

Minutes of the meeting of the Fairfield Association held on 13th April 2011 at Thorneycroft.

Present: Oliver Fulton, Ruth Haigh, Bill Littlejohn, Jane Littlejohn, Jude Naish, Hilary Short, Mick Short, Susan Turner, Philip Turner.

Apologies: Andrew Brennand, Tony Finn, Helen Granell Watson, Fraser Granell Watson, Jane Parker, Mary Ridley.

Minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

Matters Arising

- i) Issues relating to the Post Office and banking were carried forward.
- ii) A letter was sent to Mandy Bannon but we have received no reply. However, we are pleased to note that the outcome of the Public Inquiry is the confirmation of the Creation Order and we welcome this news. It was agreed that FOG would discuss how the new entrance to the Orchard at Towneley Close could be improved.
- iii) It was agreed that Graeme Skelcher should be approached to update the Management Plan with a budget of £250.
- iv) Andrew has booked the Friends Meeting House for the AGM on the 15th June.

Treasurer's Report

Co-op

opening balance £29,558.92 closing balance £54,887.39

Nationwide

Opening and closing balances £10,601.06

Ceilidh profit £179

Income includes:

Donations £335 including £300 we were expecting from Alien Energy

FAUNA donations £25,660

Sparks grant from Age Concern £447.24 - spent on equipment this month

Membership £55

Other Expenses include:

Bowland Tree Services £360 re ash trees

Richard Storton (RSPB) £472.75 from balance of RPA grant received 16/02/11

Membership Report: 4 new members and 3 renewals.

FOG Report:

A written report was delivered ahead of the meeting as shown below:

FAUNA and Orchard progress report for FOG meeting, Thursday 7 April 2011.

FAUNA

Andy Lee has pruned the two ash trees, and he seems reasonably confident that they are safe for now. They will both need to be inspected regularly, especially the one by the Orchard

entrance, as it overhangs the future footpath and bench. Both are showing signs of age, but both have been substantially lightened as well as having dead wood removed. The brash and logs from the LGGs-corner tree were left where they fell, and can be removed at some later date either by ourselves or by the footpath contractors (unless a wood-fuel collector finds them first). The brash from the Orchard-entrance tree was chipped, and the chippings have been donated to Piccadilly Gardens: a few larger logs were left stacked by the Orchard boundary. Andy's bill came to £360, and will be paid from our LEF/LCC/FA grant, as it's not covered by Community Spaces. However, we hope that it will count for Community Spaces as evidence that work has started within their 2-month guideline: Oliver has written to CS to inform them, and has also sent them the required copy of our lease. He has also written to LEF to ask if we can use their grant to pay for removing the asbestos roofing: no response so far, despite reminders.

The next scheduled work is the new fencing and gates which will be installed by Hanafins (fencing / landscape contractors) starting either on Friday 15 or Monday 18 April. These will include reinforcement/replacement of sections of the public footpath fence, a short new fence section to keep cows out of the demolished pigsties, and internal fences and gates to enable Robin Loxam to keep the cattle out of the hay meadow and move them around the other fields. We are being put in touch with possible providers of green hay for the hay meadow (needed in July/August).

The engineer who is designing the Cromwell Road bridge/ramp has promised to send us the final specification in the next couple of weeks, and we will then get estimates for the work. We need to commission Georgina Peacock to draw up final plans for tendering for the autumn construction works: these have to be approved by the Planning Department before we start work.

We have a number of volunteers for wildlife recording. We expect to convene our own group for wildflower recording, and we are in touch with a local ornithologists' group about helping us to record birds.

ORCHARD

Following the volunteer session on March 12, a number of comments were received from volunteers and neighbours about a newly planted 'thicket' of trees towards the S end of the Orchard. After some discussion FOG agreed that these trees should be removed and replanted by the hedge by the public footpath, and this was done on the April 9 volunteer day. Other work included starting the annual mowing cycle and clearing some of the paths of weeds.

