

**Fairfield Association**  
**FAUNA and Orchard sub-Group (FOG):**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on**  
**Thursday 3rd November 2011, 7.30 pm**  
**at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**

**Present:** Graham Brandwood, Andrew Brennand (part), Dave Brookes, Glenys Ferguson (mins), Tony Finn, Helen Hicks, Sue Nieduszynska, Ian Procter, Rebecca Procter, Mick Short (chair), Chris Workman

1. **Apologies:** Oliver Fulton, Hilary Short
2. **Minutes of last meeting:** Approved
3. **Matters arising:**
  - **MP Meeting:** The meeting with Eric Ollerenshaw raised his awareness of the plans and activities of FOG and the FA. He made two points of specific note in relation to the Aldcliffe Fields:
    - consider using part as a green burial site to generate revenue in the long term
    - that 'local' in terms of the Localism Bill is likely to be defined on the basis of electoral ward (i.e. Castle)
  - **Forest Schools Session 25 Oct:** Graham and Angie were thanked and complimented on a highly successful session. The feedback from some 30 children (and parents) was very positive. In the light of the growing popularity of this addition to events in the Orchard, Graham will review the number of activities offered, and the number of helpers required. A limit on the number of participants or a pre-booking system may need to be introduced.
  - **Arthur Davies:** Arthur was delighted to be presented with the wooden pear and card by Mick.
  - **Website Updating:** Carried over.
4. **Current developments:** Robin Loxam had to be alerted to the fact that the cows had been showing an unhealthy interest in the ragwort and hay piles after the ramp contractors had moved the electric fence. It was also noted that some cows have been sold.
5. **Grants and fund raising: Aldcliffe fields**

Still no reply.
6. **FAUNA**
  - **Ragwort and hay disposal:** The ragwort piles are no more. The hay still needs to be removed. Options are to ask Hanafins to dispose of it (see below), use it to mulch the hedges or hire a grab wagon (feasible with the new ramp). Dave to pursue. It was suggested that money from the HLS grant could be used to pay for spraying ragwort next season.
  - **External contracts**
    - **Ramp:** Contract finished, on budget.

- **Ponds and sluices:** Ponds and scrapes dug and three sluices installed ahead of schedule thanks to the contribution of Richard Storton (RSPB). Dave is in discussions over the invoice. Richard has been adjusting the sluices to establish the desirable water level.
- **Footpaths and fencing:** Hanafins have started on site. The line of the footpath leaving the ramp has drifted away from the plan by up to 15 yards. This has infringed the grazing agreement with Robin Loxam. The new line reduces the requirement for boardwalk and gives a better gradient for wheel- and pushchairs. A compromise has been agreed with Robin. The new line remains and extra hedge and fencing is to be installed to maintain Robin's privacy. These changes are likely to be cost neutral. Oliver is requested to get the changes formally recorded, either as an amendment to the legal agreement or through a letter.
- **Information and notice boards:** Georgina Peacock has been approached to draw a map. Hilary has consulted Graeme Skelcher's early FAUNA Management Plan to identify appropriate wildlife to illustrate the other side of the information board. She will present these ideas to the Working Party soon.
- **Dogs & Cyclists Signs:** It was agreed that such signs need to be in place as soon as FAUNA opens. Dogs on leads are to be permitted on the footpaths, but are not allowed to go into the fields. Oliver was charged with deciding on wording, format and sourcing.
- **Hedges:** Dave, Mick and Oliver are meeting Hanafins, Georgina Peacock, Richard Storton and Tarja Wilson on site on 8 November to discuss the options for dealing with the existing FAUNA hedges (laying may not be feasible in places). At the same site visit the group have been asked to:
  - discuss the best timing for tackling the hedging in the Orchard (see item 7)
  - consider whether the hay can be used to mulch hedges
  - review the operation of the sluices and the level of the water
  - inspect the wooden gate (item 12)

(There was a reminder that explanatory notices should be hung whenever there is major work taking place in either FAUNA or the Orchard – such as hedge laying or removing trees – that might lead to questions from the general public.)

- **Campfires:** These are usually an integral element of Forest Schools events (item 3) outside Fairfield, but are not permitted in the Orchard (except for Wassailing). It was agreed that there was no such restriction in the Paddock, using a fire pan.
- **Launch events:** Sue and Oliver are to consider arrangements for the two events, and would welcome suggestions relating to dates, content, guests, and an appropriate celebrity to open FAUNA. Mick has a particular celebrity in mind, and will make an approach.
- **Community Spaces 'sustainability grant':** Oliver's Working Party has produced a detailed and comprehensive list of items, that would spend up to the limit of the available grant. These cover five broad areas:
  - tools and equipment

- training costs
- equipment for educational visits and preparation of resource materials for schools
- specialist support for the initial visit by a school
- production of visitor leaflets

These ideas are considered to be on the right lines by our Community Spaces adviser, and the Working Party will continue to work them into a submission. Tony pointed out that the educational elements were difficult to cost accurately as they were dependent on such factors as the number of schools wishing to be involved. The meeting agreed that a fire pan should be added to the educational equipment.

