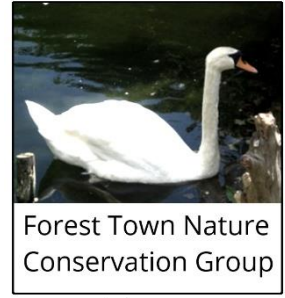


Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG)

Registered Charity Number: 1157957

Principal Address: c/o 25 The Birchlands,

Forest Town, Mansfield NG19 0ER



Forest Town Nature Conservation Group

Annual Report and Accounts 2023

(for the period 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023)

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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Contact

Website: <http://www.foresttown.net/>

Email: spa.ponds@gmail.com

Declaration

The Trustees of the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG) declare that they have approved this Trustees' Report and Accounts for the period 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023.

Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustees by Shlomo Downen, Chair of the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group, on 13th June 2023.

Note

As FTNCG comprises 60 members, under the terms of Section 8 of FTNCG's Constitution, in accordance with Section 12 of FTNCG's Constitution, the quorum for the Annual General Meeting (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 was issued by Friday 16th June 2023, i.e. at least 14 clear days before the AGM, to all FTNCG Members and Trustees for the AGM to be held at Kingsway Hall, Clipstone Road West, Forest Town, on Saturday 1st July 2023.

1. Introduction

The period covered by this Report & Accounts is record-breaking in many respects. For example, as you will see from the Accounts below, FTNCG attracted a record level of grant funding, accompanied by a record level of spending to improve Spa Ponds.

Thanks to the Severn Trent Community Fund we finally realised our dream of EMEC raising the pipe between Ponds 1 and 2 alongside raising the path (resolving the mud problem) and tending to the ponds. In fact, the Pipes, Paths, and Ponds (PPP) project is paying for improvements to all of the pipes, paths, and ponds at Spa Ponds!

M2M funding during this period enabled Andy Hollis to deliver valuable conservation skills training, including the safe use of tools such as billhooks. This helped us maintain and improve 400 meters of dead hedge which protects the emerging pollinator corridor.

The year also saw a record number of corporate volunteers help at Spa Ponds, including volunteers from the Co-op, Galliford Try, O2, Severn Trent Water, and Virgin Media. And to carry out this work we needed to use, what for us was, a record number of leaf rakes!

FTNCG also held our first indoor public meeting for several years. This event – which took place at Kingsway Hall – helped increase FTNCG membership to an all-time high of 60 members.

The PPP project provided Samantha with an opportunity to extend her project management skills as a contractor liaison and work session organiser. Some FTNCG volunteers are also developing new skills as part of the M2M funded invertebrate surveying work currently being carried out at Spa Ponds by EMEC's entomologist.

FTNCG is proud of our ever-improving website. The website provides a wide range of resources, from practical guidance to help people find their way to Spa Ponds, to water quality data and wildlife sightings records, collections of FTNCG documents and videos, and fascinating accounts of the history of Spa Ponds (once possibly known as 'Peel Water'). Credit for web design and maintenance (and much of the content) goes to Josh.

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 for the future please visit FTNCG's website at: <http://www.foresttown.net/> to access our eight previous Report & Accounts documents, where we provide additional background to the Group's emergence as a land-owning registered charity. We set out our positive vision for the future of the Spa Ponds site within our site management plan documents.

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 60 people. FTNCG Membership, which is free of charge (although we suggest donating £5 a year), confers no financial benefit.

FTNCG Trustees throughout 2022/23 were as follows:

Name	Office / Role	Appointment Date
Shlomo Downen	Chair and Vice-Secretary	1 st February 2011
Lorraine Downen	Vice Chair	1 st February 2011
Josh Downen	Treasurer, Secretary & Website Admin.	1 st February 2011
Mark Fretwell	Trustee and Tree Officer	5 th July 2017
Phil Goodall	Trustee and Water Catchment Liaison	5 th July 2017
Dennis Platts	Trustee, Photographic Records Officer	16 th September 2020
Samantha Nicholson	Trustee and Landowner Liaison	30 th March 2021
Alan Alberry	Trustee	2 nd July 2014

Helen Johnson continued as FTNCG's Rushpool Liaison, and Matt Beresford of MBarcheology continued as Archaeological Adviser.

