

**Friends of Ernesettle Creek & Budshead Wood**  
**Annual General Meeting**  
**18 February 2026 7.00pm**  
**River View Community Room, Ernesettle**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**Attendance**

Theo Nickols (acting Chair)	Taran Ash
Hilary Kolinsky (acting Sec.)	Kim Ash
Sarah Colwill	John Clough
Alison Sargent	Dawn Hogg
Rob Fraser	Stephen Gascoyne
Margaret Boadella	Cllr. Ray Morton
Kellen Hakhroo	
Dave Curno (Plymouth Open Spaces Network)	
Jess Stevens & Luke Kendall (National Marine Park)	
Emmie Kwaan (PL5 Pathways FGCT)	
Brenda Thorne (Westcountry Rivers Trust)	

**Apologies:**

Patrick Colwill  
Richard Lillicrap  
Barbara Lillicrap  
Nic T Brown (TFCS)

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1. The acting Chair welcomed everyone.
  2. Apologies were noted as listed above.
  3. The minutes of the previous AGM on 18/02/25 were agreed, and actions arising reviewed as follows:
    - 3.1. Sarah reported that Theo has checked if the group's annual accounts should be audited, the answer was yes, and the accounts have been audited.
  4. Chair's Report  
Taran Ash read out the **Chair's Report – attached.** NB. West-facing arch typo.
  5. Treasurer's Report
    - 5.1. Alison Sargent read out the **Treasurer's Report – attached.**
    - 5.2. Ray has volunteered to be added as a signatory on the bank account.  
**Action: FoEBW Officers and Ray to complete application for adding a signatory to the bank account.**
    - 5.3. Dave reported that Friends of Ham Woods have moved insurance from Zurich to Markel Direct.

5.4. Kim pointed out that whilst it may appear that the group has plenty of money, most of this is ringfenced for specific projects. The group is always on the look-out for funders that will support unrestricted funds (insurance, training etc). Dave noted that Lottery funds normally allow +10% for admin costs.

6. Officers stand down – all the FoEBW Officers stood down.

7. Election of Officers

There was only one nomination per post for the posts of Chair (Taran Ash); Vice Chair (Sarah Colwill); Secretary (Kim Ash); and Treasurer (Alison Sargent). The Officers were duly elected.

There were five nominations for committee members: John Clough; Patrick Colwill; Ray Morton; Richard and Barbara Lillicrap. All five committee members were duly elected.

The constitution was signed by Officers & the committee (three absentees to sign after the meeting).

8. Theo Nickols update

8.1. Theo thanked FoEBW for all that they do each year. Thanks were also extended to Cllr Ray Morton. Theo stated that the group works very effectively and efficiently in preparing schedules and carrying out works, and this is very beneficial for the greenspace and the landscape. The group has a very strong reputation for all that they do.

9. AOB

9.1. Sarah reported that she has looked into alternative bank accounts because all the commercial banks are charging for accounts. The group pay £4.25 per month for banking services. Sarah asked Theo to note to PCC that community organisations are being charged for banking and this should be taken into account when awarding funds. **Action: Theo to alert the finance team to this issue.**

9.2. Sarah reported that an application to the Matthew Good Foundation has been made for unrestricted funds (for insurance, banking etc). The bid outcome will be known in March.

9.3. Sarah reported that the storage space proposal is ticking along, with a potential site at the allotments being considered.

9.4. Sarah reported that she and Kim are planning an audit of Budshead Wood ahead of the Easter Egg hunt. **Action: Sarah to advise Theo of the audit date and subsequently report any issues.**

9.5. Jess Stevens reported that River Fly monitoring training is available if any new volunteers come forward. Brenda is the volunteer CSI and offered to mentor any new trainees. She and Jess are in contact with Westcountry Rivers Trust. Sarah advocated for increased testing of the Creek due to concerns about swimmers and dogs using the water. PSNMP are considering this.

- 9.6. Sarah reported that the Azolla problem has now been controlled by North American weevils and is no longer present in the pond.
- 9.7. Ray stated that PCC has a backlog of tree inspections, so the Scout Hut tree hasn't been inspected yet. Ray is chasing up tree inspection requests.
- 9.8. Sarah reported that FoEBW and Councillor's are on the case re. Woodvale Nurseries whose hoarded items are putting pressure on the bank which is collapsing under the weight of the site owner's cars, and which may also be generating pollution. **Action: Sarah & Brenda to email Theo / Ray to report the issue to PCC.**
- 9.9. Jess reported that the school children really want to help with planting in the Elizabethan garden. All agreed that there would be an opportunity for this. **Action: Kim to supply Jess with the dates when the children could help with planting.**
- 9.10. Ray asked if any stewardship / friends group is planned for Woodland Wood (the wood on the other side of Budshead Road). Theo is not aware of any plans for such a group. Dave agreed that it is a fantastic wood.

