

Minutes of the meeting of the Fairfield Association held on September 9th 2008 at 51, Ashfield Avenue

Present: Andrew Brennand, Margaret Burtonwood, Oliver Fulton, Tony Finn, Simon Gershon, Ruth Haigh, Steve Langhorn, Jean Mussell, Jude Naish, Rebecca Procter, Michael Sheppard, Mick and Hilary Short, Jean Stuart.

Apologies: None received.

Matters Arising:

- i) Actions arising from the meeting on July 16th were carried forward to next meeting.
- ii) It was confirmed that the Fairfield Insurance does cover events in the town centre.
- iii) The Borough has now accumulated £250 for the Fairfield Association and this will be handed over at a later date, to ensure that the Borough gets the publicity it deserves.
- iv) Michael has been interviewed Diversity Radio about the Fairfield Association.

Teddy Bears' Picnic Report

Despite the rain, this was a very cheerful event which raised approximately £140. Andrew Brennand said he was happy to organise the event next year. Hilary confirmed that she had spoken to Shirley who had said that a thank-you letter acknowledging the contribution made by the Castle, was not needed.

Treasurer's Report:

We currently have £10,457.94 in our Building Society account and £527 in the Cooperative bank account. Since the last meeting we have received £724.80. This includes the grant of £350 from Lancashire County Council for the marquee, loans of the marquee to a Church organisation (£75), a donation of £20, £112.50 in subscriptions and donations and £144.30 from the Teddy Bears' picnic. Money has been spent on booking the table for the Green Christmas Fayre (£10), the gate spring (£38.78), photocopying (£35), reimbursement to Simon (£125.22).

Membership Secretary Report

At the moment we have 70 members. More are expected within the next month.

Playground Report

Margaret Burtonwood, asked about problems in the play area which were reported by Lancaster City Council.

- ? Mick reported that we now have the spring for the gate but that he and Sid had experienced problems fitting it. However, Sid had noticed that there was also a gate of that design near the skateboard park which he will photograph, so that he and Mick can see exactly how the mechanism works. **Mick and Sid** will fix the gate as soon as possible.

- ? We now have the wet pour but we need a dry day to repair the holes. **Mick and Sid** will repair the safety surface as soon as possible.
- ? Nobody who has used the roundabout recently had noticed the absence of a securing bolt or experienced any problems. It was agreed that this was something which we should investigate and **Mick** agreed to speak to Sid about it. It was also agreed that it would be a good idea to ask Henry's opinion.
- ? Simon said that all the trees in the play area were doing well and that he had put mulch mats down.
- ? Michael reported a letter of complaint about the Cedar of Lebanon tree and its potential to cause future problems because of its size. It was agreed that although the Fairfield Association had discussed the trees to be planted in the play area on two separate occasions, that consultation with local residents should have taken place before plans likely to affect people living in the area were finally agreed. Simon has consulted Lancaster City Council Tree Officer, Maxine Knagg, whom he had also consulted before the trees were planted. Maxine said that the tree could be pruned. Steve Langhorn was asked if he knew anything about Cedar of Lebanon and said that they could be a problem if they became snow covered (this is clearly not normally an issue in Lancaster) and also that once they got going much of their growth was outwards spread. It was also pointed out that the tree only grew to its maximum height in ideal conditions and that conditions in Lancaster are not ideal. The issue of drains was raised. Simon said that he had checked with the local utilities. Hilary pointed out that there are certainly drains under what was the garage area since this had been part of the argument put forward when a local builder had wanted to buy part of the play area. **Simon** agreed to check the position of drains and **Michael** agreed to reply to the complainant and say that we were undertaking further research. It was agreed that the tree could be moved this winter if there was felt to be a real issue.

Orchard update

- ? Hilary said that the change to our constitution and the merger document were with the Charity Commission and that a new application to Breathing Places had been submitted. However, we were still awaiting replies on all these matters.
- ? Simon asked whether we are in a position to spend money from the Breathing Places grant. Mick pointed that some money had been spent before the Trust ceased to exist and that since then permission to spend £500 on a survey had been granted and the Fairfield Association had already agreed to cover Graeme Skelcher's fee for the survey until the money came through or simply to pay for the survey if we were not awarded the money. It was agreed that until we get permission to transfer the money, we can't spend it.
- ? Steve asked about the reason for the survey and Oliver said that it was to improve the management plan and inform the use that schools made of the Orchard. Tony expanded on our plans for the Orchard as an educational and community resource. He pointed to the success of visits from Dallas Road and Willow Lane schools.
- ? Andrew Brennand asked whether it would be possible to extend the deadline for spending the money. Mick said that there was provision for extensions in the documentation. Hilary said that we could certainly ask and that she thought we

would have a good case. Our contacts at Breathing Places were generally very helpful.