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

- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust
- The Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (NottsBAG)
- WatersideCare / Keep Britain Tidy
- FreshWater Watch
- Sherwood Water Catchment Partnership
- The Rainworth-Clipstone Landowners Group

Current and completed projects:

Primary Funder	Status	Project
Severn Trent Community Fund	Active	Pipes, Paths, and Ponds
Miner2Major (M2M) (Sherwood Landscape Partnership Scheme supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund)	Completed	Supporting biodiversity at Spa Ponds Nature Reserve
	Active	Freshwater (Aquatic) & Terrestrial Invertebrate Surveys
LocalGiving - Magic Little Grants (Postcode Places Trust)	Completed	Supporting biodiversity at Spa Ponds Nature Reserve

3. Review of FTNCG Activities

Throughout the period 1st April 2022 - 31st March 2023 FTNCG Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. Over the year FTNCG undertook the following activities to further our charitable object:

- Holding work sessions and meetings, including our Annual General Meeting (AGM), 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, with a particular focus on Spa Ponds.
- Communicating with members and supporters, providing ongoing updates and promoting activities of potential interest via e-mail, our website and Facebook pages, and by posting printed copies of our Christmas and Easter newsletters.
- 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 taking part in a biodiversity opportunity mapping workshop, and making submissions as part of planning application consultation.
- Supporting volunteer training, including species identification and recording, hedgerow management, woodland management (dead hedging and crown raising), safe use of tools (e.g. billhook), invertebrate surveying, and first aid / Health & Safety.
- Recording wildlife sightings and sharing results. We record and encourage others to record sightings at Spa Ponds via the iRecord service.
- Testing water quality at all four ponds and the River Maun (quarterly), and making results public (via FTNCG's website and FreshWater Watch). FTNCG helped broker water quality training delivered by an Environment Agency Monitoring Officer.
- Contributing to the ongoing work of the Sherwood Water Catchment Partnership, and the Rainworth-Clipstone Landowners Group.
- 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 Safety Network; Forest Town Heritage Group; Nottinghamshire County Council (Public Rights of Way), and Via East Midlands; Forestry England; Environment Agency; Keep Britain Tidy; Mansfield District Council; Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (NottsBAG); the Nottinghamshire Amphibian & Reptile Group (NARG); Ecologic CIC; EMEC Ecology; the Woodland Trust; and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT).

Throughout the period FTNCG Trustees met, both formally and informally. Minutes of the formal meetings are available from FTNCG's Minutes Archive at: <https://www.foresttown.net/index.php/documents/>

4. Financial Review (including Reserves Policy)

Estimated basic running costs

Anticipated basic running costs for FTNCG during the next year (2023/24) amount to around **£650**, as follows:

£45 for Membership

- **£12** The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- **£33** - Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT)

£200 for Insurance

- **£200** - Includes Public Liability and Personal Accident

£405 for Other General Running Costs

- **£175** - Sundry items for Spa Ponds (e.g. PPE, signs, tools, plants, seeds, etc.)
- **£100** - Education and training (including First Aid Training)
- **£130** - Printing, postage, etc.

Reserves policy for 2023/24

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

10% Fund (Match Funding) (Reserved £0; target £3,000): Funds to be set aside for FTNCG's contribution of 10% towards a bid amounting to a total of around £30,000 for EMEC to carry out work on trees, hedgerows, and bridleway at Spa Ponds. The intention is to submit a bid in 2024, with the amount of funding requested dependent upon the amount of money we have raised by then.

Delivery of the Spa Ponds Site Management Plan (Reserved £500; target £30,000): 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.

Conservation Volunteer Skills Training (Reserved £0; target £1,200): For professional on-site training and supervision.

