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Councillors named below are summoned to attend the **Amenities Committee Meeting** to be held in Gallery 1, Castle Park Arts Centre, Castle Park, Frodsham, WA6 6SE on **Monday 13th January 2025 at 7pm**

Members of the press and public are welcome to attend. The meeting will be audio recorded.

Committee Members: Cllr R Lofts (Chair), Cllr B Wade (Vice Chair), Cllr D Critchley, Cllr J Critchley, Cllr H Hayes, Cllr A Holman, Cllr P Lowrie & Cllr M Nield

Note: Per **Terms of Reference 1.10ⁱ**, council members who attend a committee meeting of which they are not a member may do so with the same rights as members of the public. This means they can attend and participate during the **Public Open Forum** but do not have voting rights or special privileges outside this context.

Town Clerk:



Dated: 8th January 2025

Meeting 8

1. Apologies and reasons for absence

To receive apologies and note reasons for absence from members.

2. Declarations of interest

To note any declarations of interest on items which are on the agenda.

3. Public participation

Members of the public are invited to speak on items which are on the agenda in accordance with FTC policy on public speaking at meetings.

4. Approval of minutes

To approve and sign the minutes of the Amenities Committee held on 9th December 2024.

5. Finance report

(a) To note the finance report provided (in meeting pack).

(b) To agree any actions to be taken.

6. Active Travel

(a) To receive an update from Cllr Holman on FTC Active Travel Maps (information circulated to committee members)

(b) To consider the quotation from Staunton Rock in the sum of £450 plus VAT, to amend the maps according to Cheshire West and Chester Council's specifications, for insertion in the 2 bus shelters on Main Street, Frodsham.

7. Hob Hey Wood

To note the Annual Report provided (in meeting pack).

8. Clerk's report

To receive any further report/updates from the Town Clerk.

9. Date of next meeting – 10th February 2025

10. Close of meeting



*Scan QR code
to view meeting pack*

Minutes from the **Amenities Committee Meeting** held in
Gallery 1, Castle Park Arts Centre, Castle Park, Frodsham, WA6 6SE on
Monday 9th December 2024 at 7pm

Members of the press and public are welcome to attend. The meeting will be audio recorded.

Attended by: Cllr R Lofts (Chair), Cllr J Critchley, Cllr H Hayes, Cllr A Holman, Cllr Lowrie & Cllr M Nield

Also attended by: 2 members of the public to include Cllr Wood

Meeting 7

1. Apologies and reasons for absence

To receive apologies and note reasons for absence from members.

RESOLVED: Apologies were received from Cllr D Critchley (work commitments) and Cllr B Wade (personal).

2. Declarations of interest

To note any declarations of interest on items which are on the agenda.

NOTED: Cllr H Hayes declared an interest in Hob Hey Wood as Chair of Hob Hey Wood Friends.

3. Public participation

Members of the public are invited to speak on items which are on the agenda in accordance with FTC policy on public speaking at meetings.

NOTED: No member of the public wished to speak.

4. Approval of minutes

To approve and sign the minutes of the Amenities Committee held on 11th November 2024.

RESOLVED: The minutes were amended to include Cllr D Critchley as a member of the Remembrance Garden Working Group.

5. Finance report

- (a) To note the finance report provided (in meeting pack) which includes breakdown of year-end projections

NOTED

- (b) To agree any actions to be taken

NOTED: No further actions to be taken.

6. Memorial Tree

- (a) To note the quotation received for a memorial tree.

NOTED

- (b) To note the report from the Town Clerk and consider the recommended actions contained within the report.

RESOLVED: The report was noted and the following was resolved: i) to allocate £20,000 to ear marked reserves; ii) to carry out a public consultation to ascertain the support for the installation of a memorial tree; iii) to seek further quotes if there is public support for the installation of a memorial tree.

- (c) To receive any further report from Cllr Lofts.

NOTED: There was no further report.

(d) To agree any further action to be taken.

NOTED: No further actions to be taken.

7. Quotes received

(a) To consider revised quote to provide replacement plastic bench on Top Road (£650).

RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed to approve the quotation and instruct the works.

ACTION: JO

(b) To consider the quote to carry out annual maintenance works to the wildflower meadow in Green Gates Park (£1,150).

RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed to (i) accept the quotation to carry out the initial maintenance works and (ii) add the sum of £1,150 to the Grounds Maintenance SLA from April 2025 for annual maintenance to the wildflower meadow.

ACTION: JO

8. Progress report on works instructed

(a) Cut the oak that has destroyed bridge and smaller failed tree and leave stacked as habitat creation (£750.00) – **completed**

NOTED

(b) Fell the ash tree on bank to safe height cut and leave stacked habitat creation (£950.00) – **completed**

NOTED

9. 2025-2026 Budget

To consider including a budget of £1,500 for additional works to Green Gates Community Park to include sum for maintenance of the wildflower meadows and any additional planting.

