

## **Chairperson Annual Report FORH 2016**

### **Jayne Wilkinson – Chair**

It has been a fantastic year for our organisation with regards to our successful attempts to secure funding bids and grant awards.

We were successful in our bid from the National Lottery's 'Awards for All' and this has provided funding which has enabled us to purchase tools, and organise 12 months-worth of training opportunities, free events and general conservation projects, including engaging with local schools through our Partnership organisation The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country.

'Big Local' funding has provided money for us to design and print 5000 leaflets which have been distributed by committee members to households throughout the Grace Mary and Lion Farm area.

Supported by our group through the Local Access Forum, way markers directing visitors along the public rights of way across Portway Hill have now been installed by the local authority, and a successful appeal by FORH for a temporary halt to the grass-cutting programme on the hillside above Bury Hill Park to allow the population of locally-scarce Harebells' to flower and set seed, gave group our volunteers an opportunity to collect seed from the plants which have now be sown on other sites across the Rowley Hills.

The Friends of Rowley Hills has seen the membership increase considerably in the last 12 months and interest shown in us on social media has been notable.

We have an excellent website, ably managed by one of our committee, through which we convey our News and Events as well as post many topics of local interest.

There has been mixed attendances at our outdoor and indoor events with those carried out in the summer proving to be more popular than those held in the winter months. However, there is a clear indication that many of the local community are interested in the wildlife and conservation of the Rowley Hills as a whole.

We've successfully formed partnerships with Sandwell libraries utilising both the Blackheath library and Oakham library as event venues , we are very grateful to their support to our organisation .

We also successfully formed partnerships with Bumble hole visitors centre supported by their volunteers so are grateful to them for their support to our organisation .

Over the next 12 months, supported by our Partnership organisation 'The Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust' many more events have been arranged.

I'd especially like to thank the management Committee for their support, a committed group of volunteers that give up their time to ensure that our organisation remains sustainable and enables our membership can grow.

Information regards funding will be delivered separate in the financial report.

Thank you to all our members and Volunteers for your support .