

Fairfield Association
FAUNA and Orchard sub-Group [FOG]
Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 1 February, 7.30 pm
at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close

Present: Graham Brandwood, Andrew Brennand, Dave Brookes, Glenys Ferguson (mins), Tony Finn, Oliver Fulton, Ian Procter, Rebecca Procter, Hilary Short, Mick Short (chair), Philip Turner

1. **Apologies:** Helen Hicks, Sue Nieduszynska, Chris Workman
2. **Minutes of last meeting:** Approved.
3. **Matters arising not on current agenda:**
 - **FAUNA cycling permit:** System in place. Two permits issued so far to people with walking difficulties.
 - **Insurance contact:** Andrew has emailed and telephoned, but has had no response yet from the insurance company.
4. **Current/recent developments: Damaged bollard & intruders at Edenbreck Cottage:**

There have been three break-ins in the last two weeks. One of the bollards has been taken out and the padlock and plate broken. Mick and Henry Hicks will replace the padlock, and decide how to repair the plate. It may need re-welding on site. How to provide an effective boundary against intruders will be considered as part of the design of the tool shed (item 11)
5. **Aldcliffe Fields:** Still awaiting Lancaster City Council's decision on land use. Donations to the fund continue to be sought.
6. **Cromwell Road back alley:** A letter was sent to the residents of the even-numbered houses and Nos 80 and 82 Aldcliffe Road, with an offer to buy and install a 'private' sign. There were no objections to the proposal. The sign has been purchased, and is being prepared for installation on the side wall of No. 36.
7. **FAUNA**
 - **External contracts :** Hanafins have finished. Andrew has had contact from someone representing the wetland contractor about the disputed payment. This issue is still to be resolved.
 - **Information & notice boards:** Hilary circulated a preliminary design for the Information Board, and invited suggestions by email. White Park cattle will be included, and insects, trees etc will be added to the next draft. The 'snapshots' at the bottom – following the design of the board in the Orchard – were considered a good idea. Tony wondered whether there was some way of linking species to the different habitats. It is anticipated that the board will need redesigning after about 10 years as the wildlife mix in FAUNA evolves. The reverse of the board will incorporate a map of the reserve and funders' logos. It was decided not to add any 'rules' to the board. Instead a

weatherproof frame will be sourced by Ian to house the 'rules' notice at the Orchard end. (The notice is currently stapled to a gatepost.)

- **Entrance markers:** A draft design was circulated. The meeting's preference was for the date to be in roman numerals to match the Orchard, but it was agreed to leave the final decision to the artist's judgement.
- **Waste bin:** In place at the Cromwell Road end, and being emptied by the Council.
- **Pond & field names:** These need to be allocated quickly if Georgina Peacock is to incorporate them into the map for the Information Board. Oliver will liaise with Sue and Helen, and initiate a discussion by email with those interested in the subject, rather than wait for the next meeting. It was agreed that one of the names would be Anna's Pond, in memory of Dik Bakker's wife.
- **Main launch event:** Sue and Oliver have a planning meeting scheduled for 2nd February. Following this, an email discussion will be initiated if necessary.
- **Community Spaces 'sustainability grant':** Oliver circulated details of the grant that has now been approved. The requested components came to slightly more than the award limit, and so had to be marginally reduced. The award, which must be spent within twelve months, is split between three main headings, but there is flexibility within these headings. Only invoices for single items over £500 need to be submitted to Community Spaces. To manage the expenditure effectively, and with an audit trail, it was agreed that Oliver, Mick and Jane Parker (FA Treasurer) would form a group to oversee the process. Effecting the spending of the various elements of the award was delegated as follows:

1. Volunteer Equipment: Ian

2a. First Aid Training: Ian

Identify and cost a provider. Try CVS first, but may not have any courses in the near future. Identify participants.

2b. Training in Wildlife Recognition/Recording: Oliver

To be arranged after the first aid training, using any money remaining under the Training heading.

3a. Educational Activities for Local Schools: Tony

Liaise with Mick over suppliers and how the resource preparation and visit tuition money is to be spent.