Contingencies (Reserved £500; target £1,200): To cover unexpected expenses, particularly those associated with maintaining public safety at Spa Ponds.

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

£51,027.25 - INCOME FOR 2022/23

£40,500.00	Severn Trent Community Fund (PPP Project)
£6,300.00	M2M Invert Surveys Grant
£1,000.00	M2M Training Grant
£1,000.00	Rural Payments Agency
£500.00	Local Giving
£500.00	MDC Councillor Donation - Cllr Mark Fretwell
£376.00	Robin Hood Lottery
£304.00	Donation from individuals
£300.00	NWT M2M Grant for Habitat Improvement
£150.97	Gift Aid
£57.10	Fundraising
£35.65	Amazon Smile / PayPal Just Giving
£3.53	Bank interest

The £40,500 from the Severn Trent Community Fund is 90% of the total £45,000 grant. The final £4,500 is due to be received in the 2023/24 accounting year. We similarly anticipate receiving a further £700 from M2M this year, once the invertebrate survey work has been completed.

We are assured of a donation of at least £400 by the end of 2023 from the Co-op as FTNCG is currently part of the Co-op's Local Community Fund.

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'.

£9,780.50 - EXPENDITURE FOR 2022/23

£18,306.59	PPP
£1,160.26	Training (M2M)
£183.10	AGM
£178.82	Membership and insurance
£102.89	Printing and postage
£75.00	Tools, seeds, PPE, etc.
£62.30	Training, education and volunteer expenses
£50.39	Website

Liabilities

FTNCG has no outstanding debts to carry over into 2023/24, but there are anticipated outstanding project expenses as set out elsewhere.

5. Annual Statement of Accounts (2022/23)

Accounts for 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023

Opening balance (Total)			
	Cash	£78.00	
	Bank	£4,366.91	£4,444.91
Total income			£51,027.25
Total expenditure			(£20,119.35)
Closing balance (Total)			
	Cash	£68.20	
	Bank	£35,284.61	£35,352.81

Accounts for 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022

Opening balance (Total)			
	Cash	£129.00	
	Bank	£2,657.61	£2,786.61
Total income			£11,438.80
Total expenditure			(£9,780.50)
Closing balance (Total)			
	Cash	£78.00	
	Bank	£4,366.91	£4,444.91

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.
- (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.
- (5) The planning permission granted for the housing development on Land South of Clipstone Road East is attached to a Section 106 Agreement that requires the developer to provide a £25,000 (Index Linked) contribution towards enhancing Spa Ponds "prior to Completion of any more than 33% of the Residential units" (which equates to 103 completed new homes). This threshold has yet to be met.

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2023

£ £

Assets and Liabilities

FIXED ASSETS

Tangible assets

Seeds retained for use in 2022/23 (Est. Value)	1,000.00	
Tools, Equipment, etc (Cost)	545.41	
FTNCG Mugs	50.40	
<i>(Seeds used during 2022/23, Est. Value)</i>	<i>(800.00)</i>	
<i>(Tools/Equipment/etc Depreciation)</i>	<i>(545.41)</i>	
<i>(Mugs used for fundraising, etc.)</i>	<i>(50.40)</i>	
Total fixed assets (remaining seeds)		200.00

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash at bank and in hand

Current Account - Coop Bank	35,284.61	
Petty Cash	68.20	
Total cash at bank and in hand	35,352.81	
Debtors (grant funding owed to FTNCG)	5,200	
Total current assets		40,552.81

LIABILITIES

<i>Creditors due within one year</i>	(0.00)	
<i>Project funding committed but not yet spent</i>	(38,693.41)	

NET CURRENT ASSETS 1,859.40

Total net assets (inc. cash and seeds) 2,059.40Represented by funds and assets*Unrestricted funds*

General Fund 1,659.40

Restricted Funds

To spend on current projects 33,493.41

Other assets

Tangible assets 200.00

Debtors (grant funding owed to FTNCG) 5,200.00

Total funds 40,552.81**BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2022**