- ? It was agreed that Hilary would ring Rachel at Breathing Places and ask how long it was likely to be before we heard about the grant.
- ? Simon reported that there had been two Saturday work days and two mid-week work days since the last meeting but that more people were needed. Mick pointed out that the numbers seemed not to have varied greatly over the years and that there was a seasonal effect which meant that everything grows faster in summer, when people are likely to be away on holiday. He said that not only had more been achieved this summer, but arguably more than was necessary in the run up to the Teddy Bears' Picnic. Oliver also pointed out that if we need more help, we have a long list of people who can be asked at short notice. It was agreed that since the Orchard Committee was shortly to be formed, further discussion by the full committee was not necessary.
- ? Simon said that he had registered the Fairfield Association with 50 Forward and that as a result we may get some older volunteers.
- ? Simon pointed that fires have recently been lit and alcohol consumed at the back of the Orchard near Townley Close.
- ? Simon has had discussions with the people who are building on the land which was formerly part of Edenbreck House. He reported that they had been pruning the sycamores on our side of the hedge but that they did want to keep that part of their garden which adjoins the Orchard as a wooded and shady area, using native species.

The Orchard Subgroup

Michael said that he had consulted with the officers and trustees of the Fairfield Association and, from these discussions, it was obvious that every aspect of the Orchard could not be discussed at the main meeting but that it was equally clear that we should not form another autonomous Trust-like body. To avoid this, the delegated group needed to be clearly accountable to the Fairfield Association and work within parameters agreed by the Fairfield Association. The new committee will therefore be a working subgroup of the Fairfield Association and it was agreed:

- i) **Accountability** The Orchard subgroup will report back to the Fairfield Association and its meetings will be minuted so that discussions and decisions are automatically fed back into the Fairfield Association meetings and the officers and trustees of the Fairfield Association know in detail what has been decided. To this end, the elected officers of the Fairfield Association will be circulated as part of the minutes list. The minutes will also be posted on the Orchard section of the website.
- ii) **Finance** £500 has already been allocated as money available to the Orchard should sudden problems arise. Obviously The Breathing Places money, when it arrives, will be available for spending on those things which are set out in the grant application. All spending must be properly agreed and receipted as set out in the section of the minutes below: The Management of Fairfield Association Business.

- iii) **Meetings** The group will meet as often as is needed but must report back to the main meeting on **every** occasion. To begin with meetings are likely to be monthly and there will be an agenda and the possibility of email debate in the lead up to meetings. Notification of meetings and minutes of the meetings will appear on the FA website and noticeboard and also on the noticeboard in the Orchard.
- iv) **Events in the Orchard:** The main events in the Orchard will continue to be the business of the Fairfield Association and will be organised through FA meetings.
- v) **Membership of the Subgroup** The Fairfield Association made a commitment to involve outgoing trustees of the Orchard Trust who wish to continue to work on behalf of the Orchard. In particular, Jon Barry , Simon Gershon, Tony Finn, Oliver Fulton and Mick Short will be members of the subgroup. Andrew Brennand will also be part of the group and Steve Langhorn , Rebecca Procter and Margaret Burtonwood were asked if they would like to belong to it. Meetings of the subgroup will also be open to all those who are interested and want to attend, in the same way that Fairfield Association committee meetings are open events.
- vi) **Officers** Mick Short agreed to be the first chair of the group and Oliver Fulton agreed to be the secretary.
- vii) The first meeting will take place on 11th September at 7.30pm at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close.

The Management of Fairfield Association Business

Michael expressed concern that recently a number of decisions had been made ‘on the hoof’ and hence without due consideration by the FA committee. In future:

- i) Any large decisions in terms of spending, events, affiliations, agreements or communication with other organisations must come out of the Fairfield Association or a delegated subgroup. Actions must be agreed beforehand by the main committee or a sub-committee.
- ii) If a decision is needed between meetings, including those which involve expenditure, communication or action of any kind, this needs to be checked with the elected officers, and if possible with the chairman.
- iii) In particular, unitary decisions relating to expenditure are unacceptable, even in the case of small sums, since small sums add up. Receipts for expenditure which have not been agreed will not be accepted.
- iv) Since the treasurer is required by the auditors to ensure that **all** monies go through the books, all money must be handed to the treasurer before expenses are deducted. The proper procedure is to hand in all the takings in and to hand in receipts for **agreed** expenses. In the case of doubt, guidance should be sought from the treasurer.
- v) From now onwards, meeting agendas will be published on the website ahead of the meetings. This will give everybody concerned the opportunity to suggest additions to the agenda if they consider there are other matters which need to be discussed. Additions to the agenda should be emailed to the

chairman as soon as possible and certainly before the meeting, so that they can be considered for inclusion on the agenda.

