

**Fairfield Association**  
**Minutes of the Meeting held**  
**on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2013 at: the Robert Gillow pub, Lancaster**

**1) Present**

Mandy Bannon, (minutes), Graham Brandwood, Andrew Brennand (chair), Dave Brookes, Peter Callingham, Ruth Feinberg, Tony Finn, Oliver Fulton, Ruth Haigh, Julia McDowell, Jane Parker (treasurer), Ian Procter, Hilary Short, Mick Short, Pamela White

**2)Apologies**

Glenys Ferguson

**3)Minutes**

From last meeting were accepted, with one change:

Income received through memberships made a total of £525, (not £295)

Hilary reported that Cath Elliot, our PCSO has said she's always reads our minutes, and has noted our efforts to combat dog related issues (fouling and control).

**4)Flora Decisions**

(with forwarded comments from Glenys, secretary of FOG and Flora Steering Group, in absentia)

Mick reported that Members of the Flora Steering Group had met with Richard Storton (RSPB) and Claire Harris who has just taken over from Nigel Pilling as the FA's Natural England Adviser.

The timetable for returning documents back to NE has been extended to December 24<sup>th</sup>.

Nigel Pilling, Claire and Glenys looked at the fields. Claire has made suggestions which we need to discuss and decide on tonight:

- 1) We need to engage a contractor now, before the agreement is signed. There is no extension on when work can be completed (end of Feb), so we must carry out work inside this period. Hannafins have agreed to start soon and have said they can complete in time, so we need to get specifications for them. There is not much time with Christmas in between. Dave suggested resisting a formal contract this time. We're not required to do it formally. Contract can be a letter stating date work has to be completed by a certain date. Would still be legally binding. Claire said we can ask for lumps of £500+, to help cashflow. Oliver said they usually pay quite quickly.
- 2) Boundary 3 rationale: to no longer have a boundary between fields 3 & 4 (on Georgina's public consultation map). So there will just be one big field. The hedge line was initially suggested because one of the footpath proposals ran up there and the hedge would have disguised people walking up the footpath. Claire's view is that the bigger the space, the better to attract wading birds. Glenys sent the message that she agrees with this, plus has the advantage of one less hedge to manage. It was agreed to remove the proposal for "boundary 3".
- 3) Lynchets – Peter Iles, the County Archaeologist has agreed with our proposal, made by Claire Harries and Richard Storton – namely that if we are to attract wetland birds and lapwing (which is our great aim), it makes good sense to plough the land. This exposes worms and birds will nest. Claire suggested ploughing northern lynchets on flat parts but not the next steps down – turning them into 'beetle banks', which we can get funding for. These are 'managed by neglect' (Oliver). They attract beetles. Lynchets would have been ploughed originally, and this approach would highlight lynchets to observers. Claire was keen to have an interpretation board, which NE will provide funding for. The decision was ratified.

- 4) Nettles in Pony Wood – Claire advocated poisoning with a herbicide, especially around the edge of the wood. Mick felt if people were against this, then we can try controlling in different ways e.g. mowing or slashing. The advantage of poisoning nettles is that it will help regenerate naturally – e.g. help bluebells etc. Mick said we wouldn't be able to eliminate them completely, but they are out of control at the moment. Tony said that having spent hours cutting nettles, he would certainly consider poisoning as an option, initially. Oliver reminded us that we've used herbicide on the ragwort. Ian said we can't dig nettles out, they just come back. Glenys sent the message that she'd be prepared to take a pragmatic approach and it would lessen our call on volunteer time. Hilary said whereas with ragwort we had a statutory duty, with nettles, they are just inconvenient. Andrew said, it's not just Pony Wood. Mick said we're not experienced in this so we need to be careful about taking advice. Maybe we need to do some research and defer decision until December.

It was resolved to ratify items 1,2,3 but item 4 was deferred.

Mick added that Claire agreed to provide funding to repair the stone wall on Aldcliffe Road. County Archaeologist, Peter Iles, is keen that we use traditional lime and mortar – to be completed by end of February.