£ £

Assets and Liabilities

FIXED ASSETS

Tangible assets

Tools, Equipment, etc (Cost)	2,050.99	
Seeds retained for use in 2022/23 (Est. Value)	1,000.00	
FTNCG Mugs (£3.60 X 14)	50.40	
<i>(Tools/Equipment/etc Depreciation)</i>	<i>(2,050.99)</i>	
Total fixed assets (remaining seeds and mugs)		1,050.40

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash at bank and in hand

Current Account - Coop Bank	4,366.91	
Petty Cash	78.00	
Total cash at bank and in hand	4,444.91	
Debtors (i.e. outstanding grant / RPA payments)	1,300.00	
Total current assets		5,744.91

LIABILITIES

Creditors due within one year (0.00)

NET CURRENT ASSETS 5,744.91

Total net assets (inc. cash, seeds and mugs) 6,795.31Represented by funds and assets*Unrestricted funds*

General Fund 4,444.91

*Restricted Funds**Other assets*

Tangible assets 1,050.40

Debtors 1,300.00

Total funds 6,795.31

6. Monthly Summary of Volunteer Hours

SUMMARY OF RECORDED VOLUNTEER HOURS (2022/23)

Month	Hours	Example of activities carried out
April 2022	78	In addition to the volunteer hours devoted to keeping up with the litter picking, many of April's volunteer hours were 'administrative', including planning and applying for funding to support FTNCG's programme of activities, and attending a balsam management meeting.
May	499	Volunteers undertook familiar tasks at Spa Ponds, including weeding, raking, seeding, and watering wildflower areas, litter picking, removing sediment from the stream between Ponds 1 and 2, pulling balsam, and maintaining the bridleway. Trustees met twice in May.
June	329	More than two dozen members and supporters gathered for FTNCG's AGM / Reunion at Kingsway Hall. June also saw much balsam pulling, and the submission of funding bids.
July	235	Yet more litter picking and balsam pulling (in conjunction with Chris Jackson), especially around Pond Hill (on east of Spa Ponds) and the Forestry England managed land bordering Spa Ponds. Also hedgerow management training session with Andy Hollis, and a bat and moth count!
August	63	More balsam pulling with Chris and Sherwood Water Catchment partners. Helen and Ron carried out litter picking, and butterfly and grasshopper spotting at Rushpool Open Space.
September	96	Project management discussions (including with EMEC) to prepare for the Pipes, Paths, and Ponds (PPP) project. Work and training session with Andy Hollis. Water quality testing.
October	172	Work sessions, including health & safety (tool) training with Andy Hollis, installing bird and bat boxes, and clearing nettle and bramble from areas seeded with grasses and wildflowers.
November	127	Public announcement and formal start of the PPP project. Work sessions including hedgerow management, installing new dead hedges inc. billhook training with Andy Hollis.
December	238	FTNCG and Catchment partners were treated to water quality training with the Environment Agency's Ian Johnson. Lots more dead hedging sessions led by Andy and by Samantha. Shlomo contributed to NottsBAG Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping event for Mansfield.
January 2023	220	Designing and printing signage to use with renovated frames to be installed by EMEC. Three Spa Ponds Work Sessions progressing dead hedges, pruning holly around the Chestnut Wood (to let in more light), raking leaves, and planting hawthorn into hedgerow gaps.
February	234	Two more Work Sessions extending dead hedges and raking leaves.
March	349	Three further work sessions, attracting several dozen corporate volunteers helping FTNCG volunteers extend the dead hedges and clear leaves and holly from the Chestnut Wood ready for sowing seed. March also saw a major focus on redesigning FTNCG's website, and Josh and Dennis revisiting some 'then and now' photographs of Spa Ponds.
TOTAL 2,640		

In the seven years since May 2015 when we started recording volunteer hours, FTNCG volunteers (including our Wardens) have delivered **more than 22,400 volunteer hours**.