

Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG)

Registered Charity Number: 1157957

Principal Address: c/o 25 The Birchlands,
Forest Town, Mansfield NG19 0ER



Registered Charity No. 1157957

Forest Town Nature Conservation Group

Annual Report and Accounts 2021

(for the period 1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021)

Object of the Charity:

'to promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in and around Forest Town'

Produced by **Shlomo Downen** (Chair and Vice-Secretary)
and **Josh Downen** (Treasurer and Secretary)

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Condolences

Condolences are offered to the family of Tony Shaw-Browne, former owner of Spa Ponds, who passed away in May 2021.

Contact

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Declaration

The Trustees of the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group declare that they have approved this Trustees' Report and Accounts for the period 1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021.

Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustees by Shlomo Downen, Chair of the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group, on Friday 18th June 2021.

1. Introduction

Throughout the twelve months covered by this Report & Accounts we all experienced the restrictions and concerns associated with the coronavirus. As noted in last year's Report & Accounts, Covid-19 has touched everybody's lives and the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG) is no exception. FTNCG Trustees met virtually on 19th May 2021 and agreed that it would be best if we once again held our Annual General Meeting (AGM) online as a 'virtual' event.

Despite the restrictions, this has been a special and positive year for FTNCG. With kind support and much determination from Keep Britain Tidy's Rob Martyr, FTNCG volunteers alongside volunteers from both the Mansfield Building Society and the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, made great progress clearing spaces and sowing seeds for wildflowers in the hope of attracting pollinators, such as bees, to the site. Other memorable events included receiving training from Andy Hollis at Pond Hill Wood and clearing a football that was blocking a pipe causing flooding between Ponds 3 and 4.

This Report & Accounts was written to ensure compliance with FTNCG's obligations under the Charities Act 2011 in accordance with Section 27 of our Constitution. If you would like to read more about FTNCG's historic achievements please visit FTNCG's website at: <http://www.foresttown.net/nature/> to access our six previous Report & Accounts documents, where we provide additional background to the Group's emergence as a land-owning registered charity.

As of the middle of June 2021 the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group comprised more than 50 members under the terms of Section 8 of FTNCG's Constitution. In accordance with Section 12 of FTNCG's Constitution, this means that the quorum for the AGM is 6 members entitled to vote on the business to be conducted at the meeting.

In accordance with Sections 10, 11, 12 and 31 of the Constitution, formal notice for the AGM will be issued by Monday 21st June 2021 to all FTNCG Members and Trustees for the 'virtual' AGM to be held on Wednesday 7th July 2021, i.e. at least 14 clear days before the AGM. It should be noted that the service to be used for the virtual AGM also allows participant access via a telephone. As usual, in line with our constitutional requirements, the notice will set out the date, time and 'place' of the meeting and the general nature of the business to be transacted at the AGM.

Trustees are agreed that once again, for the second year running, memberships will be allowed to 'roll over' for another year. Of course, FTNCG welcomes donations from Members and Supporters alike.

2. Structure, Governance and Management

The Forest Town Nature Conservation Group's (FTNCG's) Constitution, adopted on 22nd May 2013 and amended on 14th July 2014, is the governing document that establishes FTNCG as an association with the following charitable object: *'to promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in and around Forest Town'*.

FTNCG Membership currently stands at 52 people. FTNCG Membership, which is free of charge (although we suggest donating £5 a year), confers no financial benefit. As set out above, Trustees decided to forgo formal renewal by Members, which usually occurs at our AGM when it is not being held virtually, and so membership will continue for those who have maintained a relationship with the group.