RESOLVED: It was agreed to include a sum of £350 in the budget for additional planting in Green Gates Community Park.

10. Clerk's report

To receive any further report/updates from the Town Clerk.

NOTED: It was noted that (i) a request had been received to grit Chestnut Lane which would be refused as it is beyond the scope of the Winter Gritting Scheme and (ii) that 33m of fencing at Manley Road Copse was damaged during Storm Darragh and an insurance claim will be made.

RESOLVED: To instruct Northwich Town Council to carry out pruning in Hob Hey Wood Orchard at a cost of £790.

11. Date of next meeting – 13th January 2025

12. Close of meeting

NOTED: The meeting closed at 19:25.



Amenities Committee – 13th January 2025

Agenda item 5

Finance Report

Contents

Amenities Management Report

Cemetery Management Report

Allotments Management Report

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 01/01/2025

Month No: 10

Amenities Report - January 2025

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
<u>170 Amenities</u>								
2021 Grounds Maintenance SLA	0	23,294	36,000	12,706		12,706	64.7%	
4500 Tree Planting	0	1,111	0	(1,111)		(1,111)	0.0%	
4514 Winter Gritting	0	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4516 War Memorial Maintenance	0	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4517 CCTV	0	0	5,000	5,000		5,000	0.0%	
4760 Play areas add works	0	0	4,000	4,000		4,000	0.0%	
4802 Annual RoSPA	0	767	350	(417)		(417)	219.1%	
4803 Play Area repairs/refurb	0	95	0	(95)		(95)	0.0%	
4804 Tree Works	0	402	3,000	2,598		2,598	13.4%	
4805 Hob Hey Wood	0	537	3,000	2,463		2,463	17.9%	
4806 Defibrillator Maintenance	0	886	1,000	114		114	88.6%	
4807 Replacement Lights	0	0	5,000	5,000		5,000	0.0%	
4808 Bulbs	0	556	600	44		44	92.7%	
4809 Rent & Rates	0	0	1,100	1,100		1,100	0.0%	
4811 Street Furniture	0	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4812 Xmas Light Bulbs	0	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4813 Additional grounds maint	0	2,228	4,000	1,772		1,772	55.7%	
4814 Manley Road Copse	0	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
4815 Marshlands	0	0	2,000	2,000		2,000	0.0%	
4816 Active Travel Dev't Fund	0	0	8,000	8,000		8,000	0.0%	
4817 Climate Action	0	0	10,000	10,000		10,000	0.0%	
4818 Churchfields Safety Flooring	0	0	17,000	17,000		17,000	0.0%	
4991 Memorial Path	0	823	0	(823)		(823)	0.0%	
4999 Ship Street Play Area	0	1,005	7,416	6,411		6,411	13.5%	
8000 Town Clock	0	16,332	15,000	(1,332)		(1,332)	108.9%	
Amenities :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>48,035</u>	<u>126,966</u>	<u>78,931</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>78,931</u>	<u>37.8%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>(48,035)</u>	<u>(126,966)</u>	<u>(78,931)</u>				
Grand Totals:- Income	0	0	0	0			0.0%	
Expenditure	0	48,035	126,966	78,931	0	78,931	37.8%	
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>(48,035)</u>	<u>(126,966)</u>	<u>(78,931)</u>				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>0</u>	<u>(48,035)</u>						

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 01/01/2025

Month No: 10

Cemetery Report - January 2025

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
<u>130 Cemetery</u>								
1300 Burial Fees Income	0	24,310	20,000	(4,310)			121.5%	
1301 Memorial Income	0	1,475	1,000	(475)			147.5%	
1410 Allotment Income	0	35	0	(35)			0.0%	
Cemetery :- Income	0	25,820	21,000	(4,820)			123.0%	0
4140 Subscriptions & Memberships	0	100	100	0		0	100.0%	
4210 IT	0	90	500	410		410	18.0%	
4250 Rates	0	822	1,607	785		785	51.1%	
4320 Maintenance	0	972	1,200	228		228	81.0%	
4550 Plaques & Memorials	0	153	500	347		347	30.7%	
4560 Waste Removal	0	738	1,080	342		342	68.4%	
4600 Utilities	0	651	1,000	349		349	65.1%	
8060 Burial refund	0	110	0	(110)		(110)	0.0%	
Cemetery :- Indirect Expenditure	0	3,636	5,987	2,351	0	2,351	60.7%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	0	22,184	15,013	(7,171)				
Grand Totals:- Income	0	25,820	21,000	(4,820)			123.0%	
Expenditure	0	3,636	5,987	2,351	0	2,351	60.7%	
Net Income over Expenditure	0	22,184	15,013	(7,171)				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	0	22,184						

