

Minutes of 17th Friends of Nickey Line AGM (via Zoom) – 16th May 2023

<u>In Attendance (Committee)</u>	
Dave Abernethy Ian Caldwell	Apologies: Geoff Bunce
Roger Thornhill James Johnson	
Mike Platt Karen Summers	

27 Friends or non- member guests also attended.

1. Chairman's Report

James Johnson acted as chair and summarised the chairman's report (see attached) as Dave Abernethy had laryngitis.

2. Financial Report

The Treasurer, Mike Platt, summarised the Financial Report for the period from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 (see attached). Cash funds at our year end (31 March 2023) were £5458.39 c.f. £5033.16 last year. £750 had been donated by County Councillor Paul De Kort towards Line maintenance / resurfacing.

A motion to accept the Accounts was proposed, seconded and unanimously accepted.

A motion to re-appoint Mike Aldridge as FoNL's independent financial examiner was proposed, seconded and unanimously accepted.

3. New Constitution

A new constitution (see attached) was proposed, seconded and unanimously accepted.

4. Election of Committee Members

Annette Cotter resigned from the committee during last year but has generously offered to advise us on sourcing funding when required. The committee thanked her for her contributions during her tenure.

Two committee members, Dave Abernethy and Ian Caldwell, resigned in accordance to the constitution and a motion to re-elect them was proposed, seconded and unanimously accepted.

5. Events and Line Management Report

This report is item 4 of the Chairman's Report and was summarised by Committee Member Roger Thornhill. In the past year our volunteers contributed 590+ hours, a new record.

6. Discussion and Feedback

Following the reports and voting on motions, the Chairman invited comments and questions from the attendees.

- Alan Falconer raised the question of finance and said he felt the Nickey Line was a 'Cinderella ' Line in comparison with some other apparently better funded local wayfares – such as Cole Green Way, Albans Way which appeared to have received a higher priority for Herts County funding.
The Chairman acknowledged this may well be a fair point for St Albans DC which had a long rural part of the Line but also pointed out that a large proportion of Dacorum was now recently resurfaced with a new surface also laid near Roundwood Junction in Harpenden on a previously very muddy section.
- Alan Jackson raised the condition of the Ambrose Lane steps and asked if FONL committee had a view on its continued safe use. Chairman responded that he had been looking at the steps recently and acknowledged they had deteriorated but he had not concluded they need to be closed urgently. Positioned by the Ambrose Lane ramp, we have to ask how much it would be worth spending to keep the steps open when the ramp was readily available at no extra cost. He would contact members and Facebook group users to ask:
 - o Who used the steps and how frequently
 - o What problems if any did they have with the steps
 - o Why use / need them and not the ramp
 - o Why do / would they not use the ramp
- Alan Falconer asked about the disposal of waste from Line work parties.
Roger Thornhill said in some locations it was difficult as having a fire was not always appropriate. They tried to use the waste for example as dead hedges but he agreed it remains an issue.

7. AGM 2024

The 2024 AGM will be held in May. The Chairman asked for feedback on member's preferences on Zoom format or 'live' meeting for the next AGM.

8. Talk from Jim Cannon on the early history of the Nickey Line

Jim Cannon, co-author of 'The Nicky Line' published in 1977 gave a presentation with slides on the early history of the Line, followed by an informal discussion of questions raised by attendees.

- One topic was the spelling of the name "Nickey" or "Nicky". Jim said when he researched the history back in the seventies, all his sources used the name without the "e". Sue Woodward, co-author with husband Geoff of the later 1996 and 2006 books, was present and had an interesting and scholarly discussion with Jim in which she mentioned that their later research had found general use included the "e". No firm conclusion was reached and the topic appears to remain open for later researchers.

The chair thanked Jim for his talk, and the audience clearly endorsed this.

The chair thanked all members and guests for attending and supporting the AGM and presentation before closing the meeting.

Minutes taken by Dave Abernethy
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