Emmie stated that she doesn't get any specific enquiries about Woodland Wood, but if there was interest in starting up a group, she could help to get it established. Dave also offered support, and FoEBW offered to help to talk them through what's involved behind the scenes – risk assessments, schedules etc. There was a discussion about what skills a successful group needs – and the importance of includes admin and fundraising skills, as well as going out and doing the digging, making the tea etc. Brenda suggested courses to support people to form a new group. **Action: Emmie to look into courses that might be useful for Friends Groups eg. Basic book-keeping etc.**

- 9.11. Ray noted what wonderful green spaces we have between Ernesettle and Crownhill.
- 9.12. Dave stated that works are planned for the Major Road Network around Plymouth. He has alerted the council to potential impacts on woodlands and trees nearby. These proposed works are out for consultation at the moment, and group members are advised to comment on the consultation here: <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/news/consultation-upgrades-mrn-begins>. Dave stated that Plymouth Tree People look at all consultations and would flag to the group if there were any affecting the local area.
- 9.13. Dave stated that Budshead Wood is designated a replanted ancient woodland, and he noted that the Plymouth Area Estuaries SAC does not include Budshead Creek, although it includes the creek all the way up to Tamerton Foliot.

- 9.14. There was a discussion about the politics of consultations and departmental decisions that affect trees and wildlife. Theo explained that the council is a large and diverse organisation that has to balance priorities including highway management and land development, and these sometimes compete with environmental aspirations. Theo noted how important it is for Friends Groups to help capture environmental data to ensure that nature interests are represented to the council and conservation organisations.
- 9.15. Jess passed on her thanks for collaborating with PSNMP this year. The group have made it really easy to connect with residents, and successful projects are thanks to their hard work.
- 9.16. Jess reported that PSNMP are doing more work with Mill Ford School this year with a view to helping school leavers into volunteering.
- 9.17. Jess reported that PSNMP have taken on the maintenance of pathways around the point up to the causeway. The ground needs to dry out before works can commence in spring. They have been monitoring the area where the flooding occurs, and this is being brought into their scope of works.

They are considering an alternative accessible route from Northolt Avenue via the pylon field to the creek. Perching benches are to be installed at natural resting places; some small hawthorns have been removed to open up views. Kawasaki are assisting with materials storage, and they are really keen to get involved through employee volunteer days.

The Community Archaeology program has been postponed until 2027 due to lack of capacity. If it goes forward this would involve digs – full details tbc by Jess Hirons.

Blue Sparks funding will open up again in the summer for any heritage or history project proposals. Kim stated that FoEBW are keen to speak to Rob / Ernesettle Archive to devise a community heritage project – Taran endorse this. Dave reported that Tina Touhy is keen to get involved in archaeology.

PSNMP's pathways to the sea project connecting Neighbourhoods to their nearest water is underway and works starts to connect Whiteleigh with the creek later this year. It will involve way-marking and interpretation signs.

- 9.18. Kellen stated that the FoEBW Facebook page has lovely pictures, but it doesn't promote the dates and locations of litter picks. Sarah stated that publicly accessible events are advertised on the page, but many activities aren't classified as public events because they require different permissions and insurance. **Kellen to provide details so Kim can get in touch about future activities.**

- 9.19. Kim reported that with Taran and Ray she attended a webinar about the City Nature Challenge in April which involves documenting nature observations during 4-day window. FoEBW will publish details when they have worked out how to create an activity around this. You can download an app from iNaturalist and practice making observations at any time.
- 9.20. Sarah reported that Dave's tractor is currently out of action for flailing. Theo is arranging for flailing the headland and white path in Budshead wood. It's delayed but not forgotten.
- 9.21. Sarah has requested service plans from Theo as these are needed before digging for planting can commence in the Elizabethan garden. Dave noted that Plymouth Tree People have a CAT scanner that can identify underground services on site. **Action: Theo to obtain service plans.**
- 9.22. Sarah has prepared a wish list for tools, a mower etc. She will be scoping funding for these items
- 9.23. Sarah reminded that group that everyone's training renewals are due this year for first aid, brush cutting, and food hygiene, so she will be arranging for everyone to do their courses in time.
- 9.24. Theo reported that the Natural Infrastructure department are going through a restructuring, this means that the group may see some new faces within the department. The team will be strengthened and will include a marine service. The Plan for Nature and People feeds into the new structure and a Tree Management Guide is currently being considered by cabinet for approval – it is an improvement on the old tree management guide.