commented on how valuable her involvement had been with the trust.</p> <p>New Trustees to the board are:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Alice Butcher</b> <b>Vanora Davies</b></p> <p><b>Alice Butcher</b> introduced herself and will be joining as a trustee. Proposed – <b>George Hesse</b> Seconded – <b>Sue Shaw &amp; Ian Wallace</b></p> <p><b>Vanora Davies</b> introduced herself and will be joining as a trustee. Proposed – <b>George Hesse</b> Seconded – <b>Sue Shaw &amp; Ian Wallace</b></p> <p>Proposed Trustees to be co-opted in at the first board meeting are: <b>Patrick Weller</b> <b>Vic Green</b> <b>Libby Ralph</b></p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>George Hesse</b> asked what was happening about cycling restrictors on the Meadows. <b>Nick Green</b> explained that restrictors were considered</li> </ul>

	<p>due to the motorbikes and pony and traps on the meadow. The Trust doesn't wish to stop people cycling on the public footpaths. Thankfully the new fencing has stopped most of the problem. 2 motorbikes were seen on CCTV but the owners have been spoken to by the Police and warned. Battery operated scooters are a challenge as they are fast and silent and the local PCO sergeant was working with the neighbours to capture use on CCTV.</p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Lou James</b> announced that the Board had awarded Honorary Life Membership to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jon King</li> <li>• Nathan Brooker (not announced in meeting)</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked Jon for all his work with the meadows.</p> <p><b>Brian Blowers</b> thanked the board for the meeting, all the work and effort that went in to maintaining the meadows.</p> <p><b>Sue Green</b> thanked Lou for all her work as Chair.</p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>11.10am The Meeting Ended.</b>  <b>Date of next meeting: To be advised</b></p>