



**Friends
Of
Leckhampton Hill &
Charlton Kings Common**

Annual General Meeting 2025

Notice is hereby given of the 26th Annual General Meeting of The Friends of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common (FOLK) to be held at The Wheatsheaf, Old Bath Road, Leckhampton at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday 13th November 2025.

AGM PAPERS

The majority of the papers for this meeting (Agenda, Minutes of 2024 AGM, Annual Report and Accounts) can be accessed from the e-mail that accompanies this newsletter.

If you still receive your newsletter in paper form, AGM papers will be enclosed with that document.

COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

An up-to-date paper showing the names of individuals either already sitting on FOLK's Executive Committee or nominated for election this year can be found on the FOLK website.

If you are a member of FOLK, you may nominate yourself or any other member.

Acceptance of a nomination implies that the nominee agrees to act in the interests of FOLK.

Should you wish to submit a nomination, please e-mail the Secretary using the details given below **by 30th October**.

If no further nominations are received, the election of those presently incumbent or nominated will be assumed.

Apologies for absence should be sent by e-mail to the Secretary at leckhamptonhill@gmail.com



Annual General Meeting 2025 – Agenda

- 25.9 Welcome
- 26.0 Apologies for Absence
- 26.1 Approval of Minutes of the 25th Annual General Meeting held on November 12th 2024
- 26.2 Matters arising from Minutes
- 26.3 Annual Report for 2025 (previously circulated)
 - 26.3.1 PowerPoint Presentation of Report
 - 26.3.2 Answers to previously submitted questions
 - 26.3.3 Requested acceptance of Report
- 26.4 Accounts for 2025* (previously circulated)
 - 26.4.1 Highlights of the Treasurer's report will be included in the Annual Report's PowerPoint Presentation
 - 26.4.2 Answers to previously submitted questions
 - 26.4.3 Requested acceptance of Report
- 26.5 Election of Officers and Executive Committee
- 26.7 Any other Business

The formal business of the meeting will be followed by a presentation on **Wild Life and Management of Cleeve Common** from our guest speaker, Giles Alder, Volunteer Co-ordinator/Reserve Manager of Tewkesbury Nature Reserve and Conservation Officer of Cleeve Common Trust.

*Unaudited at the time of distribution.

FOLK AGM 2024

Minutes of the Twenty-fifth Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Leckhampton and Charlton Kings Common held on Tuesday, 12 November 2024 at the Wheatsheaf, Old Bath Road, Leckhampton, Cheltenham

25.1 Opening and Welcome

The Chair, Mike Donnelly, opened the meeting at 7.10pm. He welcomed the 57 members present, including 11 Committee members, and the guest speaker. He noted that all papers relevant to the meeting had been circulated to members and had been available on the FOLK website.

25.2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies from Councillor Angie Boyes, Bridget Paish and Orlagh Phipps were noted.

25.3 Approval of Minutes of the 24 Annual General Meeting held on 14 November 2023

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

25.4 Matters arising from Minutes

There were no matters arising.

25.5 Annual Report for 2023/2024

The Chair gave a Power Point presentation which summarised issues covered in the previously circulated Annual Report and Treasurer's Report. The themes reported on included

- FOLK's aims/objectives: it was essential to remain a conservation and education group; new challenges needed to be addressed, in particular meeting the needs of young people and members of society with reduced mobility; it was necessary to reflect those needs in our goals whilst maintaining a focus on core activities; a review of future activities and funding had taken place.
- Highlights: nomination for the King's Award for Voluntary Service, FOLK presence at High School Leckhampton's Eco Day, success in obtaining grant funding for FOLK's running costs, FOLK presence at Party in the Park (Pittville) free event for children, establishment of a team of six work party co-ordinators job-sharing the on-site work parties, successful events including a Quiz night and a Wildlife on the Hill site walk.
- FOLK activities: core activity of on site work parties, supporting conservation work parties with High School Leckhampton, engaging with Cheltenham Borough Council to produce a Site Management Plan.
- FOLK people: statistics included FOLK membership 515; FOLK Facebook subscribers 2,600; a total of FOLK volunteer hours 2,560 which included 1,641 hours working on the hill; a further 919 hours for meetings and admin, production of the Folktalk Newsletter, preparing for and attending events, web site management, hours given by volunteers to attend training courses.
- Partnership Projects: update provided on projects with National Grid, Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold Wardens, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust with their

adder project and Natural England who wish to make Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common a National Nature Reserve.

