

## Chair's Report FGVW AGM 24/03/17

What a year 2016 was. We are now a C.I.O., a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, responsible to the Charity Commission to meet our charitable objectives. As a C.I.O., we don't have to report to the Charities Commission until this time next year. This report is for 9 months as a Friends Group and 3 months as a charity.

The year started off as a normal year. In January we did path repairs on the Lord Mayors path between Allerton Grange Way and Gledhow Lane, with new edging and top up sandstone.

In February we did more path refurbishment on the same section.

In March, it was the turn of Mrs Hood's steps to be completely refurbished with new extra strong handrails designed by Mervyn. Many, many buckets of stone were carried from the bottom of the steps to the top! The meadow near the M62 bench was also cut back.

Then at the March meeting, we discussed the field on Gledhow Valley Road being put up for sale. From this and a suggestion from David Miles, a crowdfunding page on Justgiving was created by David. Nobody knew how this would go. The response, thanks to much door to door leafletting, twitter, facebook, e mail and word of mouth, was amazing. Many folk were addicted to checking the Justgiving page at least hourly, and the total soon reached £10,000. A fantastic start, but was that it? No, the momentum continued and money flowed in, snowballing with some very generous donations. With a £5,000 donation from FGVW, we reached a target where we could make a bid for the field.

As the appeal was progressing, we held an EGM to discuss a proposal for FGVW to become a C.I.O.

We had talked about becoming a charity for quite a few years, but the prospect of owning land meant that it was an imperative for us to become a charitable organisation, because as a Friends Group, we couldn't own land. The outcome was a unanimous decision to proceed. Thanks to Steve Johns for steering us through the application process.

Audrey's meadow came into bloom, with annuals proliferating. The meadow looked great, with yellows, reds, whites and blues amongst the grasses. The brambles and nettles didn't encroach. We await this year's flowering with anticipation.

A total of 440 people contributed to the appeal to buy the field. This was a fantastic show of support for FGVW from the local community and we couldn't let them down. Contributions from £5 to £2000 were received and we are very grateful for this fantastic community backing.

At the Action morning in May, we finished Mrs hood's steps and tackled the steps near Dorothy's bridge.

Then, after a nervous few weeks, we finally could report that the field was safely in the ownership of our Treasurer, Paul, who's bid was accepted by the vendor. Thank you to Paul, for his calmness and hard work in the process, David for organising the Justgiving page, Jenny for being a lovely, lending bank and Malcolm as our backup.

So June came along and the Fun Day. It was a lovely well run day, with an excellent attendance, good weather, the lowest ever costs percentage and a fantastic surplus after the money was counted. Thank you to Steve and his lieutenant Claire, for their hard work. The games were fantastic, a great success. Thank you to all the extremely hard working band of volunteers.

July and August and a few days in between saw us starting work on the field. Lots to do to make it feel loved again.

In September, we did more work on the field and used up the Gledhow Lane stone pile on more path repairs.

We held another EGM to approve the C.I.O. application, the new constitution and the appointment of 3 interim trustees.

As a result of the boon end of the lake being efficiently cleaned out, the lake had dropped to its proper level, unfortunately leaving a lot of exposed silt. This, along with other water based issues, led to the formation of the Lake Action Group, under David's leadership, with support from Steve, Phil and Kay. Their work in approaching and engaging the various bodies involved with the lake and watercourse has been very impressive. Thank you.

Then, in October, we became a C.I.O.. The interim trustees met to discuss the way forward and the responsibilities of the board of trustees. We will need to demonstrate that we are meeting our charitable objectives. The objectives are similar to the simpler objectives in the old constitution and indeed, all our decisions in the past have been made for the benefit of the Woods. We now need to be able to compile a report detailing our success in meeting our objectives.

We had a successful Christmas fair season, with stalls at Oakwood Lights switch on, Oakwood Traders market, The Farmers Market, St Matthews, Chapel Allerton and the Three Hulats on 3 occasions. We sold a lot of merchandise which has gone a long way to replenishing the coffers.

In November and December we worked on clearing the sledging slope in anticipation of impending snow which is still impending as we speak.

So it's been a momentous year for FGVW. Thank you to you all for your continued support.