FTNCG Trustees throughout 2020/21 were as follows:

Name	Office / Role	Appointment Date
Shlomo Downen	Chair and Vice-Secretary	1 st February 2011
Josh Downen	Treasurer, Secretary & Website Admin.	1 st February 2011
James Healy	Vice-Chair	4 th May 2016
Alan Alberry	Trustee and Spa Ponds Warden	2 nd July 2014
Lorraine Downen	Trustee	1 st February 2011
John Gibson	Trustee and Landowners Group Liaison	5 th July 2017
Mark Fretwell	Trustee and Tree Officer	5 th July 2017
Phil Goodall	Trustee and Water Catchment Liaison	5 th July 2017
Diane Simpson	Trustee	8 th June 2019
Dennis Platts	Trustee, Photographic Records Officer	16 th September 2020
Samantha Nicholson	Trustee	30 th March 2021

Diane Simpson and John Gibson stood down during this period, and we thank them for their work as Trustees. We are very pleased to welcome Samantha as a Trustee. Barry Housely continued as a Spa Ponds Warden alongside Alan, and Helen Johnson continued in her role as FTNCG's Rushpool Liaison, while Matt Beresford of MBarcheology continued as Archaeological Adviser for Spa Ponds Nature Reserve.

FTNCG is a member (or affiliate) of the following organisations:

- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust
- The Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (NottsBAG)
- WatersideCare
- FreshWater Watch
- Sherwood Water Catchment Partnership
- The Rufford-Clipstone Landowners Group

3. Review of FTNCG Activities

Throughout the period 1st April 2020 - 31st March 2021 FTNCG Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

Over the year FTNCG undertook the following activities in relation to our charitable object:

- Holding work sessions and (virtual) meetings, open to the public without charge, to consider, plan and carry out the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in and around Forest Town.
- Maintaining both electronic and hard copy communications with Members and Supporters, providing ongoing updates and promoting activities of potential interest, via e-mail, our website and Facebook pages, and by sending printed copies to postal addresses (for those Members who do not have internet access).
- Working as a Group to deliver thousands of volunteer hours litter picking and conservation working in and around Forest Town, primarily at Spa Ponds.
- Contributing to a range of consultations, including making submissions as part of planning application consultation exercises.
- Supporting volunteer training, including woodland management.
- Carrying out water quality testing and sharing results with WatersideCare, the County Biodiversity Officer, FreshWater Watch and the Environment Agency, as appropriate. We now record and encourage others to record sightings at Spa Ponds to the Biological Records Centre (BRC) via the iRecord service.
- Contributing to the ongoing work of the Sherwood Water Catchment Partnership.
- Maintaining membership of and/or affiliation with charitable and other organisations and groups with similar objects to FTNCG (see list on Page 3, above).
- Working with other like-minded public benefit organisations and agencies, including: Forest Town Community Council (FTCC) and FTCC's Planning Sub-Committee; Forest Town Heritage Group; Nottinghamshire County Council (Public Rights of Way), and Via East Midlands; Forestry England (formerly known as the Forestry Commission); Environment Agency; Keep Britain Tidy; Mansfield District Council; Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (NottsBAG); MBarchaeology; the Nottinghamshire Amphibian & Reptile Group (NARG); EMEC Ecology; the Woodland Trust; Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust; and the Rufford-Clipstone Landowners Group.

Throughout the period FTNCG Trustees met, both formally and informally. Minutes of the formal meetings are available from FTNCG's Minutes Archive at:

<http://www.foresttown.net/index.php/nature/ftnCG-minutes/>

4. Financial Review (including Reserves Policy)

Estimated basic running costs

Anticipated basic running costs for FTNCG during the next year (2021/22) amount to around **£650**, as follows:

£35 for Membership

- **Free for 2021** (usually £10 a year) - The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- **£35** - Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT)

£165 for Insurance

- **£165** - Includes Public Liability and Personal Accident

£450 for Other General Running Costs

- **£300** - Sundry items for Spa Ponds (e.g. PPE, signs, tools, plants, seeds, etc.)
- **£100** - Education and training (including First Aid Training)
- **£ 50** - Printing, postage, etc.

Reserves policy for 2021/22

Running Costs (Reserved £650; target £1,300): To cover anticipated annual expenses that must be met (e.g. insurance, health & safety (PPE) equipment, training), Trustees set a reserve target equivalent to 2 years' basic running costs at £650 per year.

Contingencies (Reserved £400; target £1,200): To cover unexpected expenses, in particular those associated with maintaining public safety at Spa Ponds.

