

**Fairfield Association
Fairfield Orchard Sub-Group**

**Minutes of the 2nd meeting
Monday 6 October 2008, 7.30 pm
at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**

Present: Jon Barry, Andrew Brennand, Margaret Burtonwood, Tony Finn, Oliver Fulton (sec), Helen Hicks, Simon Gershon, Mick Short (chair)

Apologies: Rebecca Procter

Minutes: approved

Matters arising:

- ? Oliver has contacted Andrew Jotischky and Marion McClintock about the Orchard Trust's files. He has now received all of the paper files and most of the electronic files (the last were in hand), with the exception of the bank statements which Marion is retaining until the Trust's bank accounts are finally closed and financial returns completed.
- ? Oliver reported that the papers included parts of previous Green Pennant applications (the process is completed on-line). Andrew has told him that the deadline is usually early in the year. **Oliver** to check and report to **next meeting**.
- ? **Mick** has discussed the sub-group's proposals for financial planning with Michael and Jude as Chair and Secretary of the FA and will make a formal proposal to the **next FA meeting**.
- ? **Simon** agreed to prepare the financial forecast for the **next meeting** of the sub-group and circulate it in advance.
- ? Mick asked about servicing the mower. Simon said that he had agreed with the Allotments Association, who use the mower, that they will pay for (and organise?) servicing.
- ? Breathing Places: Hilary has spoken to the person in charge of approving our revised application and sent them the Charity Commission letters approving the merger and revised constitution for the FA. They said their decision should be forthcoming within a week or so.
- ? Tent in the Orchard: the camper has been visited by the police and PCSO, who have obtained identification and followed this up. Helen reported an unpleasant conversation when she complained about his lighting a fire. Simon reported that he had reason to believe the camper had left, abandoning his possessions. Jon agreed to take the matter to the next PACT meeting (7 September) for advice. It was agreed that unless advised otherwise the volunteers would remove the tent and other remnants on Saturday 11th.
- ? Simon and Oliver had both spoken to Carol Martin, who is enthusiastic about coming to the November subgroup meeting if possible. If she is unable to come herself, her husband will come. **Oliver** to contact her with the date.
- ? Mick wrote to Jude, as agreed, to ask for the FA to cover the up-front costs of Apple Day. This was approved but Simon has not yet completed the accounts or put in a claim.

Orchard Volunteers

- ? Mick and Oliver had spoken to LRGS and LGGS, who would need a regular weekly slot if they were to send Duke of Edinburgh scheme volunteers. Agreed that this is not feasible.
- ? Simon mentioned '50 Forward', which has contacted him. **Tony** volunteered to find out more about this and report to **next meeting**.
- ? It was agreed that unless or until we come up with substantial projects which could be handed over to an external group (e.g. the various University volunteering groups, corporate days out, etc.) we should

concentrate on increasing our regular volunteer numbers. **Andrew** suggested advertising more widely, e.g. in the Public Library and **volunteered to draft a poster** [on the lines of ‘want a Saturday morning workout?’] and bring it to the **next meeting**.

- ? Simon confirmed that Ruth regularly sends him names/contact details of all new/renewing members who express interest in volunteering, and they are included on his volunteer email list.
- ? Timing: **Simon** agreed to **email the volunteers** and (a) find out if a significant number would prefer an alternative time (Sunday mornings??) (b) ask if they would be willing to be contacted independently for help with work which needs doing between the timetabled work parties.
- ? Health and Safety: (a) **Mick** agreed to **complete our H&S policy statement** for the **next meeting** to approve [may also need to be formally approved by FA meeting?]; (b) Andrew and Oliver volunteered to do first aid training – **Oliver** to check on options/costs and report to **next meeting**; (c) Mick reported that Hilary is in discussion with Zurich about our insurance cover (they had been the Trust’s insurers as well as the FA’s): they have assured us that Orchard activities are covered as before, but on a temporary basis – they have not yet issued a new policy.

Management Plan

- ? Mick suggested adding aesthetic criteria to the guiding principles. This was agreed.
- ? An implication would be that the dogwood should not simply be pruned right back in order to control it, but that we should take into account the attractive appearance of the dogwood ‘tunnel’.
- ? Noted also that the pond/wet area is in competition with some of the dogwood and possibly a quince. Choices will have to be made.
- ? Agreed that brush piles could be used as deterrents to future campers.
- ? Noted that grass piles may have to be resited away from Carol Martin’s garden.
- ? Agreed that **Oliver and Simon** will redraft the management plan for the **next meeting**, following further discussion at the next volunteer day. They will draw on Graham Skelcher’s Breathing Places-funded report and go back to him for more detailed recommendations if required (on a no-further-fee basis).

Work planning

The following list was agreed, weather permitting:

- ? Mow millennium circle
- ? Prune overhanging branches and broken fruit tree branches
- ? Burn off paths
- ? Remove tent etc
- ? Move brush to wooded area around tent site
- ? Discuss pond, dogwood etc for future action

Apple Day review

It was agreed that the Orchard half of the day had been a success, especially considering the appalling weather. An impressive number of people had turned out to help, baked cakes or simply come to the event. Simon was thanked for all his organisational efforts and asked to pass on thanks to all those who helped. **Simon** will prepare **accounts** for the **next meeting** but first indications are that the food was largely sold without financial loss, whereas there is a lot of – non-perishable – cider and apple juice left over. The amount of cider sold did not cover the cost of the alcohol licence. People were not clear about how the morning events in town had gone and questioned the value to the FA of being involved in this in future.

Implications for future years: (a) no cider (and review plans for alcohol at Wassailing) (b) consider simpler food (soup??) instead of ploughman’s lunches (c) consider an earlier date when there are still apples in the Orchard (d) restrict our involvement to the Orchard site. **Simon** was asked to **contact Chris Coates and Jill**

Wesolowski to say that in future (a) we won't be able to contribute to the day in Market Square (b) we would like to be involved in planning the whole day in good time.

Wassailing (fixed for **January 17, 2009**)

Andrew will set up a small planning group shortly and bring proposals to the **next meeting**. Simon reported that the [County?] Council has a budget of £10K for entertainment events to encourage tourism and suggested Andrew should contact Chris Coates and request up to £500. If successful, Wassailing could be advertised more widely than previously.

School visits

Tony is waiting to contact the local schools until the Breathing Places award is confirmed.

Website

It was agreed to postpone a full discussion of Orchard-related pages until James McDowell has talked to the Fairfield Association about his ideas for development of the whole site. Meanwhile, suggestions included: information about orchards in general; apple varieties in general; history and site map with apple varieties and other species; wildlife including birds and flowers to look out for; recipes; video or slide-show walk-through of the Orchard; 'dogpoo of the week' picture(s) – 'is this your dog's?'; reports on volunteer days with photos.

Fundraising

Held over: **Mick and Oliver** to check out and report to **next meeting**

Any other business

Helen asked about herbicide use on the public footpaths. Agreed that the County should be contacted (again!) and asked not to use herbicide.

Next meetings :

7.30 pm, Wednesday 5 November, **at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**

7.30 pm, Monday 8 December