

**Fairfield Association
Fairfield Orchard Sub-Group**

**Minutes of the meeting held on
Monday 5 October 2009, 7.30 pm
at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**

Present: Oliver Fulton (mins), Simon Gershon, Helen Hicks, Rebecca Procter, Hilary Short, Mick Short (chair)

Apologies: Jon Barry, Tony Finn

Minutes: approved

Matters arising

- First Aid courses: Mick will check with Beaumont for December dates (if any): if none available, or dates unsuitable for Jean and Andrew we should ask to vire the money to another BP heading.
- Tree surgery: Simon has checked the TPO: the lime tree recommended for pollarding is not covered so Andy Lee can go ahead.
- Towneley Close footpath: Mick and Oliver are meeting the objectors on 19 October.
- U3A presentation: Mick has been sent dates for the U3A monthly general meetings and has asked if we can make a presentation at one.
- Potential campers: no sign of further activity.

Current developments

- Tree health: the big ash tree has again dropped large branches. The area was roped off by Mick and Helen, fallen branches have been cleared by Simon and Mick, and Andy Lee has removed hanging ones. Andy is now seriously concerned about ongoing risk from this tree, as this is the third year in a row. Oliver to ring and ask him to discuss it with Maxine Knagg.
- It was suggested that Workspace might be offered some of the larger branches of the ash for turning into wooden fruit and selling at future events. Helen to contact them and ask if it (or other Orchard wood – see below) would be suitable [done: they need 8” diameter minimum].

Events

- Apple Day. Agreed that this had been a huge success (‘best ever’). Warm thanks to Simon as organiser and all other contributors. Various comments and suggestions were made via email in the following few days, summary appended for members of group.
- Wassailing. 16 January. To be organised by Andrew Brennand as before, similar programme. Helen is willing to organise lantern making again. Agreed that money for this could come from the BP education budget, if available.

Breathing Places

- Oliver reported that most categories of expenditure appeared to be broadly on track. He and Mick were meeting with Jude shortly to go over the accounts, check that we have receipts and produce a detailed tally (appended for members of group).
- Tony had reported that he is planning two more schools visits, which should use up the rest of the money earmarked for this.
- Log replacements. Andy is donating these, has been asked for six 4’ long, 16” diameter logs (five definitely need replacing).
- Tarpaulins. Helen has located suitable ones: £7.50 small or £15.00 large. Agreed that two small would be

more flexible and easier to keep clean in use. Helen to purchase.

- Notice boards and information materials: Chris Beaton from Gaia Graphics, who quoted for graphics for the original BP bid, is visiting shortly to see the site and present some ideas. Distinctive Landscapes, recommended as good value by Simon, are to quote for moving the notice boards into the Orchard and excavating the post holes.
- Wildflower plugs and bulbs: agreed to concentrate on bulbs, mainly for the millennium circle (including round the oak). Oliver to ask Steve Edwards for recommendations (species, suppliers) and see if he can supply any himself. Chiltern Organics (Ulverston) mentioned as one possibility.
- Bug hotels. Workspace has quoted £50-100. Agreed to ask for two and use the balance for inserts (eg field drains) and fixings. Helen to put in order after confirming availability by December.

Orchard management and volunteer days

- Simon has walked round the Orchard with Steve Edwards and his/their suggestions (attached) were tabled. Agreed that many of them needed discussion in the Orchard and a site meeting was arranged for Tuesday 6 October, to decide on priorities for next Saturday's volunteer day. This could include some tree felling as well as raking / tidying.
- Noted that contrary to Simon's message, we will have to get permission to crown raise the boundary sycamores.
- Several people had viewed the DVD about 'edible forest' management in Devon which Simon circulated after the last meeting. Agreed that this technique was not suitable to the Orchard site in general, but that it might be appropriate to plant edible herbs (eg comfrey) after thinning the dogwood and felling some of the alders in the 'tunnel' at the far end, where at present there is bare ground.
- Agreed that we should apply to the Woodland Trust for a £100 grant for tree planting (replacement fruit trees, hawthorn for gaps in hedges – especially if we remove more sycamore, mulch mats and ties for existing trees...). This should be a normal winter application, and not tied to the Woodland Trust's Guinness Record attempt, which is not on a date we can manage.

AOB

- An Abraham Heights neighbour has put his compost bin in the Orchard. Agreed he should be asked to remove it: Oliver to put a note on the bin.

Next meetings :

7.30 pm, Monday 2 November at **Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**

7.30 pm, Monday 7 December at **Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**