

**Fairfield Association  
Fairfield Orchard Sub-Group**

**Minutes of the meeting held on  
Tuesday 13 April 2010, 7.30 pm  
at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**

**Present:** Tony Finn, Oliver Fulton (mins), Simon Gershon, Helen Hicks, Rebecca Procter, Hilary Short, Mick Short (chair), Jonathan Tansley

**Apologies:** Jon Barry

**Minutes:** approved

**Matters arising**

- The March meeting was cancelled owing to Mick's illness and the pressure of other events.
- Private compost bin: the bin has reappeared in the Orchard, with compost in it. Agreed that it should again be removed to the presumed owner's garden gate step, with a note saying that if it is not back in their garden by 30 April, it will be removed and disposed of. Action: Oliver
- The owl box has not yet been erected.
- Helen and James are in contact about her 360<sup>0</sup> views for the website: there have been technical difficulties in transmission, but Helen is confident these can be overcome.
- Andy Lee has submitted his bill for work on the ash and sycamore, which came to a little over £500.

**Current developments**

- On behalf of the Trustees Andrew has signed off on the County Council's plans for the Towneley Close footpath once the right of way creation order is in place. No further news on the order. The County will after all contribute some of the costs of the footpath, but if we wish to upgrade it to a higher standard we will have to find some money. We will also have to pay for the branch path around the other side of the bench. To be discussed at next FA meeting.
- Building has started on the Martins' house. Mrs Houghton has objected to what she believes are unapproved changes to the plans, and we understand that the Planning Department is requiring the Martins to apply for retrospective amendments to their application. It seems to be established that the Planning Department did circulate the normal neighbour consultation material on the original application to the Orchard Trust, but that for reasons that are unclear a subsequent application or amendment was not properly circulated to the Trust, the Fairfield Association or any other neighbours. The Planning Department has confirmed that we (the FA) will be consulted on the retrospective amendments. Next FA meeting will discuss.
- Rob Bracewell (the City Access Officer) has visited the Orchard to advise on accessibility, especially on the public footpath to the S of the Orchard (towards Lucy Brook). He made a number of suggestions, which he will pass to the relevant authorities and try to raise money for them. The only one directly affecting our land is to remove an elder tree stump which partly blocks the path at the boundary. It was agreed that volunteers should do this at the next meeting. It was noted that the FAUNA grant applications include money to upgrade this stretch of path if this is still needed. It was pointed out that one reason for the poor state of the path is that the households adjoining it have extended their gardens and shrunk the width of the footpath. Oliver will contact the County rights of way office about this and see if they might be willing to take enforcement action.
- A householder from Holker Close has been seen pouring bleach on a mossy area where we removed trees (at his request) to encourage grass to grow in the area by his garden gate. Agreed that Hilary will write and tell him this is unacceptable (and presumably counterproductive). She will invite him to the next meeting to discuss his concerns.

## **Breathing Places**

- The display board designs are almost complete following several iterations with Capra. Tony expressed concerns about the accuracy of one or two items on one board and Hilary will email them to him for a final check. It was accepted that some compromises will be necessary, and agreed that it is now urgent to sign them off.
- Jeff Dade and Helen have not yet met to finalise plans for adapting the existing board.

## **Events**

- The TCL tree grafting day on 20 March in fact took place elsewhere.
- Tony reported that the Easter Egg Hunt was well attended (approx 80) and successful despite unpromising weather earlier in the day. Net income was likely to be around £40 when the accounts were finalised. Owing to the absence of several regular volunteers there was nearly a crisis when one promised helper had to withdraw owing to illness. Agreed that we should aim to increase the volunteer pool for events.
- Blossom picnic (May 1). Already advertised on the website and in the newsletter and leaflets. Simon will prepare a poster and email it to volunteers and to Ruth for circulation to FA members, as well as getting it onto the notice boards. No other preparation is required – all to bring food to share, plus their own flasks if they want hot drinks.
- Go Wild Week. Jonathan and Rebecca are organising this. Simon has given them previous years' programmes and a list of contacts for possible speakers. Events will be at 7.30 on the Monday-Thursday (17-20 May) and 9.30 for the Bat Walk on Friday 21<sup>st</sup>. Last year the bat walk leader offered to repeat it this year – Jonathan and Rebecca to liaise with him. Tony will arrange a bird talk using his contacts, probably for the Monday. Mick will ask Andy Lee to do a talk on trees, probably focused on conservation of older trees. Oliver will ask Chris Workman, who led a North Lancashire Naturalists Group visit to the Orchard last year (there is a link on the Orchard page of the website to the report of this visit) if he will give a talk on an aspect of nature of his choice, and will ask Graeme Skelcher for a talk on wild flowers. Mick will ask Trevor Pearce for a talk on earthworms and other mini-beasts. Julia Russell could be asked to repeat her talk on edible plants if we need another speaker. Agreed that we will ask for a £1/head donation and will not pay speakers but can offer up to £25 travel expenses. Jonathan will design a poster once the programme is complete and send it to Mick, who will print and laminate it and email it to James for the website and Ruth for circulation.

## **Orchard management and volunteer days**

- The next session's list of tasks was agreed, including: removing the elder tree stump (see above); stocking the insect hotels; weeding/clearing the recently planted hedge plants; and installing the replacement stumps in the circle if Andy Lee can source them in time (Mick to liaise with him).
- Simon has not yet fixed his departure date: it will be early May. Most arrangements for his absence have already been made (see minutes of February meeting), but it was now agreed that at each sub-group meeting we must confirm the leaders as well as the work programme for the two following sessions (Wednesday evening sessions will start at the end of May).
- Simon's return date is not known but we should now assume that he will not be back in time for Apple Day. This year Transition City Lancaster (TCL) is organising a local food fortnight in September, jointly with the boys' grammar school, Lancaster and Morecambe College etc., and including an Edwardian day in the market. Simon suggested we should aim for a modest event in the Orchard, tied in with this. The fortnight is being co-ordinated by Felicity Smith, who lives on Willow Lane.

## **Fundraising / new grant applications**

- No news yet of our Lancashire Gateway application for £1,500 to support school visits. Hilary will ask when we might expect to hear. Pending, or failing, that, we may need to ask visiting schools if they would be willing to ask parents for donations towards tuition costs by RSPB or Lancashire Wildlife Trust. Tony

will discuss this with the teachers concerned. Agreed we should also ask the FA if it is willing to support or underwrite school visits.

- Owing to illness Mick has not yet spoken to Sam about fundraising, but will do so shortly.

**Next meetings :**

7.30 pm, Monday 10 May 2010 at **Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**

7.30 pm, Monday 7 June 2010 at **Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**

7.30 pm, Monday 12 July 2010 at **Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**