

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Fairfield Association held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2007 at Edenbreck.**

**Present:** Tony Finn, Oliver Fulton, Simon Gershon, Ruth Haigh, Henry Hicks, Mark Houghton, Michael Sheppard, Hilary Short, Mick Short, Adrienne Wallman.

**Apologies:** Ann and Sid Duncan, Helen Hicks, Jude Naish, Elaine Weedy.

### **Matters Arising:**

- i) The newsletter will be distributed this week.
- ii) Simon Gershon reported that the entrance to the footpath between the end of the orchard and Lucy Brook is protected by a six inch strip of land which belongs to the houses which border the path at this point and that the householders are unwilling to agree to access across the strip.

**Treasurer's report:** Our balance is £8882.69. Major income includes a donation reserved for work on the orchard (£213 from Simon Gershon). Major outgoings were £1145.79 retainer owed to Briscoes for their work on the playground. In addition £80 was paid to Georgina and we also need to pay £300 to Graeme Skelcher for work over the past year. Ann has indicated that she would like to stand down at the AGM and so, sadly, we need to look for a new treasurer.

### **Annual Audit**

Alan Burton who has audited our accounts free of charge for the past ten years is setting up his own business and for technical reasons needs to charge us. He proposes a fee of £85 per year. In return he will advise us on tax issues, insurance and the rules of the Charity Commission as well as auditing the accounts. In particular he is strongly advising us to use Gift Aid to claim back 28p for every pound donated by providing declaration forms which donors and subscribers can sign. We can claim Gift Aid retrospectively on donations/subscriptions made up to 5 years ago. Subscriptions for the period 2002 – 2006 total £691 and we could claim a further £193 using Gift Aid.

### **Standing Orders**

We need to change banks in order to be able to use standing orders for membership. The Coop Bank was suggested because of its policy of ethical investments. It was also suggested that we should have a current and reserve account in order to benefit from the higher rates of interest available. It was agreed that we should open a new account with the Coop Bank.

### **Membership Secretary**

Ruth needed to be clear about what was involved before taking on the job.

Michael described the job as one of monitoring and growing the membership. In particular, she would need to make sure that we know who are members are and try to ensure that we don't lose members. This would involve keeping a database with names, addresses, gift aid declaration etc. Ruth said she would do the job and it was agreed to co-opt her.

### **Playground Report**

Henry reported that the cost of mending the rope on the climbing net and the safety surface adjacent to the Ability Whirl roundabout will be £430 +VAT, including £250 for labour. After some discussion it was decided that we should ask to be notified when the repairs will take place so that we can watch the procedure and hopefully be able to save the cost of labour on future repairs. Mark and Simon said they would like to be involved and it was also suggested that we should ask Sid if he was interested.

### **Millennium Orchard and Friends of the Orchard**

The Millennium Green is facing a financial crisis. At the last volunteer day it was agreed, subject to the Trust's agreement, that:

- i) the Fairfield Association will fund Steve for 1 month
- ii) Friends of the Millennium Green will be formed to enable those people who would like to give money to the orchard, to do so. Mick agreed to work on this.
- iii) Adrienne and Oliver would work on funding proposals on behalf of the Trust

Andrew agreed that the Fairfield Association would be allowed to contribute 50% of the money required to pay Steve, provided that he was paid via the Trust.

There was a lengthy discussion about problems with the Trust and general agreement that something needs to be done before or at the AGM which is in May.

Tony Finn spoke of his experience as a member of the Trust. He pointed out that Steve is not an employee of the Trust but someone who is employed on a casual basis as and when he is needed. There is money for a picnic area which would keep Steve in work if Steve worked on it. He said there were issues to do with managing Steve and the things he chose to work on and also a bigger issue of no long term management plan. Tony Finn said that Steve would welcome management.

In terms of the recent emergency meeting of the Trust, Tony said that the idea of the Fairfield Association taking over the Trust had fallen on deaf ears as far as Marion was concerned. As far as the Fairfield Association is concerned, it was agreed that any merger would involve a change of leadership. There might also be constitutional problems to be overcome. It was in general agreed that faced with the options of a vote of no confidence at the Trust AGM (and possibly a report to the Charities Commission) a merger would be the least painful option for all concerned. As a result it was agreed that Michael and Hilary should meet Marion and Andrew before the next meeting to talk through the issues and put forward a formal offer that the Trust amalgamate with the Fairfield Association. There also needs to be a procedure for amalgamating the two charities and a management month by month year plan so that the volunteers and the Trust are less dependent on Steve. A proposal can then be put forward for discussion at the Trust's AGM. It was agreed that the Fairfield Association AGM should be booked for the same evening as the AGM for the Millennium Orchard Trust.

If the situation remains stalled after the meeting with Marion and Andrew, it was agreed that a vote of 'No confidence' be put to the Trust AGM.

It was also agreed that no money should pass directly from the Fairfield Association into the Orchard Trust. Steve, for example, should be paid directly and that although Adrienne and Oliver would work on bids for money for the Orchard, nothing would go forward until the present situation shows movement.

### **The remainder of the agenda!**

It was agreed that another meeting was needed to discuss issues relating to Fun Day and the AGM, Fauna and Communication Update. This will take place after the meeting with Marion and Andrew. The Newsletter will ask for volunteers to organise Fun Day and also advertise for a new treasurer.

### **Date and Time of the Next Meeting**

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May at Lyndene (Michael and Jude's house)