- Major Works on the site:
 - Infrastructure improvements to paths.
 - Completion of the dry stone wall from Hartley Lane to the Memorial Wall by the Cotswold Wardens. This year the Cotswold Wardens had contributed a total of 1,895 volunteers hours to the site with 1,155 hours building the dry stone wall and another 740 hours for project work and maintenance on the hill and common.
 - Installation of fencing in Daisy Bank field to enable cattle grazing.
 - Veteran trees management.
 - Lime kiln conservation.
- FOLK – Our Future: identifying priorities for the coming year, commitment to core conservation and education objectives with continued focus on habitat conservation and site maintenance for the benefit of all users of the hill, celebration of 25 years of voluntary service.

The presentation included highlights of the Treasurer's Report for the financial year 1 October 2023 – 30 September 2024, including:

- Income for full year £4,839
- Expenditure for full year £2,766
- Surplus (excess Income over Expenditure for full year £2,073
- FOLK Reserves at 30 September 2024 £4,073
- Subscriptions were not collected from members and therefore FOLK relied upon the generous support of local individuals and grants from organizations to fund activities.
- Grants and donations from organisations and individuals totalled £4,400 in the year, all relating to funding of specific projects.
- FOLK Insurance for Public Liability, Personal Accident and Equipment costs had risen this year by 26% to £636. Work party costs related to fuel and oils, new hand tools and servicing of our powered machinery.
- After successive shortfalls, this welcome return to surplus income generation reinforced the importance of effective and targeted funding of activities.

The Chair expressed his thanks on behalf of FOLK to the following for their financial support in the last 12 months -

- Local individuals.
- Gloucestershire County Council for the Build Back Better Grant.
- Shurdington Parish Council for a grant for volunteer training.
- Leckhampton Borough Council for the free use of Stanton Hall for FOLK meetings.
- Cheltenham Borough Council for their contribution towards insurance costs.
- Chalton Kings Parish Council for the free use of Stanton Hall for FOLK meetings

Following the presentation of the Annual Report and Treasurer's Report, the following issues were raised -

- a) When finalised, the joint Ravensgate and Charlton Kings Common site Management Plan would inform FOLK's work party management plan.
- b) Those present were reminded that the next Quiz was to be held at the Wheatsheaf on 22 November 2024 at 7.30pm and they were encouraged to attend and support this event.
- c) With the support of Shurdington Parish Council, consider developing links with Tewksbury Borough Council.
- d) The significant contribution from Geoff Holt in the running of FOLK's work parties for ten years was recognised and much appreciated.

The proposal by Serena Meredith that thanks be extended to Geoff Holt for his leadership of FOLK work parties was agreed by those present. The proposal by Councillor Paul Baker that thanks be extended to the committee and volunteers for their commitment and hard work was agreed by those present.

The Annual Report and the Treasurer's Report were accepted.

25.6 Accounts for 2023/24

The Treasurer's Report in respect of the financial year 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024 had been circulated to all members and summarised in the presentation referred to above.

25.7 Election of Officers and Executive Committee

The Chair began this section of the meeting by displaying an image showing the current membership of the Committee and indicating which members did not wish to be re-elected. This list also included the names of the nominated representatives of Cheltenham Borough Council to the FOLK Executive Committee, together with the names of the Newsletter Editor and the Webmaster. He advised that, since the AGM of 2023, Rachel Watson had been appointed to the role of secretary and Peter Niblett had been co-opted to the Committee due to his role as work party co-ordinator. Currently there were 3 Committee Member vacancies and nominations had been sought prior to the meeting. He advised that he would continue as Chair for one more year only. No nominations had been received and he invited those present to put themselves forward at this meeting. He stressed that without an adequate number of officers and active committee members FOLK's future would be at risk.

