

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 2020

(for the period 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020)

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 **Josh Downen** (Treasurer and Secretary)

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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 2019 - 31 March 2020.

Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustees by Shlomo Downen, Chair of the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group, on Friday 14th August 2020.

1. Introduction

Although this Report & Accounts covers a period largely untouched by the coronavirus it is being prepared during a time of great uncertainty, disruption and change. For example, instead of using our Annual General Meeting (AGM) as an opportunity to listen to a guest speaker and enjoy a social event, this year's AGM is being held on-line as a 'virtual' event. Covid-19 has touched everybody's lives, and the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG) is no exception.

This year's Report & Accounts will be 'thinner' than usual, so 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 five previous Report & Account documents, where we provide additional background to the Group's emergence as a land-owning registered charity. 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.

As of 8th August 2020 the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group comprised 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 5 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 was formally issued by Friday 28th August 2020 to all FTNCG Members and Trustees, for the 'virtual' AGM to be held on Wednesday 16th September 2020, 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.

Exceptionally, as part of a minuted Trustees meeting held online on Thursday 6th August 2020, Trustees made the decision, in the interests of the charity, to hold this year's virtual AGM about a week after the usual 15-month period since our previous AGM (held on Saturday 8th June 2019). Trustees also decided to allow memberships to 'roll over' for another year, whilst welcoming donations from Members and Supporters alike.

As usual, in line with our constitutional requirements, the notice set out the date, time and place of the meeting and the general nature of the business to be transacted at the AGM.

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, 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 uninterrupted for FTNCG's 50 Members.

FTNCG Trustees throughout 2019/20 were as follows:

Name	Office / Role	Date of Trustee Appointment
Shlomo Downen	Chair and Vice-Secretary	1 st February 2011
Josh Downen	Treasurer, Secretary and 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

Additionally, Barry Housely continued as a Spa Ponds Warden, Helen Johnson continued in her role as FTNCG's Rushpool Liaison, and Matt Beresford (of MBarcheology) continued as the Archaeological Adviser for the 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 2019 - 31st March 2020 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 meetings and work sessions, 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.
- Taking part in the Mansfield Local Plan Examination in Public and submitting information as part of planning consultations.
- Supporting volunteer training, including in relation to first aid, the Riverfly Recording (Monitoring) Scheme, and identifying the presence of water vole.
- Carrying out regular water quality testing and sharing results with WatersideCare, the County Biodiversity Officer, and the Environment Agency, as appropriate.
- 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.
- 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; Mansfield District Council; The Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (NottsBAG); Nottinghamshire Fungi Group; MBArchaeology; the Nottinghamshire Amphibian & Reptile Group (NARG); EMEC Ecology; the Woodland Trust; Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust; the Sherwood Catchment Partnership; the Rufford-Clipstone Landowners Group; and a variety of County Wildlife Recorders.

Throughout the period FTNCG Trustees met, both formally and informally.

4. Financial Review

Estimated basic running costs

Anticipated basic running costs for FTNCG during the next year (2020/21) amount to around £600, as follows:

£45 for Membership

- **£10** - The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) Community Network
- **£35** - Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT)

£112 for Insurance

- **£112** - Includes Public Liability (for up to £5m cover) and Personal Accident

£443 for Other General Running Costs

- **£338** - Sundry items for Spa Ponds (e.g. signs, tools, plants, seeds, etc.)
- **£ 75** - Education and training
- **£ 30** - Printing and postage

Reserves policy for 2020/21 as agreed at 6th August 2020 Trustees Meeting

Running Costs (Reserved £500; target £1,200): To cover anticipated (remaining) annual expenses that must be met (e.g. insurance, health & safety equipment, training), Trustees have set the reserve target at a level equivalent to 2 years' basic running costs at £600 per year.

Contingencies (Reserved £500; target £1,500): To cover unexpected expenses, in particular those associated with maintaining public safety at Spa Ponds.

Match-funding (Reserved £1,000; target £3,000): To position FTNCG to take advantage of match-funding opportunities in general, Trustees have set a target to ring-fence £3,000 in the event FTNCG attracts additional funding. This financial element would be used alongside volunteer hours to support the success of bids where appropriate. Some or all of the £1,000 currently held in reserve may be used to enable Site Improvement Works at Spa Ponds, including the proposed raising of the pipe and path between Ponds 1 and 2.

Spa Ponds Site Improvement Works (Reserved: £1000; target £3,000): FTNCG currently holds £500 from the Mansfield Building Society ring-fenced for hedge work with Ecologic (including training). Trustees would like more funds to pay professionals such as EMEC and Ecologic for support developing and implementing our Habitat 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.

