

Fairfield Association
FAUNA and Orchard sub-Group (FOG):
Minutes of the meeting held on
Wednesday 5 October 2011, 7.30 pm
at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close

Present: Graham Brandwood, Andrew Brennand, Dave Brookes, Glenys Ferguson (mins), Tony Finn, Ian Procter, Hilary Short, Mick Short (chair), Chris Workman

1. **Apologies:** Oliver Fulton, Ruth Haigh, Helen Hicks, Sue Nieduszynska
2. **Minutes of last meeting:** Approved
3. **Matters arising:** None
4. **Current developments**

It was reported that a motorbike had been seen on the public footpath by the Orchard.

5. **Grants and fund raising inc. Aldcliffe fields**

The deadline we imposed of 3rd October has been reached, but there has been no reply to our offer for the Fields.

6. **FAUNA**

- **Ragwort collection and disposal:** More ragwort on the Orchard side will be removed by wheelie bin (and if possible by trailer) on the 8 October Volunteer Session. Disposal from the Cromwell Road side is proving more problematic. Commercial collection for disposal in landfill has been ruled out on cost grounds. An intensive volunteer day(s) was suggested, using single axle trailer and/or pick-up truck. It is understood that it is allowable to dump into green waste at Salt Ayre and that it should be possible to obtain a day permit to allow a truck to be used without charge. There may also be finance available in the Natural England grant. Dave agreed to investigate these options further as a matter of urgency.
- **External contracts**
 - **Ramp:** nearing completion and on budget.
 - **Ponds and sluices:** two quotes submitted. Richard Storton of RSPB has been involved in the awarding, and will supervise the works. Contractor is expected to start on 12 October taking one to two weeks.
 - **Footpaths and fencing:** deadline for receipt of tenders is 10 October. Georgina Peacock to be involved in the awarding.
- **Information and notice boards:** proposal is for an A1 size information board with map on one side, and wildlife on the reverse, similar to that in the Orchard. The same supplier has been contacted. Hilary requested suggestions for content ASAP. The working party were reminded to take into account installation costs.
- **Ash tree:** Andy Lee has reinspected and considers it poses no problem to the proposed footpath.
- **Launch event:** Oliver's proposal for a two stage launch was accepted:

- a) a low-key ribbon cutting event as soon as the external contractors have finished
- b) a launch party in early spring/Easter time, avoiding problems of contract over-run and allowing the ground heal.

Content and guests to be considered at the November meeting.

- **Community Spaces 'sustainability grant':** We have been invited to apply for a further grant to complement the 'delivery grant' already awarded. This has to be submitted before the capital works are completed (i.e. by early December). Oliver is to convene a working party comprising Tony, Ian and Chris. The working party will produce a shopping list of allowable items (eligibility checked with Community Spaces), identifying priorities and indicating costs for November FOG. Suggestions included development of educational use (see item 10), heavy duty equipment (e.g. hedge trimmer, brush cutter, sander for graffiti removal), first aid training, contribution to tool shed.

7. Orchard

- **Tree labels:** Labels to be attached to deciduous trees on 8 Oct. Question marks over the accuracy of the planting plans mean that the remaining labelling will be deferred until summer when fruit trees can be identified without error.
- **Arthur Davies:** Mick will present the card and carved wooden pear in recognition of his long-standing contribution as a volunteer.
- **Towneley Close footpath:** Andrew met the contractors on site on 4 October to confirm the practicalities, and work has commenced. Lancashire County Council will fund the most direct route, with FA paying to provide the extra spur around the bench. The fruit tree has been protected with temporary fencing. Andrew has insisted that a 'cyclist dismount' sign is provided. Behaviour will be observed to determine whether bollards are needed.
- **Apple Day 24 September:** Helen submitted a detailed written report. Helen was thanked for her very efficient organisation of a highly successful event which also generated a healthy financial contribution. Ruth and a whole army of helpers were also thanked for their efforts and support. It was suggested that the format be reviewed when planning for next year, to avoid the risk of the event becoming stale.

8. Volunteer Activities

- **Report on 10 September:** The focus was on ragwort disposal and preparing the Orchard for Apple Day.
- **Tasks for 8 October:** Principally autumn tidying in the Orchard as per the Management Plan (e.g. nettles and long grass around the fruit trees; branch pruning along footpaths); ragwort (item 6); tree labelling (item 7).
- **Personnel:** Ian is gradually taking over from Mick as Volunteer Leader. Tony has kindly agreed to provide the refreshments for volunteer sessions.
- **Parental Consent:** Ian raised the issue of volunteers under the age of 18. It was decided that young people should be welcomed at organised volunteer sessions, subject to parental consent. Ian is to draft a parental consent form.

9. **Edenbreck Cottage Planning Application and tool shed**

The Fairfield Association has given its support to this application, with some minor concerns. Not until planning permission is granted can the FA's requirements (such as a tool shed and a tap at the edge of the building) be considered. Dave has agreed to identify the best way forward with the tool shed – exploring the need for planning permission, appraising and costing the build options, and other practicalities. Hilary will investigate the possibilities of grant finance.

10. **Education Working Party**

Tony is to establish a working party comprising Oliver, Graham and Chris. Some teachers will be invited to join. Subject to access limitations, Tony hopes to organise an initial site visit before half term. The aim is to develop FAUNA as a community educational resource for local schools. Tony and Oliver have already walked around the reserve to generate some ideas, but the initial focus of the working party will be on 'market research'. Grants (e.g. item 6) will be sought to provide equipment, cover costs of setting-up the organisation, producing educational materials etc.

11. **External Events**

- **Morecambe Bay Wealth of Wildlife:** Tony attended the meeting on 9 September. It is anticipated that next year we will receive a similar level of professional support, such as for another Go Wild Walk (this time within FAUNA) and help with schools' visits.
- **LEF Open Day:** Attended by Oliver on 16 September. He made a useful contact in the Brockholes Reserve Manager who has considerable experience in creating wetlands and dealing with petty nuisances.
- **Healthy Walks:** Lancashire Wildlife Trust in conjunction with University of Cumbria are organising four Saturday walks from FAUNA starting on 19 November. Andrew is to display their poster on the Noticeboards. Anyone interested in becoming a Healthy Walk leader was asked to contact Oliver.

12. **Website Updating:** On Oliver's 'to do' list.

13. **AOB**

- **Half-term in the Orchard:** Graham Brandwood's offer to organise a Forest Schools Craft Session with Angie was gratefully accepted.
- **Leaf clearing at the Storey Institute:** Helen has received a request from the Gardeners for help. FOG is happy to support this. It was suggested that Helen should discuss arrangements with the Gardeners and ask Jonathan Tansley to organise volunteers.
- **MP Letter:** Hilary has received a reply from Eric Ollerenshaw to her letter about the Fields campaign and the Localism Bill. He has offered a meeting and is interested in a site visit. Hilary to pursue.

Next meetings :

7.30 pm, Thursday 3 November 2011 at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close

7.30 pm, Wednesday 7 December 2011 at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close