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 01/01/2025

Month No: 10

Allotments Report - January 2025

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
<u>135 Allotments</u>								
1410 Allotment Income	0	1,131	1,300	169			87.0%	
Allotments :- Income	<u>0</u>	<u>1,131</u>	<u>1,300</u>	<u>169</u>			<u>87.0%</u>	<u>0</u>
4140 Subscriptions & Memberships	0	55	55	0		0	100.0%	
4210 IT	0	507	0	(507)		(507)	0.0%	
4320 Maintenance	0	15	300	285		285	5.0%	
4600 Utilities	0	91	50	(41)		(41)	183.0%	
Allotments :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>668</u>	<u>405</u>	<u>(263)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(263)</u>	<u>165.1%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>463</u>	<u>895</u>	<u>432</u>				
Grand Totals:- Income	<u>0</u>	<u>1,131</u>	<u>1,300</u>	<u>169</u>			<u>87.0%</u>	
Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>668</u>	<u>405</u>	<u>(263)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(263)</u>	<u>165.1%</u>	
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>463</u>	<u>895</u>	<u>432</u>				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>0</u>	<u>463</u>						

HOB HEY WOOD FRIENDS GROUP ANNUAL REPORT



2024

Mark O'Sullivan



Summary

- Over 200 volunteer hours
- Planted 210 trees
- Four guided walks around the wood hosted by group members
- Four talks about Hob Hey Wood given to local groups
- Repairs to steps, boardwalks, fences and paths
- Fallen tree clearance
- Other maintenance tasks, litter picking, invasive species control
- 2025 calendar produced and sold
- Continued with bat monitoring programme
- Very active on social media
- Regular feedback to FTC Amenities Committee
- Commenced project to replace all paths, bridges and steps in the south wood
- Wildlife recording has now identified over 700 species, some rare
- Continued with meadow creation
- Five Year Management Plan updated
- Made connections with other organisations



Chiffchaff in Hob Hey

Volunteer activities

Eleven volunteer days were completed in 2024, two fewer than in 2023. Several members performed solo tasks in the wood during the year such as pruning, invasive species removal, and litter picking.

Tree Planting

210 trees obtained free of charge from the Woodland Trust's 'Free Trees for Schools and Communities' scheme were planted near the main bridge. These were all native species that will enhance the biodiversity of the woodland. They were used as hedging and to fill in gaps cleared of invasive species.

Meadow Management

The new meadow was given more attention this year. A 'hay cut' is required to impoverish the soil, encouraging wildflowers.

A volunteer group from The Environment Agency; led by Brian Webber, completed the scything with the group clearing away the tonnes of 'arising' generated.

Yellow rattle seeds were also purchased and scattered in the meadow to help control the vigorous grasses that out-compete the wildflowers we are trying to encourage to grow here.



Orchard and meadow in summer

Bat Monitoring Programme

In March and June 2023, under the guidance of licensed bat handler Tom Kenwright, twenty bat boxes were installed in the wood. Six of the boxes were built by group member John Gascoyne, the others were purchased, financed by FTC.

The purchased boxes are removeable and are being monitored by Tom. Information on the number and species of bats roosting in the wood will add to the scientific knowledge of bats in Cheshire; very little is known about these secretive mammals.

A year later, during the Frodsham Festival of Walks, Tom examined the bat boxes, and we were excited to show people the very first bat we'd found in one of our boxes. Another survey in December found another bat using one of our boxes with signs of activity at another. We now have clear evidence that our bat monitoring programme is helping bats in Frodsham!



Other Maintenance Tasks

Many other varied activities were performed by the volunteers. These included the removal of several trees that fell across paths during storms. Repair of boardwalk mesh and boards. Cleaning of paths and steps of fallen leaves and soil. Litter picking. Invasive sycamore saplings were again tackled (these grow fast and can overrun an area leading to poor biodiversity).

The noticeboard erected in 2021 was kept up to date with seasonal highlights provided. Feedback indicated that this was appreciated by visitors and several volunteers were recruited by seeing the volunteer dates on the board.

The repairs to the stone steps leading from the picnic table to the stream were completed.

Replacement of Paths, Bridges, and Boardwalks in the Southern Wood

In late 2023, the group initiated a project to replace all the infrastructure in the southern part of the woodland as the steps, bridges, and paths installed over 20 years ago are now rotting away.

The project plan was drawn up by Paul Birtles with help from Brian Webber, early in 2024. Chair, Helen Hayes took this to the Cheshire West and Chester Crowdfunding programme, Cheshire West Crowd. With the help of many local people, Frodsham Town Council, and Cheshire West and Cheshire Council, the procurement of all materials has been fully funded with work commenced in December.

Installation should be completed in Q1 2025.

Social media and 'outreach' activities

The group maintains a website (hobheywood.wixsite.com/friends) which contains a huge amount of information on the wood and the group's activities including maps and directed walks. This was maintained and updated in 2024.