Delivery of the Spa Ponds Site Management Plan (Reserved £750; target £75,000): Trustees would like more funds to pay professionals such as EMEC and Ecologic for support implementing our Management Plans, including work to maintain our bridleway, enhance biodiversity, and improve water quality. It is hoped that in the future FTNCG will receive at least five years of funding for maintenance and improvement work at Spa Ponds as part of Rural Payment Agency (Woodland Management and Countryside Stewardship) schemes.

Himalayan Balsam Management (Reserved £700; target £1,500): To pay for professional support to manage invasive non-native species at Spa Ponds, in accordance with the Spa Ponds Site Management Plan, to help protect biodiversity. The target is to raise funds to continue this management for two subsequent years.

Conservation Volunteer Skills Training (Reserved £500; target £3,000): To pay for professional on-site training and supervision, e.g. helping volunteers with maintaining the bridleway and improving the hedgerows at Spa Ponds.

The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)

INCOME FOR 2020/21

£3,751.00	Severn Trent Water Grant (Spawn on the Maun)
£2,434.00	Wheatcroft Fund Grant (Keep the Forest Buzzing)
£500.00	Councillor Allowances (Notts County Council)
£312.00	Robin Hood Lottery
£224.00	Donations from individuals, inc. membership
£50.00	Forest Town Community Council
£40.53	Amazon Smile
£37.25	HMRC Gift Aid
£7,348.78	TOTAL INCOME FOR 2020/21

How expenditure has supported the charity's key objectives

As set out below, expenses were incurred in relation to the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group undertaking or funding activities to carry out the charity's object *'to promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in and around Forest Town'*.

EXPENDITURE FOR 2020/21

£6,835.00	Contracted Work on Spa Ponds
£355.32	Tools, seeds, PPE, etc
£309.48	Printing & postage
£207.92	Membership & Insurance
£10.00	Training & education
£7,717.72	TOTAL EXPENDITURE FOR 2020/21

Liabilities

FTNCG has no outstanding debts to carry over into 2021/22.

As of the 31st March 2021 both the Keep the Forest Buzzing and the Spawn on the Maun Projects remained uncompleted. FTNCG is grateful to Keep Britain Tidy for their vital role in the delivery of these projects, both of which are due to be completed before the end of 2021.

5. Annual Statement of Accounts (2020/21)

Accounts for 1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021

Opening balance (Total)

Cash £5.00

Bank £3,150.55 £3,155.55

Total income £7,348.78

Total expenditure (£7,717.72)

Closing balance (Total)

Cash £129.00

Bank £2,657.61 £2,781.61

Accounts for 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020

Opening balance (Total)

Cash £65.07

Bank £2,048.70 £2,113.77

Total income £1,995.25

Total expenditure (£953.47)

Closing balance (Total)

Cash £5.00

Bank £3,150.55 £3,155.55

<u>BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2021</u>	£	£
<u>Assets and Liabilities</u>		
FIXED ASSETS		
<i>Tangible assets</i>		
Tools, Equipment, etc (Cost)	99.23	
FTNCG Mugs (£3.60 X 14)	50.40	
Tools, Equipment, etc (Depreciation)	(99.23)	
Total fixed assets		50.40
CURRENT ASSETS		
<i>Cash at bank and in hand</i>		
Current Account - Coop Bank	2,657.61	
Petty Cash	129.00	
Total cash at bank and in hand		2,781.61
Total current assets		2,832.01
LIABILITIES		
<i>Creditors due within one year</i>		0.00
NET CURRENT ASSETS	2,832.01	
Total net assets		2,832.01
<u>Represented by funds and assets</u>		
<i>Unrestricted funds</i>		
General Fund	2,832.01	
<i>Restricted Funds</i>		
<i>Other assets</i>		
Tangible assets	50.40	
Total funds		2,832.01

