

**Fairfield Association
Fairfield Orchard Sub-Group**

**Minutes of the meeting held on
Monday 8 February 2010, 7.30 pm
at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**

Present: Tony Finn, Oliver Fulton (mins), Simon Gershon, Helen Hicks, Rebecca Procter, Hilary Short, Mick Short (chair)

Apologies: Jon Barry

Minutes: approved with one amendment. Breathing Places point 2: Jeff Dade will do whatever extra work is needed on the notice boards, but may need up to one extra day (i.e. **not** within his original estimate)

Matters arising

- Private compost bin: Oliver has moved the bin to the presumed owner's garden gate step, with a note on it asking for it to be removed: when last observed it was still on the step.
- Tony has bought two bird boxes as agreed: total cost approx £17. This is not covered within the BP grant: **Tony** to reclaim from Jude.
- **Helen** will contact James McDowell about her 360^o views for the website, to find out what form he needs them in.

Current developments

- Mick circulated Andy Lee's revised tree report, following his inspection of the old sycamore and further inspection of the big ash. His recommendations are now that the ash should be substantially thinned and pruned, especially the big branch overhanging the public footpath, but that major pollarding should not be necessary. The sycamore turned out to be in a poor state and for safety reasons he recommends pollarding the two largest branches. After discussion these proposals were accepted. It was agreed that we should put up notices explaining why this work is essential: **Mick** will organise these. The lime has been pollarded as previously agreed. Andy has submitted an interim bill for £315, and the rest of the work is yet to be invoiced. **Oliver** to ask the Woodland trust for advice on grants for work on veteran trees of landscape / historic value; also for tree labels and a full Orchard map (see below under Fundraising). Simon said that Common Ground promotes maps of local historic features and might be worth checking out.

Breathing Places

- Helen reported that the owl box and the second insect house have arrived. She would try to have the insect house ready for installation by volunteer day on Saturday, especially if others could help her to attach the metal legs in the meantime.
- Mick has discussed the log replacements with Andy and has contact details for Roger Cartwright and failing him, another possible supplier. We hope they will be free and that Andy may be able to bring them on a planned trip, saving the delivery charge as well. Although we only need some replaced now, Simon suggested asking for a complete set as the rest will probably be needed soon. **Mick** to follow up.
- Helen and Hilary reported that all our (re-)design requests have been submitted to Capra. We are still waiting for some images and some of the text is still to be finalised.
- **Helen** to send final dimensions to Jeff Dade.
- After some discussion of the height of the new boards it was agreed that we don't need to ask Woodscape to modify them but should be aware of children's as well as adults' needs when installing them.

Events

- Wassailing. Total proceeds were approx. £85. Everyone was thanked for their help with another successful

event. **Andrew** is following up the Morris's offer to come again on a Thursday evening in May.

- Tony reported that Dallas Road came to the Orchard for the Big Schools Bird Watch on Friday 5 February.
- Tree grafting day in the Orchard on 20 March organised by Transition City Lancaster (TCL). Simon reported that this is now fully booked so should not be advertised in the Newsletter. He explained that the charge to participants is because TCL's grant does not cover all costs. The Orchard is the venue but not the source of any materials, though it might benefit later if there are a few spare grafted trees we can use. It was suggested that the stump and the vandalised tree could be grafted onto if there is time. TCL has insurance through BTCV, so there is no need for our insurance. **Simon** will forward a copy of the insurance policy and a risk assessment to Oliver for our files.
- Easter Egg Hunt – Easter Monday (April 5). In hand – to be discussed next meeting.
- Blossom picnic. To be fixed to coincide with a volunteer day (to be moved if necessary). Next meeting
- Go Wild Week. Jonathan Tansley and Rebecca have agreed to organise this. Simon will provide them with a list of contacts for possible speakers. Next meeting.

Orchard management and volunteer days

- Simon proposed a set of tasks for February (install the insect hotels, plant Kentish cobs, layer brooms; if ground is frozen, finish pruning) which was agreed.
- Simon's absence. Simon is leaving the country at the end of April and will return at the beginning of September – in time for Apple Day. He has asked Jonathan Tansley to run the email notification system and will supply him with the address list. Simon will leave us the key to his garage, and the equipment (plus mower instruction book) can stay there – Adrienne will be in residence most of the time in case of any difficulty. Mick and Hilary will take over providing refreshments. It should be possible to plan out tasks for the summer period well in advance. **All members** were asked to re-read the management plan before the next meeting, when we will draw up a monthly list. Agreed to invite Jonathan to the next meeting.

Fundraising / new grant applications

- Hilary has drafted a Lancashire Gateway fund application for £1,500, to support school visits this year. It will be considered by the Lancashire Locals committee.
- It was agreed to ask Sam Edge to investigate funding, and work up a proposal, to fund labels for the trees plus a web-based / downloadable map of the Orchard which would specify all fruit tree varieties and other species. **Mick** to speak to Sam.
- It was also suggested that we should look for funding to cover at least some of the mowing.

Towneley Close and other developments

- No further developments.

Any other business

- Tony and Oliver are going to a meeting on 18 February, hosted by the Wildlife Trust at Heysham Nature Reserve, to discuss a possible new project entitled 'Morecambe Bay Wealth of Wildlife'. It looks primarily aimed at generating political support for increasing the Wildlife Trust's capacity in the north of the county.

Next meetings :

7.30 pm, Monday, 8 March 2010 at **Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**

7.30 pm, Monday 12 April at **Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**