- vi) AOB should be used only for business that arises at the very last minute. Minimising the use of AOB reduces the danger that important issues are not properly considered because matters presented to the meeting have a) not been considered beforehand and b) are not properly considered at the end of a long meeting when people are tired and ready to leave.

Apple Day

This event will be a Fairfield Association event this year. It will take place on October 4th between 10.00 -14.00 in Market Square and 12.30 – 15.30 in the Orchard.

In Market Square, there will be a commercial enterprise selling apple trees, homemade chutneys and apples. There will also be identification of apples, a longest-peel competition, and Wes and his Banjo Band will play. It was suggested that the Fairfield Association banner should be on display and **Ruth** agreed to look into the possibility of having a banner made, since this would also be an asset at the bonfire, Christmas Fayre and other events.

In the Orchard, a ploughman's lunch of local cheese, bread, local apple juice and cider will be served between 12.30 and 13.30. The cost will be £4 for a small plate and £5 for a large plate. Cake and tea will also be sold in the tea tent.

Games will run between 13.30 and 15.30 and Wes and his Banjo Band will play.

There will be an apple press, apple bobbing, the William Tell apple game and apple printing. There will also be guided walks around the Orchard.

Oliver offered the apple recipes which he had put up on the website last year and suggested that we might also sell apple and hedgerow jelly. **Steve** said that, as a loyal customer, he would ask Greggs if they would provide us with something such as the world's biggest apple pie

It was **agreed**

- i) that any fliers produced should have a map directing people to the Orchard and a Fairfield Association membership form on the back.
- ii) That **Simon** would check the risk assessment used last year and update it if necessary.
- iii) **Ruth** would ask the Fairfield bakers for cakes and point out to people that cake would be needed not just for this event but also for the Bonfire Stall at the Castle. This will give people the opportunity to bake for either or both events.

FAUNA

Oliver reported that Ann Wood (Lancaster City Council) had advised him that she had now heard back from the County Council about the revised plan for the original FAUNA area, which we had been asked to submit in draft. The County now considered that this would not help the City Council to terminate the existing lease, since we have made it clear that we do not want Edenbreck cottage, and thus the agricultural tenancy as a whole cannot be terminated. Hence it will be a matter of negotiation between the City

and Robin Loxham rather than termination, and Ann Wood is now concerned that she doesn't have as strong hand as she thought. She will now make sure that the process of negotiation starts, and will get back to us to report progress by 31st October. Georgina has also completed a proposal for use of the paddock which is ready to be submitted to Lancaster Planning Department, however, Ann Wood would appreciate it if we kept quiet about any plans for the paddock at the moment. So our planning application is ready but need not go in yet.

Ann Wood also reported that she knew nothing of Robin Loxham 's response to LGGS notice, which we believe was served in February 2008. **Oliver** will contact the school to find out where they are in the process and also talk to Jon Barry.

AOB.

i) We have received a cheque for £50 from the Yorkshire Building Society thanks to James McDowell's suggestion and there may also be a picture opportunity in the press. The Yorkshire Building Society would appreciate a letter of thanks and **Hilary** agreed to write this.

The Yorkshire Building Society has a fund which considers applications twice a year. It offers up to £500 for pieces of equipment. It was agreed that **Hilary** would contact the manager and ask about this.

ii) Parkin Stall at the Castle. **Jude and Michael** will organise this event and Oliver will help. Mick said that he had seen a second-hand generator for sale along the canal for £50 and it was agreed that he and Sid should check this out.

iii) It was agreed that **Hilary** would produce a newsletter which would include information about: the merger, the orchard subgroup, the website, Apple day, Bonfire Night at the Castle, the Green Fayre and Carol Singing, amongst other things.

The website It was agreed that the website is looking good and that we should ask James McDowell to come to a meeting and talk to us about future plans.

Date and time of next meetings:

Oct 22nd, 7.30 pm at Thorneycroft (Oliver's house)

November 19th, 7.30 pm at Whitegates (Mick and Hilary's house)