Our Facebook page, updated almost daily with photos and stories about the wood and its inhabitants has once again proven very popular with many appreciative comments about the wood and the group. The page now has almost 1,200 members.

Our social media efforts did result in us welcoming several new volunteers to the group. Hopefully, this will continue into 2025.

Guided Walks

The group led a guided walk and bat talk as part of the Frodsham Festival of Walks. This was attended by over 60 members of the public and appeared to be well received. Tom Kenwright inspected our bat boxes as part of the walk and we were able to show people the first bat we've ever found in one of our boxes!

Three other guided walks, with smaller groups were held including a fungal foray with Rachel Drapeur which saw us find 62 species of fungi, and a wildflower walk led by Tom Kenwright.



Fungal Foray

We also hosted a bat watching and moth trapping evening in the orchard. The cold weather reduced the number of moths significantly, but we did identify four species of bat. We were also treated to the sight of a barn owl hunting in the new meadow, evidence that our habitat improvement plan for the area is paying off!

Mark O'Sullivan helped guide a walk held by Climate Action Frodsham of Frodsham's Community Orchards, which included Hob Hey's orchard.

Presentations to Local Groups

Mark O’Sullivan gave four talks during the year, to various groups from Frodsham and Helsby. One, to Frodsham U3A, was attended by over 60 people.

Once again, when talking to people, many had never heard of Hob Hey or knew where it is. Our work has increased the number of people visiting the wood (and hopefully, the number of people who care about it).



Talk to Frodsham U3A

Collaboration With Other Organisations

2024 saw the group make connections with other organisations to hopefully learn from them. These included the Royal Society of Biology, Cheshire Wildlife Trust, University of Central Lancashire, and Butterfly Conservation. Hopefully, shared projects will result from these collaborations, and we’ll have the opportunity to talk to other groups in 2025.

Finances

The main source of income for the group in 2024 was the sales of the Hob Hey Wood Friends Group calendars. This amounted to £901 (with printing costs of £537 funded from FTC).

We also gained £205 from giving talks to local groups and received donations from CAF of £50.

Expenditure was as follows:

Orchard trees	£117
Materials for step repairs	£185
Wildflower seeds	£167



Wildflower seeds sown in the meadow

The crowdfunding exercise for the replacement of steps, bridges, and boardwalks raised, after Spacehive costs were removed, £23,931. We also had a donation from a member of the public of £1,000 towards the project. All this money will be invoiced in 2025 to the contractors who are carrying out the work.

Wildlife recording

As ancient woodland, Hob Hey Wood, is an incredibly biodiverse place. Despite this, little formal recording has been performed and, until 2021, knowledge of the species living here was scant. In 2021, a project commenced to record as many species as possible and input them into the biological recording database 'iRecord'. By the end of 2021, over 400 species had been recorded. This effort was continued, and we have now recorded over 700 species!

This is 'the tip of the iceberg' as many species are difficult to identify, but it does show just how biodiverse the wood is, given its size. Further efforts will continue in 2025 with hopefully focus on Hob Hey's stream which we know so little about.



Micro moths on forget-me-not

If Hob Hey Wood was to be destroyed, by 'development', it would be a significant loss to biodiversity in Cheshire and must not be allowed to happen. Fortunately, its ownership by Frodsham Town Council, registration with Fields in Trust, and the popularity of the wood with local people makes that a very unlikely event.

Encroachment on the wood by development remains a concern, however.



Small yellow underwing moth

Plans for 2025

The project to replace all the paths, boardwalks, steps and bridges in the southern part of the wood should be completed early in the year. This will allow mud-free walking in the wood, hopefully helping to keep people away from disturbing any wildlife.



New long-lasting bridge in Hob Hey

Activities for 2025:

- Leading a walk as part of Frodsham Festival of Walks
- Other guided walks (fungal foray, wildflower walk)
- Giving talks on the wood to interested groups
- Moth trapping
- Look into getting a barn owl box installed on the woodland edge
- Continued biological recording including stream survey
- Maintenance tasks: boardwalk repair; drain clearance; invasive species removal; litter picking; step clearance; step repairs; pruning overhanging branches
- Tree planting
- Meadow hay cut
- Planting of wych elm to help white-letter hairstreak butterflies
- Promotion of the wood via social media

Activities for 2025 (Cont.):

- Production of a calendar to raise funds
- Regular feedback to FTC
- Look to attract more volunteers
- Consider producing Christmas cards to raise funds
- Promotion of Hob Hey with local schools
- Look at possible purchases to extend the woodland
- Look into registering Hob Hey Wood as a Local Nature Reserve



Snowy Hob Hey

Mark O'Sullivan
Secretary of Hob Hey Wood Friends Group
02/01/2025