3b. Forest Schools materials: Graham

3c. Publicity leaflets: Helen and Hilary

- **Robin Loxam's field usage:** A draft document previously produced by Dave is to form the basis for discussion with Robin. Richard Storton (RSPB) will be invited to join Dave and Oliver in negotiating and clarifying the details with Robin. The agreed schedule of field usage will be written up and used to monitor practice, subject to future review.
- **Concessionary path agreement:** The FAUNA footpath has already been declared as a permissive path. Oliver is in discussion with Ann Wood about whether the City Council needs to be involved in the process of designating it a concessionary path. A meeting with the County Council will follow.
- **Wildlife surveys, data collection, photographs and recording:** Tony is keen to establish an informal system of wildlife monitoring. Not only would it start to reveal how the reserve is developing and being colonised, but it would be helpful for planning educational activities to know what species can be found, and at what times of the year. Tony offered to organise and co-ordinate this, and proposed that individual spotters contact him with their sightings via email, the website or facebook. It was recognised that this would have to be supplemented by more formal and systematic monitoring, as started with the wildflower group (co-ordinated by Oliver) last summer. Further efforts will be made to find someone to lead a bird recording group.
- **User surveys:** Oliver is to ask Georgina Peacock about an electronic counter.

8. Orchard

- **Waste bins:** The bin at the south end has not been emptied. Andrew to chase.
- **Wassailing:** Went very well. Good publicity in the Lancaster Guardian. Discussed more fully at the Fairfield Association meeting.

9. **Volunteer activities: Report for January & Tasks for February:** See Ian's full reports at end. The principal task of dogwood cutting was completed in January. The Woodland Trust saplings have arrived ready for planting in February subject to the weather conditions. The 'wild harvest' mix includes blackthorn, elder, hazel, dog rose and crab apple. The experiment of laying matting on the steep grass path that has become worn and slippery appears successful. Ian was authorised to source and buy a roll of matting and pegs (grant money is available).

10. Health and Safety Policy:

- **First Aid box and Health and Safety box:** The contents of the first aid box have been reviewed by Ian and Graham. Their suggestions for extra items were approved, and Graham authorised to purchase them. Ian introduced the contents of the H&S box, which is to be the repository for paperwork such as medical condition forms and leaflets to be handed out to volunteers. This box is to be held by Ian. It should be taken to volunteer sessions in the Orchard and FAUNA, and used by Organisers of events where volunteers are involved (for instance, Apple Day).

- **Risk Assessment for Volunteer Sessions:** The document written by H&S working group and circulated prior to the meeting was approved. It was suggested that several copies should be added to the H&S box, so that the risk mitigation information and the guidance on using tools etc. was readily available for people to consult.
- **Child Protection Policy:** Suggestions for content made by the H&S working group were circulated prior to the meeting. There was concern to strike an appropriate balance, and not to over-protect children.

After some discussion, it was agreed to adopt the following policy relating to ages (to apply to volunteers in the Orchard and FAUNA, volunteers at FA events, and participants at Forest Schools-type sessions): *Under 14s must be accompanied and supervised by a parent/guardian. 14 to 18 year olds must have parental consent.* Hilary noted that the presence of child volunteers should be disclosed to the insurance company (Andrew to action).

The recommendation that any FA volunteer likely to have considerable and close contact with children should be subject to Government vetting procedures was welcomed. Graham will co-ordinate obtaining enhanced CRB disclosure under the Fairfield Association for relevant individuals through Signposts at Morecambe.

There was considerable discussion about events, such as Fun Day, where the nature of the event and its location in a public open space make it impractical and impossible to police children's ages and/or whether they are accompanied. It was agreed that publicity should contain the statement: *Children attending this event should be accompanied and supervised by a parent/guardian.* There was no consensus as to whether (or what) further steps should be taken, and this issue was referred to the FA meeting. (Andrew was requested to notify the H&S group when it appears on the FA Agenda.)

The FA meeting was also asked to produce a statement for the policy relating to unsupervised play in the play area.

- 11. Edenbreck Cottage: Tool shed:** Using a container as the basis has now been ruled out. Sam Edge will provide suggestions for the design and position, and pass these to Dave for costs to be estimated. Fraser and Helen Granell-Watson are to be consulted, as one of the aims is to create a secure boundary (see item 4). Grant funding will need to be secured.
- 12. Educational activities:**
 - **Carnforth High School 'Enrichment Week' visit:** Nothing more has been heard from CHS. However, Dallas Road Primary School has contacted Tony to book two one and a half hour mini-beast sessions for Year 2 in February.
 - **Working Party:** The first meeting took place at Dallas Road on 1st February. Tony reported that it was very informative and productive, with discussion ranging from resources to the provision of themed and curriculum-related activities. Members will

exchange ideas and information by email to develop things further. The aim is to begin tutored activities based on FAUNA in the summer term. Tony agreed to provide a written report on progress for circulation with the next agenda.

13. **Website updating:** Following clarification of the policy on ages (item 10), Oliver can now submit the revised webpage on volunteering. He hopes to have final drafts of the other pages available for the next meeting. In the process of re-writing, Oliver has realised that there is a need to establish a policy on access to the FAUNA fields (for instance, if an expert wishes to study one of the ponds). Contact details for permission need to be incorporated on the website, and perhaps a permit system set up.
14. **External events:** None
15. **AOB:** Tony was asked to begin planning for the Easter Egg Hunt, and to commit his proposals to paper for the next meeting.
16. **Date / place of next meetings :** Thursday 1 March and Wednesday 4 April at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close

Report on Volunteer Session 14 January 2012

A bright sunny day attracted 21 volunteers.

1. We implemented new Health and Safety procedures agreed by FOG
 - a. All volunteers were issued with a leaflet giving general health and safety advice and procedures
 - b. People entered their emergency contact names and numbers in a log book
 - c. A note was made of several people's medical conditions
 - d. All of this is kept confidentially by the Volunteer Organiser but will be available on site at each formal volunteer session
 - e. Notices were posted at the entrances to the Orchard and FAUNA advertising the work of the volunteers and asking the public to take sensible precautions
2. Philip Turner showed us how to prune dogwood and five big clumps of the shrub were pruned with the pruned wood cut up and stored under the hedges. Many thanks to Philip
3. Two further sections of hedge were laid, again in front of the benches to create vistas across FAUNA
4. Much progress was made on pruning the fruit hedge. Hopefully further work in the next two months.
5. A small copse of trees was inspected and we agreed that two trees should be removed and a large area of brambles cleared. That will allow further judgement on whether further clearance is necessary. Pencilled in for March.

6. The area around the pigsties was inspected to consider how to make progress with the projected tool shed and possibly a composting toilet. Further discussion with Edenbreck Cottage and council officials was agreed.
7. Three barrow loads of stones were shifted from the south path to our stone store.

Well done everyone!

Proposed Volunteer Tasks for 11 February 2012

The main priority for this session is to plant the 840 hedge saplings acquired from the Woodland Trust. We will have the assistance of student volunteers from Green Lancaster. A site meeting has been held to plan exactly where the saplings are to be located.

Local volunteers are still very much needed for this big job. If possible they should bring spades and wheelbarrows to transport both the saplings and the chippings we shall use as mulch.

A number of specific health and safety issues will be mentioned to the student organiser prior to his risk assessment and on the day.

- Instruction on the use of spades to plant the saplings
- Some of the planting is alongside rather boggy ground and wellingtons will be needed for these sections especially
- Some of the planting is inside the barbed wire line hedge lines. Great care must be taken with the wire, we think that plastic tubes used to protect saplings can double up over the wire where we need to lean over.
- Where we are planting to fill in existing plants care must be taken to protect eyes.

If we have time there are some other jobs that need doing:

1. Collect any litter accumulating within the Fauna fence
2. More tidying of the dogwood we cut last time, into the hedge or to the brash pile by Towneley Close
3. Mud clearing on the public footpath parallel to the Orchard
4. Pruning back of the public footpath hedge (in the vertical plane as it will be laid in future)
5. Continue the pruning of the fruit hedge.
6. Purchase and lay further matting around the fruit hedge

As well as an aide memoire for future days this list can also act as a 'Plan B' if we have a severe frost around February 11.