

Friends of Kett's Heights

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 19.00 on 14/5/2024 at St Matthew's Church

Attendance

The meeting was attended by Paddy Adams, Mike Button, Linda Campbell, Jane Chittenden, Andrew and Dave Dobson, Bridgid Everitt, Gaye de Leiros, Hannah Levene, Norman Lister, Catherine Harris, David Howarth, Cavan Stewart, John and Vanessa Trevelyan, and Neil Winder.

The Chair (Cavan Stewart) welcomed attendees, especially new members, and outlined the agenda for the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Jane Chapman.

Minutes of the 2023 AGM

The minutes were approved, with no matters arising.

Annual Review

Cavan presented the highlights of activities and achievements during the past year. The past 12 months have been perhaps the most eventful for the Friends of Kett's Heights and the site since our inauguration in 2015.

Improvements to accessibility

This project is funded by a grant of £320,000 from Greater Norwich Growth Fund (via a Community Infrastructure Levy – CIL) with the aim of delivering improved access and biodiversity at Kett's Heights. Work began at Kett's Heights last autumn, which included extensive heavy engineering work and complete closure of the site from November to early April. We now have a new stepfree roadway from Ladbrooke Place to the piggeries, a new cycle rack and refurbishment of the lower pathway leading up from the main entrance on Kett's Hill. The project is not yet complete: we are waiting for the new gates to be installed at Ladbrooke Place, the safety rail on the new roadway and resin bond surfacing on the lower pathway. We also want to establish planting to soften the impact of the landscaping work and enhance biodiversity.

In the last month (April) we totalled 116.5 hours between 12 volunteers. People are delighted to be back after such a long absence.

Feedback from visitors has been very encouraging.

Water supply

This will give us reliable water supply in difficult drought conditions. We have agreed to the conditions of a licence to run mains water into the site. We are responsible for covering the cost of installing the pipework (with most of the cost funded by a National Grid grant), and subsequently for paying for metered water. The City

Council is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the pipework if required. Anglian Water has had great difficulty in locating the mains water connection point, and has finally succeeded. They now have to connect the new pipework to the existing mains water supply in Ladbrooke Place.

Anti-social behaviour

Information boards on the upper and lower green have been damaged, and will be repaired/replaced in the near future. Graffiti on the chapel walls has been painted over with wood stain.

Litter-picking

We continue to litter-pick daily in spring and summer, and every other day during autumn and winter. The site is kept in good condition thanks to our small group of volunteers.

Green Flag award application

The City Council invited us to apply for a Green Flag award with their support. We submitted our application in the early spring and received an inspection visit from two Green Flag judges on 26 April. We shall be informed some time in July whether we have been successful. As an important part of our application we have rewritten our five-year Management Plan, which is now available on our website.

Looking ahead

Highlights in our Management Plan are outlined below:

- Upgrade signage to include access guidance for disabled visitors
- Assist the City Council to carry out an accessibility audit
- Use planting to soften the impact of the hard-landscaping around the new entrance
- Agree a strategy with the City Council to reopen the pathway from William Kett Close
- Ensure that the fencing is safe and secure, particularly along the north-east boundary
- Investigate the possibility of Blue Plaque signage to commemorate Robert Kett and Kett's Rebellion
- Work with the City Council to complete the repointing of the chapel wall

We are already underway with some of this work, such as planting to soften the landscaping and encourage biodiversity. In connection with reopening access from William Kett Close, we had a meeting with the council earlier today, when we agreed that the council must lead on this project with us in support.

Presentation: *A Year on Kett's Heights*

The Chair of the Publicity and Events Committee, Vanessa Trevelyan, spoke to the Annual Review with a presentation titled *A Year on Kett's Heights*. Despite the long closure of the site for the access improvements, there had been substantial achievements throughout the year. Vanessa highlighted the following points.

Tours and visits

- Our regular tours have resumed, with 104 visitors recorded in the year to April 2024.
- For Heritage Open Days 10 September 2023, the theme was *Creativity Unwrapped*, with a historical reconstruction event led by illustrator Tony Quickenden, plus a sculpture event with Gaye and Cavan
- Magdalen Gates School Years 1 and 5 (about 70 children) visited us to learn about Kett's Rebellion
- As guests of the Royal Norfolk Show, we received a Community Champions tribute.

Practical work

The practical works group has been very active, including:

- Creating a wildflower meadow on the upper green, roping off the areas that are not to be mown (conserving the habitat for wildflowers) while keeping picnic area regularly mown
- Installing a new picnic bench on the upper green, already very popular
- Continuing restoration work on St Michael's Chapel, replacing flints and rectifying old repairs that were not to conservation standard
- Carrying out extensive works to improve the pond and water retention, with a new pond liner and peripheral planting (which has resulted in the arrival of tadpoles, among other wildlife)
- Responding to climate change: creating an experimental gravel garden with resilient planting, following a *Dry Gardens* course at Beth Chatto's garden in Essex
- Restoring a splendid vandal-proof cast-iron rubbish bin installed for us by the council
- Continuing to deal with graffiti on the chapel wall, using wood stain. John Williams, our expert graffiti-remover, has set the standard for us.

Vanessa concluded her presentation by remembering CJ Sansom, the author of *Tombland*, who died on 27 April 2024. He was a good friend of the Friends of Kett's Heights and we heard the news with great sadness.

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Accounts for 2023

The Treasurer, Mike Button, spoke to the accounts for 2023 (details included in annual review).

At the end of the year the charity's financial position remains strong, with a surplus of receipts over payments at the end of the period of £696 and total assets of almost £18,000. The balance in the bank today is £18841.

There is expected to be significant spending by the Friends in 2024 in installing the mains water supply (necessary because of the substantial risk of summer drought). However, a generous grant from National Grid will reduce our costs.

Our income is boosted by Gift Aid recovery and also by regular donations from a generous benefactor, who preferred to remain anonymous. We recorded our thanks for this benefactor's ongoing support.

At the end of 2023 the Friends had 164 members in 108 households (a small reduction this year), and continued to receive more income in donations than in membership subscriptions.

There were no questions to the officers.

Election of Committee Members and Officers

Chair: Cavan Stewart was proposed by Vanessa Trevelyan and seconded by Claire Kidman. There being no other nominations, Cavan Stewart was elected as Chair.

Vice-Chair: David Howarth was proposed by Gaye de Leiros and seconded by John Trevelyan. There being no other nominations, David Howarth was elected as Vice-Chair.

Secretary: Jane Chittenden was proposed by Bridgid Everitt and seconded by Claire Kidman. There being no other nominations, Jane Chittenden was re-elected as Secretary.

Treasurer: Mike Button was proposed by Jane Chittenden and seconded by David Howarth. There being no other nominations, Mike Button was re-elected as Treasurer.

Executive Committee members: existing members Jane Chapman, Claire Kidman, Gaye de Leiros and John Trevelyan were proposed. Additionally, new members Andrew Dobson, Dave Dobson and Hannah Levene were proposed.

Paddy Adams stepped down from his role as Executive Committee member. Cavan thanked him for his service, on behalf of the Friends.

As there were fewer nominations than there were places available, all members who were proposed were declared to have been elected. It was noted that the Executive Committee had power to fill the remaining vacancies for committee members.

Any other business

There being no other business, Cavan thanked all attendees and volunteers, then declared the official business of the meeting closed.

The meeting closed with refreshments. The Friends recorded their thanks, as always, to St Matthew's Church for providing the venue for today's AGM along with hosting numerous meetings during the year.