## 5) Treasurer's Report

Jane provided the following report, as of 20.11.2013

### Bank Balances

14 October 2013	£70,411.45
20 November 2013	£38,143.41

### Significant transactions

#### a) Payments

Goad & Butcher - payment for the Gleasons land:	£38,000
Goad & Butcher – professional fees	£ 1,130
Abbey Traders – marquee	£ 1,022
Newfields – Party Food	£ 576

#### b) Income

Community Spaces – celebration grant	£ 2,000
Environmental Stewardship – half- yearly	£ 792
Ayrtons – silage	£ 875
Donation re maintenance	£ 500
Grant: Harold & Alice Bridges charity re play area	£ 1,000
Grant: Garfield Weston Foundation re play area	£ 2,500

#### Estimates:

Net grants income in the bank	£21,805
General Funds estimate	£16,338
(Income & Expenditure Accounts Balance 30/4/13	£12,747)

Grants received for play area surface (in progress)	£ 9,836
Balance in Flora/Fauna pot	£ 4,598

Mick said we should have received an amount from Higher Level Stewardship grant for having heritage cattle, so although they probably won't be able to backdate the payments, we should receive payments in the future from NE.

## 6) Membership Report

Ruth reported that since the last meeting, we have received 12 renewals, and 7 new members plus additional donations of £70 (£165 in total)

Oliver wondered if we could email people who pay by standing order “thank you and can you pay a bit more?” Ruth said most people who pay by standing order, also make donations at other times. Andrew suggested wording along the lines of “this is what we’ve been doing recently...and we are interested in alternative sources of funding.”

## 7) Website/calendar

Julia reported that she has new paging for wildlife survey, and that Flora Talks recordings were going on the website.

**Calendar** – Julia wanted advice on how many calendars to order, before Christmas. One of the online companies she’s considering using has a set price of £6 until 24<sup>th</sup> December. £9 was the maximum we would want to charge, so the difference would be profit/donation. We could offer a discount on multiple purchases. It was agreed that Julia would place an initial order of 50, with the view to increasing the order if necessary. Andrew thanked Julia for organising it.

## 8) Flora Steering Group (FSG)

Mick reported on:

- a) Single Farm Payments – Hilary and Mick have been to Lancaster Auction Mart to investigate. If we pay £3-4k amount for entitlement to SFP for Flora, they were advised we’d get it back in the first year and an equivalent annual payment for five years after that. We need to pay the entitlement up front, but if we wait a bit, the price may come down (it fluctuates). If we wait for the HLS agreement with NE to be in place (by Jan). We can buy them from people who already have them for our land. You can buy them from an individual or from a ‘pot’ – like a voucher system. The EU intended them as a subsidy for farmers, but in the UK they tend to be a subsidy only for rich farmers who can afford to pay upfront. Bill Grayson recommended it, as he makes a profit from it. Dave said you claim in Spring, so Andrew asked if we could claim the money in three months or a year and three months? Andrew suggested we go ahead if we get paid in the spring of 2014. What’s the last date we can buy them? It costs about £300 to employ someone to buy the entitlements for us. Hilary said she didn’t see a reason not to go for it – it’s a long term investment, but she would check the details.
- b) Initial works of HLS bid – Mick said we should be okay. £9k has been secured by Lancashire County Council. The first phase of hedges, gates, ponds should break even and then we should need a big grant claim for footpaths. Oliver said the Woodland Trust will top up funding for putting trees in hedges. Mick is putting a footpath proposal to the next FSG meeting and will bring it to the next FA meeting in December. In order to get funding in time for Autumn (when birds have finished nesting and we can start the work), Hilary needs to be preparing application in the new year.
- c) Educational events are going well – Tony’s school events.

Toilets in Flora – Tony said when there are volunteers or schoolchildren visiting Flora, it’s a long way to go to use a toilet (e.g Mick and Hilary’s house). Tony suggested a camping toilet with cassette. Graham said the ‘bog in a bag’ is £20 and the tent is £50. A permanent composting loo costs £1k. If tents were going into Pony Wood, then a plywood foundation would be required. It was agreed that a permanent loo is not needed near the orchard. Hilary suggested asking residents on Aldcliffe Road whether we could use their facilities, although this would probably be unnecessary once a portable solution was chosen. The decision to obtain a loo was agreed in principle. Tony to do some more research.

## 9) FOG

Ian reported that there had been 19 volunteers and 13 students at the last volunteer session.