## 7. Orchard

- **Towneley Close footpath:** The path is finished. Andrew spoke to Dave Goode at Lancashire County Council about concerns over the camber and compacting. It has been inspected and LCC considers it is satisfactory. The cyclist sign has yet to appear (Andrew to pursue). An extra waste bin has been installed. The City Council has promised that in future it will empty all the bins in the Orchard.
- **Wassailing:** From 3pm on 14th January. Graham has offered to take charge of the bonfire. It was suggested that this might be re-located to a path, where it could usefully burn off the grass. Overall organisation is in the hands of Andrew, and the item will be discussed further at the FA meeting.
- **Hedges:** Laying the Orchard hedge (alongside the public footpath) would be a major effort for volunteers, so it has been suggested that Hanafins could do this whilst they are on site. Richard Storton has advised against treating this hedge at the same time as the FAUNA one on the opposite side of the footpath. However, it may be possible to make a start this year. The matter is to be discussed at the site meeting on 8 November (see item 6 hedges). Funding (e.g. through HLS) also needs to be explored.

## 8. Volunteer Activities

- **Report for October:** Ian reported on a productive session in the Orchard on October 8th, involving over 12 volunteers. Long nettles and grass were strimmed, earth from the footpath construction was moved, apple trees pruned, unwanted saplings removed and a tree stump re-set. In addition, the ragwort pile in the pigsty was removed.
- **Tasks for November:** The session planned for 12 November is expected to include some 30 university students from Green Lancaster. Ian and Mick are co-ordinating. Students are to be split into two groups under the supervision of regular volunteers. Group 1 will focus on clearing leaves and mud, and defining path edges in preparation for blow-torching later. Group 2 will be involved in general tidying, including wood and branches which will be put into storage for Wassailing or stacked for insects. Regular volunteers will clear bird boxes, attach labels to deciduous trees, continue strimming and remove more unwanted saplings. Ian and Mick have reviewed the availability of tools, and consider there should be enough as long as regular volunteers bring their own basic equipment where possible. At the start of the session, health and safety instruction relating to the specific tools that they will be using is to be given to each group of students by their attached supervisor.

- **Parental Consent:** The form drafted by Ian was circulated. Its use was piloted in October. This revealed problems with compliance. Ian is to write a policy for young volunteers and disseminate it on the FA website along with the parental consent form. The form is also to be sent to the Coordinator of the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme at LGGs.

## 9. Edenbreck Cottage

- **Planning Application:** The current application has been rejected and another is being worked on. Fraser Granell-Watson has requested a meeting with Mick, Oliver and Andrew to discuss boundaries.
- **Tool Shed:** The design is still under debate. It needs to be secure and comply with the restrictions imposed by its location within a conservation area. So a stone structure is required, but the jury is still out on whether a stone-clad shipping container is the best option. Michael Sheppard has agreed to investigate whether someone would be willing to donate a container (Andrew is to ask Michael about his progress.) Hilary will be requested to explore grants. It was suggested that stones lying in the Orchard and in FAUNA could be used for cladding. Robin Loxam and LGGs are to be approached to explore the possibility of using stone from the broken down wall. Mick is to pursue this and also try to identify people with the requisite skills to build the shed.

## 10. Education Working Party

Teachers' visits are on hold until the contractors have finished work.

## 11. External Events

- **Wonderful Woodlands 8 Oct:** Mick gave a short presentation as part of this event held in Williamson Park. Not helped by the weather, the turnout was disappointing.
- **Leaf Clearing at Storey Institute:** Scheduled for 10am Sat 26 November (to 1pm). Ian is to contact Jonathan Tansley to send out a reminder to the Volunteer list, and ask that they bring their own tools. FOG's builders bags and other tools are also to be taken. Tony has offered to provide refreshments.

## 12. AOB

- **Volunteer morning 12 November:** Tony is unable to provide refreshments, Mick has agreed to take over.
- **Fauna field gate:** Graham reported that the middle field gate has a broken slat. Its inspection is another action for 8 Nov.

## Next meetings :

7.30 pm, Wednesday 7 December 2011 at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close

7.30 pm, Thursday 5 January 2012 at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close