

**Fairfield Association
Fairfield Orchard Sub-Group**

**Minutes of the meeting held on
Monday 7 June 2010, 7.30 pm
at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**

Present: Oliver Fulton (mins), Helen Hicks, Henry Hicks, Rebecca Procter, Hilary Short, Mick Short (chair)

Apologies: Tony Finn, Simon Gershon

Minutes: approved

Matters arising: none other than agenda items

Current developments

- Since the last meeting there have been several fires in various places including on the picnic table itself. The fire brigade was called to put out a fire in brushwood near Towneley Close. Mick and Hilary put out a large fire in the site previously used under the sycamore tree. Helen and Rebecca spoke to two different Polish families at the picnic table who had lit a fire for cooking in the same place and were unaware that fires are prohibited. Helen removed the ash and the second family helped her to scatter grass clippings to conceal the evidence. It was agreed that we must include prominent 'no fires or barbecues' notices in the new notice boards.
- During his Go Wild visit, Andy Lee looked at the oak tree next to the illegal compost bin and said there was clear evidence of glyphosate being used on the ground, the tree and the neighbouring dogwoods.
- Andrew Brennand and Hilary visited the owner of the house who had installed the double gates next to the southern notice board. She is a recently-arrived parent of small children who wanted direct access to the Orchard for a push-chair, and was unaware of the ownership of with the Orchard or the Fairfield Association's connection. She had already asked her contractor to turn the outer gate round to open inwards, and went back to them armed with our insistence that this must be done. They duly complied.
- Hilary circulated a draft letter to all the householders abutting the Orchard, and various suggestions were made, including careful wording of the legal position – i.e. that our toleration of gates etc was not to be construed as conferring any rights to present or future owners – and separating this from the concerns about vandalism. Hilary will redraft and circulate for further comment.
- It was suggested that the picnic table has become a serious liability as an encouragement to late-night drinkers etc., and that, although with reluctance, it should be removed and the path to it re-laid to grass. The sub-group agreed unanimously to put this proposal to the AGM on June 23.

Breathing Places

- The new notice board designs are ready for printing.
- Hilary will organise installation by the contractor who quoted for this. She will ask him to liaise directly with Woodscape over delivery to the site. If this is not possible, Mick and Hilary will take delivery until the contractor is ready to install them.

Events

- Go Wild Week took in nearly £150 before payment of one set of expenses. Three of the evenings – Birdsong, Tree Care and Bats – were well attended, the remaining two (Mini-Beasts and Wildflowers) less so, though the content was excellent and Graeme Skelcher's wildflower commentary was very informative for future Orchard management. It was agreed that a full week of nightly events may be too intensive, and that we could experiment next year with a new format, e.g. four or five Friday nights in May-June. It seems that even 7.30 pm may be too late to attract children on Monday-Thursday. We should find out whether there are national events (e.g. Wildflower Week) we could tie in with, and perhaps offer combined Orchard-

and FAUNA-based tours if FAUNA is fully up and running by then.

- Apple Day. Helen has been in touch with the Storey Gallery, who are launching a new exhibition at that time and so are unlikely to be available; and with Workspace, to invite them to provide a similar stall to last year's: unfortunately the main organiser of last year's stall is expecting orthopaedic surgery shortly and can't commit himself at present. Helen has also tried to contact Felicity Smith, who is co-ordinating Local Food Fortnight but has proved elusive.
- Apple Day has been advertised on the Volunteering/Events posters for September 25, and it was agreed that we will stick with this date. Helen will provide a plan for the next meeting, and it was agreed that all we should commit to is a tea and cake (Fairfield Bakers) stall and games such as William Tell and apple bobbing, maybe apple peeling, plus storytelling from Tony if he is willing (Oliver to ask him). If Workspace or the Middlewood Trust or any other charity come to sell their products, we should ask them for a donation in return.
- Fun Day: Oliver will ask Tony if he plans to organise activities in the Orchard this year, and if so put him in touch with Elaine Weedy.

Orchard management and volunteer days

- Mick will email Jonathan to ask him to send round the volunteer email. Tasks should include grass mowing, and rescuing the broom, the mature apples, the fruiting hedge and the new trees/shrubs from bindweed before it takes hold. However, we will try to leave nettles around the trunks of the apples to discourage bark-strippers. One of the most damaged apples now has woolly aphids and these should be treated or the tree removed. We have very few pairs of hedge clippers for cutting nettles etc: if people bring their own pairs to him, Henry can sharpen them.
- It has been suggested that residents of the homeless shelter on Edward St might be willing to volunteer to help.
- It was suggested that we need help with the mowing, and that we could ask Andy, who mows the allotments' grass, to help us on a casual basis. Mick will speak to Andrew B and Jude about using some of the money raised at recent events for this purpose.
- It was agreed that on Saturday we should try to identify one or two areas in addition to the oak circle where regular mowing might help to encourage wildflower recovery.

Fundraising / new grant applications

- Hilary has applied to Awards for All for money for tree labels and other non-Orchard matters, tied to a celebration of the Orchard's 10th anniversary. She will also apply to the Royal Botanical and Horticultural Society of Manchester, who gave a grant to the Orchard some years ago.
- At least one school visit has taken place, apparently without any involvement by ourselves. This is very welcome, but it would be useful to have a record of how often such visits take place. Agreed to ask Tony to contact all the schools and ask them to tell us when they plan, or have made, visits.

Any other business: none

Next meetings :

7.30 pm, Monday 12 July 2010 at **Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**

7.30 pm, Monday 6 September 2010 at **Whitegates, Sunnyside Close** (no August meeting)