Mick reported on the following:

- a) There has also been a guided walk for MA students which made us £190
- b) They will put live willow screening between School Pond and the board walk.
- c) Canker and Fireblight in the orchard – affected trees will be replaced with soft fruit, and a tree nursery will be started

## 10) FOTT Report

Dave reported that

- a) they now have planning permission.
- b) they are considering building an outdoor timber-fuelled bread oven on the site – brick or clay for making bread or pizza at for community events. Andrew and Julia both had suggestion of people they knew who had built them.

Peter reported that they are applying to Awards for All, but their notes say you have to have leased land for at least 5 years. Dave says it's probably not a problem. They want extra information about the trees so they need to pay a tree expert for more reports. Dave said they would apply for grants before asking Fairfield Association for financial support.

## 11) Playground Report

Andrew reported on:

- a) November 5<sup>th</sup> 2013 – At 8.30pm, loads of teenagers looted recycling bins in the area and made a bonfire on Fairfield Green. The waste they used included many unsavoury items including medical waste, used incontinence pads etc. Because no-one is organising a bonfire on the site – this creates a vacuum for vandals. Sarah, whose house backs onto the green, said they couldn't sleep in the back bedroom when the wind was blowing smoke towards their house. On a positive note, she thinks that there are 5 or 6 houses that might consider managing a bonfire next year as a way of preventing antisocial pyrotechnics. They would start a small pile of wood in an area away from the houses. Mick suggested that the residents also talk to the council. When negotiating for the land, several years ago, a council officer had offered to put in concrete base for a fire. Andrew to tell Sarah about possible concrete fire pit idea.
- b) Retaining wall behind benches (rotten logs) - the exposed rusty nails have been taken care of by Andrew and Ken, but a big gap is appearing. Luscombes who are subcontracted by Abacus to do the Wet Pour work, said there was no point replacing individual logs as they will keep on rotting. The best cost-effective solution would be to redo the whole log palisade, taking it back the board and turf. It will need a mini digger. Andrew to get a quote. Other options: brick layers at Lancaster and Morecambe College, or recycled plastic planking like the walkboards on Fauna, which would last longer. Ian said Fraser wants to get rid of some stone, but that would require deep foundations. Hilary to get a stone quote from Mr Edwards and Andrew to get information on different materials.
- c) Resurfacing – Andrew and Hilary commissioned the whole of the resurfacing – to be finished in five days. Ken has also done a lot of work in the playground.
- d) Grafitti on a stand-alone slide and multi-unit needs removing with the electric sander. Andrew will do this next volunteer day if Ian can charge the sander up in preparation.

## **12) Events**

- a) Flora talk: Robin Loxam and family, next week. Sue Nieduszynska is working out a programme for next term. People are invited to send ideas to Sue and questions to ask Robin and his brother. Pamela White asked if the fixed day of Thursday could be changed to an alternative evening so she and others that can't make Thursday could attend some of the talks in the future. It was agreed we would ask Sue if Friday 7.30-8.30 could be considered.
- b) Carols on Xmas Eve – Ruth has asked Stephen Hoyland and he's keen to organise it again. Ruth Feinberg and Pamela White asked if dates could be added to Xmas Eve (again, because they can't make Xmas Eve) but it was thought that Stephen would not be available.
- c) Wassailing – Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January – Graham to provide wood. Andrew has organised Morris Men and a folk band. Community Spaces want to give us more money for something, so we could use that to pay for Morris men. Tony said we need a new preserving pan to heat drinks and keep them warm. Tony to give Andrew a detailed description of what is required.

## **13) Correspondence**

Andrew has passed correspondence from his alma mater to Mick, who is working on wording for bequest information, along with Jeff Oliver.

## **14) Items for Website/Facebook**

Andrew to put something on website about the playground. Julia said the calendar is looking empty – needs Sue's summary of Flora talks.

## **15) AOB**

Ruth asked if we should be doing a newsletter before Christmas?

There is a lot that could go into it, including:

Summary of Flora consultation, buying Gleasons land, need for more money/volunteers, land-based work e.g explanation of missing apple trees, events, Calendar for sale, dog poo poster info, expect carol singers on Xmas Eve, etc

## **16) Next Meetings** - Both meetings starting at 7.30pm.

Wednesday December 18<sup>th</sup> – Robert Gillow pub

Wednesday January 22<sup>nd</sup> - Robert Gillow pub