

Newsletter July 2021

FRIENDS OF BRIDE'S MOUND



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Dear Friends,

We hope this newsletter finds you well: we all send warm wishes from Glastonbury, and we hope you enjoy this latest news from Bride's Mound.

Report on the AGM

Once again our AGM was unable to be public but at least this time we were able for the committee to meet in the garden of Becketts pub, rather than just Miranda and myself as happened last year! So we are giving you the jist of the AGM reports in order to keep you informed of what has been a very quiet year.

With best wishes, Serena

Miranda's chair report

“As you can imagine it has been a quiet year but we have maintained a presence on the land which, along with the extra gate, has helped to prevent squatters and happily have retained our grazier for a further year. This income, along with Friendship payments, has enabled us to pay another lump sum off the loan; taking advantage of low interest rates, which means it is reducing rapidly. We are particularly grateful to our Friends for their payments over this financially uncertain year.

Thank you to Serena for being secretary. Thank you to Zeyla for her excellent work as treasurer and for getting Gitti as our accountant. Thank you to Joanne for her help as membership secretary and fundraiser and Lynda for her excellent bookkeeping skills and regularly going down to the land putting leaflets in the boxes and keeping a check on what is happening down there.”

Joanne's Membership report

The Friends of Bride's Mound members are invited to renew their membership each year at Imbolc in the newsletter, beginning February, and are then gently reminded in the second



newsletter later in the year. In practice members renew, or join for the first time, throughout the year.

The 2020 Friends:

Members who paid by cash, cheque or PayPal plus one additional member requested to be added at 2021 AGM:	19 friends
Annually or monthly paying members:	10 friends
'Life memberships' taken from Jaine Raine's original membership records	4 friends
Plus additional life members requested to be added at 2021 AGM.	3 friends
Committee members	7 friends
Total	43 friends

Zeyla's treasurer's report

During the year to 31 October 2020, we continued to be supported by subscriptions and donations from our Friends, amounting to £2,116.

The farm subsidy provided £2,289 and grazing fees gave us £1,232. Together with some fundraising, (but not Glastonbury Festival), we raised a total of £5,719.

Essential costs of maintaining the land, including tree and hedge lopping and planting, plus a new gate; as well as administration expenses and mortgage interest, came to £2,691.

The profit of £3,028 we paid into the mortgage account, which, at the year end stood at £16,020.

We retained just over £6,000 in current account for running costs and for funding future projects.

Miranda's Land Management Report

“Lynda and Miranda have both kept a strong presence on the land which has helped to stop people from squatting on the land, particularly as this is such a problem in the orchard section of Brides Mound during the pandemic whilst Somerset County council have not been permitted to get a court order to move them on. The land in the orchard is badly damaged, but fortunately they have been respectful of the chapel site itself.

The farmer has renewed his tenancy as he appreciates the degree of care and protection we are giving to the land and is confident that we deal with his requests immediately. Jj is doing regular monthly maintenance and some wild roses have been planted which will hopefully thrive and look beautiful in the future. “

Election of committee

We also elected the committee which stays the same as last year with Miranda as chair and land manager, Serena as secretary, Zeyla as Treasurer, Joanne as Membership secretary, Lynda as bookkeeper, and we welcomed Alison in as Project Manager and fundraiser looking after the various book and CD we have for sale.

The Imbolc walk had to be cancelled as a public event but Serena went to The White Spring at 1.00 where she had a wonderful serendipitous meeting with Lydia who had arrived to drum there, just as the Spring was being opened and lit with candles. Then walking alone, with others joining her in spirit, she walked the usual route encountering various special people en route in a truly Pilgrims Progress fashion. Arriving at Brides Mound, Miranda had lit a fire and we formed a socially distanced circle of 9 people for a really very beautiful ceremony. Lydia then arrived with her drum and drummed to the four quarters – a blessing on the land.

At present there are a large number of van dwellers living in the Orchard on Brides Mound chapel field and after the ceremony Serena went and met with some of them asking them to please respect the land. Sadly, since lock down has ended and Somerset County Council have started moving people on from the various roads where they have been parked, they have all be going to the orchard which is now in a desperately overcrowded state with the detrimental effect on the land. We can only pray that a traveller site is made available for everyone so that we can reclaim the orchard for visitors, pilgrims and those who wish to have a beautiful magical experience at this very special pace.

Meanwhile the Town Deal Fund is going ahead and we have been accepted to build the visitor centre on the former Morland's car park in front of the chapel field. This entails lots of bureaucracy and we are working with Somerset Wildlife Trust and South West Heritage Trust to fill out all the forms and spreadsheets that are required. Hopefully Jamie Vincent will agree to sell us the land, as the District Valuer has priced it at the sum we had offered him and which he had not accepted. Maybe now he will. We'll keep you posted. Thank you for your continuing support. We really need it right now. *(end of AGM notes)*

Land Manager's Report:

I would like to comment here that although there are people, I'm sure, who have found the encampment on the Chapel field an eyesore and perhaps intimidating; the people there have maintained great respect for Friend's of Bride's Mound's land and for the significance of the Mound on the Chapel field.. They have always been cooperative and helpful if we have had issues.

As the chapel field is still owned by the County Council, our relationship continues be to maintain good communications with the Council in order to ensure that land management issues are addressed and that the significance of the whole area and the Chapel site is not forgotten.

Since our last Newsletter I have met with our Grazier several times to ensure he has smooth access to the land and he has continued his contract with us for another year. We have discussed sowing some grass seed at the bottom of the pond field.

Serena and I recently walked the land with Simon Clarke and Jolyon Chesworth of the Wildlife Trust. We are particularly interested in how we can run the land in the future with more of a wildlife conservation perspective; when we own the land outright and are no longer as dependant on income from farming. Your “Friendships” have contributed so much towards that and we are so grateful for that. Especially in these uncertain times.

Our land is most suited to traditional, non-improved, hay meadow (very rare in this country now but particularly significant to wildlife); and areas of wetland. They suggested that we have a look at the model that Friends of Longrun Meadow use (Taunton Dean) and meet up with Helen Lawy there.

The land continues to get on with looking beautiful all by itself; but each year we do a little something to enhance it. So in future years I hope there will be an abundance of Iris and Meadowsweet; pink and white Dog Roses and some mature and beautiful trees.

Miranda (Land Manager and Chair Person)

Friendships

If you haven't already done so this year, we warmly invite you to renew your membership of Friends of Bride's Mound now (if you don't already pay your contribution with a standing order).

To renew your membership via Paypal, or to download a membership form to renew by post, please visit our website here: <https://www.friendsofbridesmound.com/friends.html>

If you set up a new standing order can you please e-mail us (friendsofbridesnew@yahoo.co.uk) so that we know your details and can send you newsletters.

St. Brigid's Blessing

May Brigid bless the house wherein you dwell
 Bless every fireside, every wall and door
 Bless every heart that beats beneath its roof
 Bless every hand that toils to bring it joy
 Bless every foot that walks its portals through
 May Brigid bless the house that shelters you.