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

INCOME FOR 2019/20

£500.00	Mansfield Building Society Grant
£460.00	Councillor Allowances (MDC & NCC)
£430.00	Donations from individuals, inc. membership
£417.50	Robin Hood Lottery
£111.25	HMRC Gift Aid
£33.00	Fundraising / Sales
£25.01	PayPal Giving
£18.49	Amazon Smile
£0.00	Bank interest
£1,995.25	TOTAL INCOME FOR 2019/20

How expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity

More than £950 of expenses were incurred in relation to the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group undertaking 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 2019/20

£500.00	Contracted Work on Spa Ponds
£190.72	Membership & Insurance
£172.73	Tools, seeds, plants, etc.
£60.00	Training, education and research
£30.02	Printing & postage
£953.47	TOTAL EXPENDITURE FOR 2019/20

Liabilities

FTNCG has no outstanding debts to carry over into 2020/21.

£500 of grant funding from the Mansfield Building Society has yet to be spent on its allocated purpose. This has been carried forward into the next accounting year as noted in the Balance Sheet and the Reserves Policy.

5. Annual Statement of Accounts (2019/18)

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

Accounts for 1 April 2018 - 31 March 2019

Opening balance (Total)

Cash £21.29

Bank £3,110.64 £3,131.93

Total income £935.80

Total expenditure (£1,953.96)

Closing balance (Total)

Cash £65.07

Bank £2,048.70 £2,113.77

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2020

£ £

Assets and Liabilities

FIXED ASSETS

Tangible assets

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

Cash at bank and in hand

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
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NET CURRENT ASSETS	3,205.95	
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Total net assets		3,205.95
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Represented by funds and assets*Unrestricted funds*

General Fund	2,655.55	
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Restricted Funds

Mansfield Building Society Project	500.00	
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Other assets

Tangible assets	50.40	
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Total funds		3,205.95
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BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2019

£ £

Assets and Liabilities

FIXED ASSETS

Tangible assets

Tools, Equipment, etc (Cost)	355.81	
FTNCG Mugs (£3.60 X 20)	72.00	
Tools, Equipment, etc (Depreciation)	(355.81)	
Total fixed assets		72.00

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash at bank and in hand

Current Account - Coop Bank	2,048.70	
Petty Cash	65.07	
Total cash at bank and in hand		2,113.77
Total current assets		2,115.77

LIABILITIES

<i>Creditors due within one year</i>		0.00
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NET CURRENT ASSETS	2,115.77	
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Total net assets		2,115.77
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Represented by funds and assets*Unrestricted funds*

General Fund	2,115.77	
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Other assets

Tangible assets	72.00	
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Total funds		2,115.77
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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.

6. Monthly Summary of Volunteer Hours

SUMMARY OF RECORDED VOLUNTEER HOURS (2019/20)

Month	Volunteer Hours	Activity attracting the most participants
April 2019	135	14 attended the litter picking and site survey
May	183	6 joined the bridleway maintenance with Andy Hollis
June	172	17 heard presentations about history and water quality at our AGM
July	140	4 undertook Riverfly training with Les Warren
August	144	12 took part in the Site Management walk around, including some balsam pulling, bridleway maintenance, and litter picking
September	90	9 joined the Spa Ponds Work Session, incl. bridleway maintenance, hand clearing around the roses, tidying up around the entrance to Pond 0, removing branches to prevent leaf fall into Pond 2
October	167	12 took part in one or both Spa Ponds Work Sessions focussing on Pond 4, incl. clearing debris, removing branches to prevent leaf fall, removing a tree trunk, and clearing footpath at bottom of Pond 4
November	201	15 took part in one or more of the 3 Spa Ponds Work Sessions, incl. clearing paths around and between Ponds 4 and 3, blocking run-off access points along Warren Farm boundary, removing tree trunks and debris from Ponds 2 and 3, clearing paths around and between Ponds 2 and 3, and Pond 3 outflow pipe, clearing frozen bracken
December	96	10 attended Spa Ponds Work Session, including de-silting Pond 1 and dead-hedging at the southeast corner of Pond 2
January 2020	203	21 took part in one or both Spa Ponds Work Sessions, incl. de-silting Ponds 1 and 2, shoring up bank at Pond 2, transplanting service tree, dead hedging parts of Ponds 1 and 2 (installing gate)
February	235	18 took part in one or both Spa Ponds Work Sessions, incl. de-silting Pond 1, transplanting baby holly, dead hedging along Pond 1, removing bramble from Pond 1 slope, closing gaps in hedge near Clipstone Drive entrance, felling (with Rob Martyr), shoring up Warren Farm boundary hedge
March	196	10 attended Spa Ponds Work Session, incl. low dead hedge along glade, raking and re-seeding damaged section of glade, tagging and removing young sycamore for use in dead hedge
TOTAL	1,962	

Over the period covered by this Report and Accounts (April 2019 - March 2020) our Spa Ponds wardens Barry and Alan have devoted more than 888 hours looking after the Spa Ponds site, including collecting more than 175 bags of rubbish. In the five years since May 2015 when we started recording volunteer hours, FTNCG volunteers (including our Wardens) have delivered **more than 14,200 volunteer hours**.