<u>BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2020</u>	£	£
<u>Assets and Liabilities</u>		
FIXED ASSETS		
<i>Tangible assets</i>		
Tools, Equipment, etc (Cost)	111.14	
FTNCG Mugs (£3.60 X 14)	50.40	
Tools, Equipment, etc (Depreciation)	(111.14)	
Total fixed assets		50.40
CURRENT ASSETS		
<i>Cash at bank and in hand</i>		
Current Account - Coop Bank	3,150.55	
Petty Cash	5.00	
Total cash at bank and in hand		3,155.55
Total current assets		3,205.95
LIABILITIES		
<i>Creditors due within one year</i>		0.00
NET CURRENT ASSETS	3,205.95	
Total net assets		3,205.95
<u>Represented by funds and assets</u>		
<i>Unrestricted funds</i>		
General Fund	2,655.55	
<i>Restricted Funds</i>		
Mansfield Building Society Project	500.00	
<i>Other assets</i>		
Tangible assets	50.40	
Total funds		3,205.95

Notes: (1) Gift Aid income is attributed to the year in which it was paid by HMRC rather than the year of donation. (2) Unclaimed Gift Aid donations are not listed as an asset. (3) Money that has been fundraised is listed in the year when those funds are received by FTNCG. FTNCG received £400 in June 2021 based on fundraising activities conducted earlier in 2021 in conjunction with Portland College and this will be reflected in the 2021/22 accounts. (4) FTNCG is the owner of Spa Ponds Nature Reserve, but it is not listed as an asset because the land is owned in the public interest and the deeds are held in trust by the Official Custodian for Charities.

6. Monthly Summary of Volunteer Hours

SUMMARY OF RECORDED VOLUNTEER HOURS (2020/21)

Month	Volunteer Hours	Example of activities carried out
April 2020	142	Due to Covid restrictions the only on-site activity was litter picking which could be carried out by individuals or pods rather than large groups. Other volunteer activities were carried out from home, e.g. consultation submissions.
May	112	Two potter sessions involving 5 and 6 people respectively were organised, these entailed individuals and household pods working in a socially distanced manner to pull Himalayan balsam and plant trees and plants around Pond 2. There was also virtual attendance at a Landowners meeting and much litter picking by the site's wardens.
June	222	Two potter sessions were held to plant trees and carry out other on-site maintenance. There was also some individual balsam pulling efforts, the submission of a funding bid and work on other funding opportunities.
July	102	Litter picking, strimming and bridleway maintenance carried out, and an initial draft Woodland Management Plan was produced. No large group activities due to Covid.
August	153	Bid writing and other administration (including preparation for the AGM), as well as litter picking. No large group activities due to Covid.
September	192	Litter picking, balsam pulling, clearing fallen tree from bridleway, bid writing, and conducting site walkover for management planning. No large group activities due to Covid.
October	300	Work on Keep the Forest Buzzing project (preparing site for the planting of pollinator-friendly plants to support bees, butterflies, etc., clearing and rotavating compartments; included volunteers from the Mansfield Building Society), litter picking, work on funding bids, water quality testing training, and conducting site walkover for management planning. Removing sediment from stream, reinforcing barriers along promontory, transplanting trees from between Ponds 1 and 2 and 'nursery' near glade.
November	219	Litter Picking, training session at Pond Hill, raking leaves, clearing compartments ready for Keep the Forest Buzzing seed planting, planning and administration, and refreshing all along the Chestnut Walk.
December	133	Litter picking, planning and administration (including work on the updated Spa Ponds Management Plan).
January 2021	150	Litter picking, digging trench and clearing blocked pipe between Ponds 3 and 4 to deal with floodwaters, administration, planning, and virtual meetings (including Landowners, Woodland Management Plan, and (monthly) Forest Town Community Council meetings. Took part in Portland College's Veganuary fundraiser.
February	164	Litter picking, managing site access, emergency work session (incl. dead hedging to protect the stream between Ponds 1 and 2), and administration (including work on Spa Ponds Site Management Plan).
March	375	Litter picking, Keep the Forest Buzzing work session (including Miner 2 Major / Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and Mansfield Building Society volunteers), Notts Biodiversity Action Group event (virtual), and Admin (including working on Site Management Plan and planning for the Keep the Forest Buzzing project).
TOTAL	2,264	

In the six years since May 2015 when we started recording volunteer hours, FTNCG volunteers (including our Wardens) have delivered **more than 16,700 volunteer hours**.