The Chair thanked the members of the Committee for their support and hard work over the last year.

25.8 Any Other Business

There being no other business, the Chair closed the meeting at 7.50pm.

FOLK Annual Report – 2024 / 2025

FOREWORD

FOLK has a long record of volunteering work to support the management of Leckhampton Hill & Charlton Kings Common: 25 years of supporting conservation, and maintaining and improving site access and facilities.

It was the vision of the first FOLK Executive Committee that was the foundation for where we are today. Our thanks must go to those founder members and all the work party volunteers and members of the Executive committee past and present for the thousands of voluntary hours given.

FOLK at 25

The success of that original vision can be measured in a number of ways. 25 years' longevity for a not-for-profit conservation project is, in itself, a significant achievement, but FOLK's reputation in 2025 is based on much, much more. FOLK's conservation management has brought much recognition and awards along the way, not least our shortlisting for the King's Award, but this proud achievement is based on the solid foundations of strong organization, robust finances, partnership working and excellent teamwork. But FOLK's continued investment in our people is probably our greatest success: to this end, we have updated all of our hand tools and have added new powered machinery so that our volunteers are well equipped and trained to tackle the challenges of The Hill!

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Chairman's Highlights 2024 – 2025

Leckhampton Hill & Charlton Kings Common are being considered for NNR (National Nature Reserve) status. Meetings have taken place and the feedback is very promising for a successful result. There are only 200 NNR sites in England. Leckhampton is held in high regard for its geology and, of course, conservation.

The publication of the 25th anniversary edition of FOLKtalk is filled with some amazing articles, details FOLK's first five years and has a timeline history of the last 25 years. Conservation grazing and wildlife are also featured and much more: a must read!

The completion of the RCEG (Restoring Cheltenham Escarpment Grassland) project, funded by National Grid, has been achieved, but a contribution from additional funding of £26,000 has enabled the purchasing of more walling stone to allow the Cotswold Wardens to continue building the dry stone wall towards the Hill Fort.

FOLK Activities 2024 -2025

The work party coordinators, with the aid of planning meetings and a WhatsApp group for all the volunteers, plan and administer the work parties. FOLK work parties are very well supported with volunteers. Focusing on conservation and access, we work in cooperation with Cheltenham Borough Council and Natural England.

Many volunteer hours have gone into the production of the new Cheltenham Borough Council site management plan, which has now completed its first phase. CBC have obtained additional funding and the project is now with CNL (Cotswold Natural Landscapes), who will interface it with the NNR (National Nature Reserve) management plan.

Partnership Projects

We continue to work with the Cotswold Wardens, contributing volunteer hours clearing vegetation and debris from the old wall in preparation for the building of the next phase. The Cotswold Wardens have contributed 1,003 volunteer hours building the dry stone wall from Hartley Lane to the Hill Fort and contributed another 398 hours on a number of projects on the Commons.

FOLK volunteers have worked with GWT (Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust) to support their 'corridor strategy' linking rich biodiversity habitats across the county, and helping to create improved conditions for adders and butterflies adjacent to the Hill Fort

We continue to work in partnership with Cheltenham Borough Council, with the CBC Senior Ranger attending the FOLK Executive Committee meetings. The meetings are also attended by two nominated Borough Councillors. Following concern over the adder project, we have worked with CBC to produce a new project protocol allowing for more consultation before projects commence.

FOLK People

During the past 12 months we have again witnessed yet another extraordinary example of drive and generosity from our friends and volunteers, delivering another full calendar of work party events and partnership conservation results. We are indebted to members, volunteers and Committee for a staggering 2,809 volunteer hours provided free of charge

FOLK membership currently sits at 523, and is offered free of charge. We are developing our communications across our various stakeholder groups: the Facebook page remains extremely popular as a channel for news and debate on local 'Hill' issues, and now has over 3,000 registered followers; FOLK's own website delivers a deep wealth of information to our members, and the quarterly FOLK Newsletter delivers articles and updates of interest to users and visitors.