Dog mess and vandalism. We have consulted Alison McGowan, the Council Dog Warden, about the dog mess problem, and a press release will go to the Lancaster Guardian highlighting the problem in the light of upcoming events such as the Easter Egg Hunt, and saying that we are considering a dog control order if it doesn't improve: such a proposal would in practice trigger a public consultation which could help to raise consciousness. We are very wary about making threats which could be seen as divisive, but we believe a suitably worded press release asking for public support could help. It was also agreed that if/when the Towneley Close path is put in place, we should not only ask for a new bin at that entrance but request the Council to empty the bin at the south end, as Helen should not be expected to do this indefinitely. The Dallas Road poster designs have arrived and will be printed shortly, either as laminated sheets or with a metal backing, depending on cost. They are very good quality and should make an impact.

There has been more damage to tree bark. Following reports that a Staffordshire terrier has been seen 'attacking' trees, Alison offered to contact the owner (whose name and whereabouts are known) and warn him this is criminal damage. Alison is liaising with Cath Griffiths, the PCSO. We now think it is quite possible that last year's supposed knife attacks were in fact caused by dogs. There has also been some vandalism of a willow near the 'wet area': some youths were spotted breaking off branches by neighbours from Abraham Heights.

They called the police, who came in time to catch the culprits.

Andy Lee pruned / coppiced some of the sycamores on the Martins' boundary on the same day as his FAUNA work: the brash was chipped and the chippings can be used as mulch for new plantings. He also crown-raised the sycamore next to Marilyn Lindsay's garden. She and the Martins will pay the relevant parts of his bill.

We have been given a grant of £500 from Small Sparks for tools for volunteer use and the tools have been bought.

EVENTS

The Easter Egg Hunt is planned and Ruth has circulated requests for cakes and volunteers. Go Wild planning is nearly complete – there will be four or five events in May, some on weekend daytimes, some at twilight.

Playground Report

- i) The big swing has been greased.
- ii) The safety surface under the swings needs more repairs.

- iii) It was agreed that Hilary should ask Henry if he would be happy to produce another plaque to mark our achievement in establishing the nature reserve.

Future Events:

a) Easter Egg Hunt: It was confirmed that arrangements were in place.

b) Go Wild Month is in hand and our programme is:

May 8th Hegerows

May 13th Bats

May 15th Birds

May 25th Hares and Mammals

May 28th Guided walk: FAUNA to Freeman's Pools.

It was agreed that a competition to find a new name to replace 'FAUNA' will be part of the Go Wild Month.

c) Summer Daze will take place on Saturday 30th June. Nick Gebhardt is hoping to come to the next meeting.

d) Cross Bay Walk, Saturday May 14th. Mick has put a sponsorship form on the website. Andrew is dealing with Just Giving. It was agreed to contact the Library (Hilary), Swapshop (Ruth, Virtual Lancaster, Diversity FM and also to produce a press report for the Lancaster Guardian (Mick). and ask them to advertise the event. Ruth said that should would. James will be asked to put the details on the website.

e) Kwik Cricket will take place on the Sunday 3rd July with a fall back date of Sunday 10th of July.

f) Robin's Open Garden. It was agreed that tea and cakes were most appropriate and that a rota will be required. Ruth agreed to contact some of the Fairfield bakers and ask them if they would be happy to organise the event. It was also agreed to contact Sue Neiduszynski for advice on the grounds that her Garden Party was very successful. In addition to the teas we need to organise the walks into the Nature Reserve.

Oliver volunteered to accompany some of the baker organisers when we go to talk to Robin about the event.

Newsletter

It was agreed that Andrew should ask Gabbi to produce a newsletter and that we should email reports, announcements etc to Gabbi. The newsletter will go out at the end of April.

Date of next meetings:

May 18th at 49, Wingate Saul Road..

June 15th at Friends Meeting House. Fairfield Association AGM.