

FoHW Annual General Meeting 2026

Venue: Methodist Hall, Allhallowgate

Date: 15th January 2026

Time: 7.30 pm

Chair: Katie

Item 1

Attendees: 21

Apologies: 5

Item 2

Katie offered thanks to Jem for his long-standing work in support of FOHW in his role as Secretary from which he stood down this year and offered thanks to Sylvia for taking on the role of Secretary.

Item 3

No other items of AOB were noted

Item 4

Resignation and Election of Trustees

Katie stood down permanently as Trustee and Carol offered thanks for her contribution as Chair of FoHW and for hosting the Trustee meetings. Carol also stood down, following procedure, and was proposed by Jane, seconded by Becky, for re-election, which was unanimously approved by members. There were no other nominations, so there exists one outstanding vacancy.

Item 5

Annual Report

Carol produced the Annual Report which has been circulated to members and will be available on the FoHW and Charity Commission websites.

Carol gave a brief summary of the activities detailed in the Report giving special mention to the contributions from Gabby and the Skell Valley Project (SVP) Volunteers.

SVP

Gabby outlined some of the activities undertaken by SVP including fencing of enclosures, grass cutting, raking, baling, balsam control and scrub management. She mentioned that the SVP volunteers were very positive about working at Hell Wath and that although the SVP had come to an

end the volunteers would continue to be available for work on site as NT volunteers with Gabby in her role as NT Ranger.

Sylvia commended the signage erected on site and mentioned how it had made a positive impact on visitors' perceptions of the site.

Plantlife

Carol outlined the Plantlife GCC (Growing Community Connections) Project which came to an end this autumn and which had an impact on grassland management at Hell Wath. Other sites involved in the project were visited and, outside the project, a members' day out was arranged to one of the participating sites, Foxglove Covert. The Plantlife co-ordinators have compiled a Final Report on the project which will be uploaded to the FoHW website.

Balsam

Carol mentioned that a new focussed strategy for balsam control seems to have made some impact on eliminating balsam from selected areas on site. It is intended to continue this strategy in forthcoming years, alongside the experiment with biological control through the rust fungus.

Quarry

Carol described the work undertaken so far with the quarry clearance which continued throughout the autumn and winter months. There is scope for a couple more work sessions this winter to open up the west side of the quarry floor which is where the standing water collects during winter months.

Woodland Management

The work done by consultants on developing a Woodland Management Plan was outlined, together with the lack of response from NYC. This lack of response will restrict what is able to be done in the near future.

In response to a member's question, it was explained that while FoHW did not require NYC permission for every conservation task undertaken on site if those tasks fell under the umbrella of activities already agreed upon, such as grassland management, scrub management, planting, path maintenance and so on, FoHW has not as yet been successful in getting permission to remove any of the larger sycamore trees which have been identified as being detrimental to the ecology of the site.

Other Activities

Carol concluded her comments by briefly referring to the other activities that were detailed in the Annual Report.

Item 6

Financial Statement

Carol, as treasurer, presented the financial statement from the period 1st April 2024 until 31st March 2025. Details were circulated to members.

In summary:

Opening balance:	£2235.60.
Income:	£3017.00
Expenditure:	£2218.39
Closing balance:	£3034.21

Paul proposed (seconded by Jane) that this statement be submitted to the Charity Commission, which motion was approved by members.

Then Carol gave members an update of the accounts to 31st December 2025.

Membership Fees

Membership fees of £5 are due by the end of January, reminders having been sent out to members by email.

Item 7

Management Plan

This is being drafted by Carol for completion at the end of January for discussion by Trustees. It will then be circulated to members for comment, finalized and put forward for adoption.

Katie, as Chair, offered thanks to Carol for the time that she has committed in undertaking this work which greatly benefits through the expertise she is able to bring to it.

Item 8

A Talk about Bats

John gave members a talk about bats on Hell Wath. Because they need a thriving insect population to survive, the presence or absence of bats gives a good indication of the ecological health of a site. Before John's involvement there was little or no data on bats in Hell Wath and because they are legally protected a licence is needed to work with them so John's engagement with the North Yorkshire Bat Group enabled him to survey bats on site through transect surveys, data-collecting equipment (Batlogger detectors) and habitat installation (bat boxes).

Seven (possibly eight) species of bats have been recorded on site and John gave members fascinating information about the ecology of these species: their habitat preferences, times of emergence, their feeding habits, their presence or absence on different parts of Hell Wath, their behaviour and an array of other nuggets of information which, enhanced by photographs and video clips taken on site, greatly educated and entertained all who were present.

Item 9

There being no AOB the meeting closed at 8.40 pm, the next AGM meeting being scheduled for 14th January 2027.