We delivered an impressive 35 supervised Working Parties in the year, across all seasons, and each were well attended, contributing 1,769 volunteer hours of work on the commons. There is increasing demand from a steady stream of new volunteers. Keeping the site in top condition and under control from invasive scrub and gorse is a never ending challenge, but allows open access to visitors and users across the site.

LOOKING FORWARD

We remain true to our core conservation and education objectives, supporting the widest recreational use of the land and promoting the site's incredible SSSI status and natural treasures. We recognise the importance of FOLK's role in liaising and consulting with the owners, trustees and the site's various user groups. Our partnership projects with local schools will continue to deliver education and 'in the field' experiences to local Young People, whilst specialist training delivered to our volunteers will enhance our own conservation management skills

After 25 successful years, we continue to see many opportunities going forward but we also face some major challenges which demand our immediate attention:

1. The increasing costs of running FOLK and our work party activities, and the impact of new charges for insurance, banking and website, all of which requires funding.
2. Recruitment of committee members and officers without whom we cannot deliver on FOLK's programme of conservation and education activities.

FOLK is well-placed to meet those challenges, and we will continue to deliver our ambitions by working closely with the local partners who have supported us supremely with their generosity. However, we need a new generation of members and committee officials to take FOLK forward - if you can, please come and join us, and help to deliver those next 25 years!

Financial Year Report 1st October 2024 – 30th September 2025

Highlights. Full Treasurer's Report with AGM Papers

Income for full year	£2,185.70
Expenditure for full year	£3,014.01
Surplus or Deficit for full year	£ (828.31)
FOLK Reserves at 30 th September 2025	£3,244.98

FOLK does not collect subscriptions from members and as a result relies on the generous support of local individuals and organizations to fund activities. Grants and donations from organizations totalled £2,158 in this year, all relating to the funding of specific projects.

Our thanks to the following for their continuing interest and financial support.

Local Individuals and FOLK members.
Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council.
Shurdington Parish Council
Charlton Kings Parish Council
Cheltenham Borough Council
Gloucestershire County Council

FRIENDS OF LECKHAMPTON HILL and CHARLTON KINGS COMMON (FOLK)
Statement of Accounts for the period 1st October 2024 to 30th September 2025

INCOME	2023-2024		2024-2025	
Membership Subscriptions				
Individual Members: 1-year and 5-year subscriptions received	0.00	0.00	(1)	
Organisation Members: 1-year subscriptions received	0.00	0.00	(1)	
Sub-Total	0.00	0.00		
Donations and Grants received from Organisations & Individuals				
Total Grants and Donations Received	4,814.10	2,158.50	(4)	
Acknowledging the continued support from local organisations & individuals:				
Cheltenham Borough Council	300.00	0.00		
Gloucestershire County Council	2,000.00	0.00		
Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council	1,000.00	1,000.00	(3)	
Sturdington Parish Council	800.00	0.00		
Cheltenham Lottery	282.50	197.50	(1)	
Cotswolds National Landscape	0.00	500.00	(3)	
Individuals / Fund-raising events	431.60	461.00		
Sub-Total	4,814.10	2,158.50		
Bank Interest				
Savings Account	25.23	27.20	(1)	
Sub-Total	25.23	27.20		
Total	4,839.33	2,185.70		
Cash Book Balance				
Opening Balance at 1st October 2024		4,073.29		
Add Income in period		2,185.70		
Deduct Expenditure in period		3,014.01		
Closing Balance at 30 September 2025		3,244.98		
Represented by Cash Balances (held at Lloyds Bank)				
Current Account balance at 30th September 2025		583.47	(8)	
Savings Account balance at 30th September 2025		2,661.51	(8)	
Bank Accounts Reconciliation				
Current Account bank statement at 30th September 2025		583.47		
Deduct unrepresented cheques at 30th September 2025		0.00		
Savings Account bank statement at 30th September 2025		2,661.51		

