

Greener Staplehurst Group

Meeting – 27 July 2020 (Zoom)

Present:

Paddy Riordan (Chair)
Jose Castro
David Charge
David George
Mina McPhee
Martin Ralph
Adele Sharp
Natasha Thomas
Jacqui Veitch

1. Apologies

Louise Pettifer

Susan Gullett has stepped down as she cannot commit sufficient time to the Group. Notwithstanding this she will try and progress the projects she has undertaken until they can be handed over.

2. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes approved.

3. Wimpey Fields

The site needs care and maintenance although it was agreed that any works undertaken will maintain the balance between an accessible, attractive site and benefit to nature. Examples of works to be undertaken include: grass to be cut, oak saplings to be reduced, mild cut on paths to encourage flowers to grow, some bramble and ground ivy to be cleared.

Payback Team schedule to be organised so they can help with Wimpey fields. In order to make sure that the maximum number turn up, advance notice to be given to them and to get more villagers to volunteer.

Date agreed – Saturday 8th August. **Action: DG to publicise on Facebook on the GSG and the Staplehurst Helping page.** Payback team can start early but additional helpers (including members of GSG) to come for an hour or more between 10.00 and 2.00pm. Anyone coming should bring their own shears and trimmers as well as gloves. **Action: As many GSG members to attend on 8th as possible.**

4. Flowerbed edges

Relating to the hedge running along Chestnut Avenue and the A229. The suggestion is that logs should be placed parallel to the hedge at 50cms-1m from hedge to create a no-mow zone where wildflowers and insects can thrive. Discussion about where to get logs from. **Action: MM to try to get logs from bedgebury. PR to get approval from the Parish Council at the next meeting for the placement of logs.** (Following the meeting, MM reports that Bedgebury can supply the logs. DC and MM to collect in due course).

5. Youth club hedges

Of the 64 hedge saplings planted about half have perished, partly for lack of watering. DC has a water back pack on order and once that arrives he has kindly offered to water the remaining saplings until they are established. There is a tap at the village hall which may be used.

6. Brush cutter/trimmer

The PC owns a petrol trimmer which needs a replacement part. It is likely that the replacement part will be hard/impossible to get. If that is the case then it is proposed is that a battery operated trimmer/brush cutter be purchased at a cost of £300. This could be purchased from the Wimpey Fields budget of which there is still about £12k left from the original £24k provided by Wimpey. Councillor Peter Spearink supports this purchase and it is proposed that the purchase be made by the PC and then the equipment be available to all the community groups.

The point was made that if the new trimmer is battery operated, it would be sensible to have a spare battery.

Action: PR to get approval from the PC for the purchase of a battery-operated trimmer/brush cutter.

7. Litter picking volunteers

There is currently a litter picking scheme in Staplehurst, whereby MBC provides the equipment and half a dozen volunteers undertake to keep litter free streets of their choice. It is proposed that this scheme be expanded so that there are about 24-30 such volunteers. However, this can only happen once MBC is in a position to provide the equipment. DG will put a request for more volunteers on FB.

The PC also organises an annual litter picking event – it is proposed that GSG take over responsibility for this.

Action: PR to get approval from PC.

8. Planters on Parade – north side

The planters at the Parade look lovely and have been very popular. These were funded by the donations of the residents of the Parade. £59.52 remains from this fund.

It is proposed that additional planters be added to the north side but it is difficult to ask the same residents for more money. Proposal that GSG should fund two planters. It was suggested that one of the planters be a community herb planter. Following discussion, it was agreed that the herb planter should be in addition to the two main planters. It should be higher (making it dog proof) and placed in the green area near the library. This will need to be approved by KCC. £350 has been allocated to allow for the sleepers and the top soil/compost needed for the new planters. Requests for plant donations will be made to the villagers who were very generous with plants when the last call was made. PR will ask Peter Spearink to be in charge of making/supplying the planters.

9. Any other business

- a. NT is concerned to make sure that the group maintains its energy and that all the projects for the year that have stalled as a result of Covid-19 can be picked up again in due course. She reminded the group that at it has always been the intention that individuals will take responsibility for projects to lead and run them. **Action: MM will draw up a list of all projects discussed to date** so that individuals can put their names against those for which they wish to be responsible. NT would like to take on the communications project in order to engage, inspire and educate the wider village into becoming more eco-friendly.
- b. It was reported that some allotments are to become available as part of the David Wilson development and proposed that GSG should have one. The suggestion was made that this should be a community allotment and people in the village invited to help take part. This follows on from the engagement and pride shown by the people in Market Street who have taken ownership of the new planter located there.

- c. JV asked if Sainsbury have a planting programme for the new shop development. There was confirmation that the proposed plan was low impact and green and that the car park is nicely landscaped. GSG committee members have been directed to take a look at the plans for the detail: MBC Planning application number: 20/501907The point was made however, that the planning was done at a higher level and closer to the time, Sainsbury should be invited to present their plans to the wider village and the villagers should be able to give feedback on them. This followed a comment from PR that he had met the liaison person at Sainsbury and they are keen to ensure that the village opinion is taken on board.
- d. MM raised the point that there needs to be representation at GSG from the Horticultural Society. **Action: AS has kindly agreed to raise the matter at the Society to get a representative .**
- e. T-shirts – there is now agreement that PR should go ahead with ordering T-shirts for the group (to arrive ahead of 8th August). The colour scheme of green on black has been agreed. **Action: All to put in size requests as soon as possible.**
- f. Susan Gullett is stepping down from the group. She was in the process of making signs for greening initiatives around the village. She has also started a conversation with the Rector with a view to helping the church make the churchyard into a more ecologically friendly area. The first project she would like to hand over to someone in the group. On the conversation with the Rector she is happy to take it forward initially although that will also need to be handed over to someone.

Date of next meeting

Monday 24th August 2020

Mina McPhee
29th July 2020