**CHAIR’S REPORT**

**AGM of FRIENDS OF PARK WOOD**

**24th Feb 2016**

Introduction

It's been an interesting year! We've had a landslide closing a major routeway through the wood. Big Local continues to build up a head of steam. I would like to focus on our achievements this year, say 'thank you' to special people and organisations, and look forward to the coming year.

Achievements

We have run seven work parties. Average attendance four. Three were cancelled due to adverse weather and/or ground conditions. Two when I was on holiday.

Mike and I plan to attend a real life first aid course in April.

We have collected 44 bags of rubbish, one tent, one bed, four wooden pallets, several cushions and umpteen bits of wood.

We have kept the new glade free of beech seedlings. Natural regeneration includes oak, ash, holly and bramble.

With the Council's assistance we have chosen a route for the replacement footpath to replace the footpath damaged by the landslide. Along this new route we have discovered a lime tree.

Friends of Park Wood has a Facebook page, a logo, a leaflet and a calendar of events.

Keighley Walking Initiative uses the wood for their health and social walks. These are run by 'Get Out More'.

Shaun O'Hare is very keen to have someone from our group active on the steering committee of Big Local.

Thanks

I would like to thank all members of Friends of Park Wood for their support.

I would like to thank the Committee for their hard work: France-Leigh (secretary); Richard (treasurer); Liz (membership secretary); Evelyn and Ken.

I would also like to thank: Colin Whitfield and the Trees and Woodlands section of the Council for all they have done in the wood; Christine Riley and members of the Long Lee Village Hall committee who continue to hire to us this ideal venue for our meetings; and Annie Berrington of 'Get Out More' for her latest donation to be spent on insurance for our work parties.

Welcome to the coming year!

We already enjoy the wood as individuals. We need to enjoy it as a group. We need to enjoy our calendar of events and bring our friends along - we need new members.

We need now to be vigilant for landslides as well as for ash die-back and sudden oak death.

If we decide to play an active part on the steering committee of Big Local then we need to be very clear just who we are and what we are about. The potential benefits include funding for our new footpath and our dry stone wall course as well as broadening our outlook. The potential costs include risking our loss of identity working with an organisation much larger and more diffuse than ours, but this could be prevented by a clarification and simplification of our goals.

Signage is expensive and also something that we need to find funding for.

Expert technical knowledge is desirable before we take any further action with our 'dam project'.

Conclusion

We are a secure group, small but collectively dynamic, respected and lovely. Big Local outside of our group and the landslide inside the wood serve to show us that we are at the mercy of events to some extent. It is how we respond to those events, and to others that we cannot foresee, that are the challenges for the year ahead. It starts as usual for us with Spring! ...

Eric Yaffey

Chair

23rd Feb 2016