EXPENDITURE	2023-2024		2024-2025	
FOLK Banking and Insurance				
Bank Service Charges	0.00	35.36	(1)	
Insurance (Public Liability, Personal Accident, Equipment)	636.31	814.75		
Sub-Total	636.31	850.10		
Newspaper and Communications				
Newspaper Production / Distribution and Website Maintenance	27.58	413.60		
Noticeboard Maintenance	0.00	0.00		
Sub-Total	27.58	413.60		
Work Party and Other Conservation & Education Activities				
Fuel, Oil and Sundries	43.97	45.63		
Tools and Equipment - Purchase & Sewing	287.11	834.24	(6)	
Other Work Party Expenses	60.85	200.86		
Training	1,710.00	0.00	(8)	
Printing and Stationery	0.00	20.00		
Events and Promotions	0.00	649.78	(7)	
Sundry Items	0.00	0.00		
Sub-Total	2,101.93	1,750.31		
Surplus / (Shortfall) Income over Expenditure	2,073.61	(828.31)	(2)	
Total	4,839.33	2,185.70		

Notes to Accounts:

1. FOLK has no regular income beyond monthly contribution from Cheltenham Lottery & Bank Interest (now exceeded by Bank Charges)
2. Shortfall for FY reflects further increase in FOLK overheads (insurance) & costs incurred for the first time (Website hosting, Bank Charges)
3. FOLK is grateful to Leckhampton, WPT PC, CNL & individuals for donations towards FOLK overheads, and Charlton Kings PC for free use of hall
4. New fund-raising initiatives will be a priority in 2025-26 to deliver a return to trading surplus (i.e. Income > Expenditure)
5. Increase in Tools & Equipment spend mainly due to a new programme of regular servicing of powered equipment for Work Parties
6. No training spend in year but this remains a priority to meet Health & Safety requirements and enhance conservation management skills
7. Events & Promotions spend mainly the result of the planned replacement of event display stands (hurdling received in previous year)
8. Management of Reserves remains prudent. Current level of funds considered sufficient as a buffer against future unexpected expenditure

I certify that, based upon the evidence & explanations given to me, the above is an accurate statement of the Accounts of Friends of Leckhampton Hill & Charlton Kings Common (FOLK) as at 30th September 2025

Signed by:

Print:

Date:

Occupation:



**Friends
Of
Leckhampton Hill &
Charlton Kings Common**

26TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, November 13th 2025, beginning at 7pm.

NOMINATIONS FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

PLEASE NOTE: If you are a member of FOLK, you may nominate yourself or any other member. Acceptance of a nomination implies that the nominee agrees to act in the interests of FOLK.

I would like to nominate the following person for **Chair/ Vice Chair /Secretary/ Treasurer** (delete as appropriate):

Nominee:		Proposed by:	
	Please print name	n/a if nominating self	Please print name
Signature:		Signature:	

I would like to nominate the following person as a **Member of the Executive Committee.**

Nominee:		Proposed by:	
	Please print name	n/a if nominating self	Please print name
Signature:		Signature:	

Please complete and return this form to the Secretary, FOLK, 33 Meadowsweet Road, CHELTENHAM, GL53 0AS or by email to leckhamptonhill@gmail.com by Thursday, 30th October.

FOLK – Status of current Officers and Committee Members and nominations for 2025

The 2025 AGM is required to elect the following:

- Up to 8 Committee Members – the election of whom will bring the Committee to its maximum size of eleven.
- The COMMITTEE may co-opt up to 3 members, at a Committee meeting.
- Nominations should be with the Secretary 14 days before the AGM. However, if there are more vacancies than nominations then nominations may be accepted from the floor of the meeting.

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Comments</u>
1	Chairman – Mike Donnelly	2021 - 2025	Not seeking re-election
2	Secretary – Rachel Watson	2023 - 2026	Term is up to three years
3	Treasurer – Mark Dowie	2022 - 2026	Term is up to four years
4	Andrew Bishop	2023 - 2026	Term is three years
5	John Harvey	2022 - 2025	Term is three years
6	Morgan Miller	2022 - 2025	Term is three years
7	Peter Whalley	2022 - 2025	Not seeking re-election

Peter Niblett Co-opted Member

Nominations Received: