

**Fairfield Association  
Fairfield Orchard Sub-Group**

**Minutes of the 3rd meeting  
Monday 5 November 2008, 7.30 pm  
at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**

**Present:** Tony Finn, Oliver Fulton (sec), Helen Hicks, Rebecca Procter, Simon Gershon, Mick Short (chair); Mr and Mrs Martin (first item only)

**Apologies:** Jon Barry, Andrew Brennand

**Minutes:** approved

**New development adjacent to the Orchard**

? Mr and Mrs Martin, who are building a house and garden on the land behind Edenbreck House, running up to Mr Ellison's boundary at the foot of Towneley Close, introduced themselves and described their plans.

It was noted that the City Council had given the development planning permission, and made specific recommendations / requirements about trees and hedging, without consulting either the Millennium Green and Community Orchard Trust or the Fairfield Association, despite our common boundary and ownership of some of the hedges and trees concerned. It was **agreed** that this should be taken up with the City Council.

The Martins' plan for their E boundary includes a low wall topped with a railing at the N end of their property (nearest the picnic table area), and the replacement of the existing privet hedge further S with a mixed beech/hawthorn hedge, once landscaping has been completed. They have also been given permission to prune branches overhanging from the Orchard (mainly sycamore) and remove 3 sycamores from their garden area (all poor specimens, two of which were in fact dead) and required to replace them with at least two more suitable trees. They had met Maxine Knagg, the Council's Tree Officer, on site and discussed these plans with her. It was **agreed** that, despite the lack of consultation by the planning department, the sub-group had no objection to these plans, indeed welcomed them.

In addition, the Martins wished to discuss the future of the sycamores bordering their land, which are covered by a TPO. It was suggested that there might be benefit for all parties if these were thinned, and agreed that this should be explored with Maxine Knagg: **Oliver** was asked to **arrange a site visit** with Maxine, to include the Martins, Mick, Simon and any other sub-group members who wished to attend. The Martins had already asked Simon to relocate the compost heap at their house boundary (behind the picnic table), and now requested permission to cut back the brambles in this area to a reasonable distance from their boundary. It was **agreed** that their landscape contractor should cut these back so that their new wall could be built, and that we would discuss a permanent arrangement for the area during the site visit (after Maxine's departure).

Tony reminded the meeting that if major changes were made in this area, other Orchard neighbours might expect us to change the Orchard to meet their needs too. However, in the case of the Martins, the changes involved related to a common border, and were also felt to be in the Orchard's overall interest. These criteria could be used when judging matters related to future requests.

**Matters arising**

? Green Pennant: Oliver had not yet progressed this: **next meeting**

? Camper: the tent and other possessions had been removed and handed to the police (thanks to Jon and Melanie Forrest for arranging this) and the area has been filled with brash which will hopefully deter potential campers.

? Apple Day accounts: being handled by Jude and Simon.

? Orchard volunteers.

a) Tony reported that 50 Forward is a stand-alone organisation sponsored by Age Concern, aimed at supporting those over 50 and not in regular employment. It was not clear whether our monthly meetings would meet their needs. Mick explained that at present it was impossible for us to register with them as we still do not have a formal insurance policy, merely a temporary continuation of our current cover pending a review by Zurich.

b) Simon had emailed existing volunteers to ask about alternative times – responses not yet complete, but so far it seemed that Saturday mornings were still the favourite.

c) Mick had circulated a, hopefully final, draft of the Health and Safety policy. This was **approved** with one or two suggestions for small changes. **Oliver** agreed to contact the CRB and enquire about the cost of checks. If this proved prohibitive, we might need to turn away children/young people who came without their parents. **Mick** will email the revised version to all volunteers and will get some copies laminated so that they can be kept with the first aid kit and brought to each session. New volunteers will need to be inducted and given a copy.

d) First Aid training. We are hoping that we may be able to access training for several members through Beaumont College. A number of other providers were suggested if this does not work out.

? Herbicide on the public footpath. **Oliver** agreed to liaise with Adrienne Wallman and contact Lancashire County Council.

? Website: James McDowell had not been able to come to the last Fairfield Association meeting. Agreed to postpone discussion until after his presentation.

## **Agenda**

It was agreed that following the lengthy discussion of the Martins' plans, only urgent items would be discussed at this meeting.

## **Breathing Places**

Mick reported that Hilary had been in contact with the officer dealing with our application, who had asked for clarification of a number of minor points. It looked as if we should receive a final decision shortly.

## **Current developments**

Nothing else to report.

## **Review of Management Plan**

Oliver briefly introduced the draft, which consisted of last year's plan, drafted by Jon Barry and provisionally adopted by the FMGCOT trustees with some minor revisions and updates, followed by a set of bigger issues for discussion. The 'aesthetic' guiding principle, agreed at the last meeting, had been incorporated. It was agreed to postpone full discussion to the **next meeting**: meanwhile, **all members were asked to email comments and suggestions to Oliver**, who will incorporate them in a new version for discussion.

## **Simon's Future Role**

Simon and Mick explained that Simon's other commitments and interests meant that he would have limited time to devote to the Orchard from now on, and that following informal discussion Mick had identified some key roles for which the Association greatly depended on Simon. The list, circulated with the agenda, included Simon's central roles in dealing with emergencies (fallen trees/branches, cows...), organising the volunteers, contributing ideas, people skills (eg with campers), contacts (eg with 'trainers' or contributors to activities) and offering his time and his facilities for storage. Simon said that he was happy to continue providing these, and was especially glad to continue as volunteer co-ordinator. He would prefer not to act in 'bureaucratic' roles such as managing the Breathing Places expenditure (assuming the grant was approved). It was **agreed** that these could and should be handled in future by the sub-group as a whole, which would nominate particular members for specific tasks where needed.

### **Orchard Management – next volunteer morning**

Simon had circulated a list of proposed tasks which was **agreed**.

### **Expenditure Forecast**

Postponed to **next meeting**.

### **Forthcoming Events**

Andrew was holding a Wassailing planning meeting on November 26 at 8.00 p.m., at The Robert Gillow: **all welcome**. He would announce it at the FA meeting on 19 November.

### **Fundraising**

Simon had suggested applying to the Woodland Trust for a £100 tree-planting grant. **Agreed: Oliver** to progress this. It was suggested that the application should if possible leave open the possibility of using some of the money to replace hedging removed by Network Rail between the LGGS playing field and the footpath / cycle track.

### **AOB**

A meeting had been arranged with the City Council on November 11 to clarify the paperwork needed to complete the transfer of the lease from FMGCOT to the Fairfield Association.

Mandy Bannon had heard from Lancashire County Council that they hoped to take the Towneley Close footpath to the required committee meeting for approval in early January.

### **Next meetings :**

7.30 pm, Monday 8 December **at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**

7.30 pm, Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February (to be confirmed) **at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**