

Greener Staplehurst Group

Meeting – 29 March 2021 (Zoom)

Present:

David George (Chair)
Jose Castro
David Charge
Mina McPhee
Paddy Riordan
Adele Sharp
Richard Smith
Peter Spearink
Natasha Thomas
Vince Fordham (guest)

1. Apologies

Martin Ralph
Louise Pettifer
Jacqui Veitch

2. Minutes of last meeting

Approved.

3. Litter Policy Document

RS was thanked for an excellent paper. The following comments were made:

- NT suggested that it would make sense to use the wording that appears in the GSG set up paper. NT will provide RS with a copy.
- PR indicated that the checklist was very good; RS used the Parish Council document to draft this part. PR commented that more people in the community need to be encouraged to join in with the twice-yearly litter picking day, even if they only clean up their own street.
- NT suggested that it is worth adding Poppy's Nursery and the Staplehurst Under 5's group as that age group of children will be very open and enthusiastic about such a cause.
- JC commented that the Communications Group will shortly be developing its own strategy and policy paper and will be keen to promote all Parish Council groups including GSG (and its initiatives).
- PS mentioned that the Community Payback Team has, for the last 3 to 4 years taken part in various clean up activities from ditch clearing to just plain litter picking. They can be counted on to join projects/activities that run on Saturdays. PS also mentioned that if the involvement of the Community Payback Team is required then a request should be made direct to PS or one of the other people who co-ordinate the Team's activities.
- PR mentioned the Summer Play scheme run at the local school. He indicated that he can request the Play scheme supervisors to add litter picking to the activities of the children attending. He also indicated that he has contacts at the local primary school and can

have an initial conversation with the Head. After this NT has volunteered to work with the school in order to co-ordinate the learning around litter.

- It was noted that more litter picking equipment will be needed. DG will identify and talk to the right people at MBC. It was reported that in the past MBC used to provide equipment for this kind of activity but (according to Jean, the PC administrator) they no longer do so. DG will still explore the possibility.
- The general point was made that more people will be needed to help implement and manage the action on the ground. PR and NT have already agreed to work with RS.
- It was noted that once volunteers signed up as litter pickers, they would receive an information pack which includes an insurance form which must be filled out and returned promptly.
- RS will take on board all comments and the revised document will need to be approved at a full Parish Council meeting. Once approved by the PC, RS will prepare an action plan along with a GANTT chart outlining dates and people responsible.

The document was approved by GSG, subject to the comments made at this meeting. It will now go to the PC for approval.

Action: RS to revise and forward to the PC. Anyone who would like to join the working group for this initiative should get in touch with RS.

4. Site Updates

Poyntell Pond

MR and the Payback Team pruned the willows at Poyntell Pond. PR commented that the Payback Team has been working hard and there have been appreciative comments from members of the community, in person and on Facebook, for all their efforts.

PS indicated that the willow cuttings (moved to Jubilee Fields) should be transferred to Wimpey fields to top up dead hedges. DC indicated that since he is currently working locally, he can move Hippo bags as necessary.

Action: DC to liaise with M on the transfer of the willow cuttings.

Herb Bed

People have now started to plant this area.

Parade

The two big beds are doing well although the smaller beds need additional plants to brighten them up.

Jubilee Fields

DG has plated cornflowers and poppies, raised from seed, and he has more to go in. It was agreed that the area at the back should be mown and covered in plastic to ready it for October.

Action: DG and DC to cover the ground.

Jeffrey Close

The wildflowers (from seed) are now coming through although the area with the grass cuttings does not appear to have taken. It was agreed that elsewhere in this area, the ground should be covered in readiness for the next planting season.

Action: DG and DC to put down the plastic cover.

Chestnut Avenue

It was reiterated that the bed here is to be extended and the group was reminded that it gets waterlogged during the winter. There was a discussion about whether the water problem should be dealt with by raising the bed but this was rejected for the present. Since this area is to be planted for floral display, the best thing would be to take off the turf and dig it ready for planting now. There was agreement that DG and DC should undertake whatever action they see fit, depending on the conditions on the ground.

Poyntell Pond

There is good progress here and the willow has been cut back.

Action: DG and DC to undertake appropriate action to extend the bed and keep it in good order.

Planters

PS and BG are currently busy making more planters. DG reported that he has just planted up one new planter at a cost of £70 and another five are being constructed. It was proposed that £200 be allocated to cover the cost of the plants for the new planters. This motion was agreed.

Timbers

The point about getting timbers was raised and MM indicated that as soon as transport could be arranged then the timbers could be collected from Bedgebury.

Tree Planting

DG reported that he is shortly to meet someone from MBC to discuss how more trees can be planted in Staplehurst. In the past MBC have helped with tree planting and it would be good to have them plant more in the neighbourhood. It was suggested that DG should show the MBC representative the trees already planted and then request that they add to these, since both MBC and KCC have pro-tree planting policies at present. It was also suggested that the local councillors be asked for financial assistance from their Community funds in order for additional tree planting initiatives.

Action: DG to investigate possibilities for additional trees in Staplehurst.

5. Proposed changes to the GSG Facebook page

GSG has been set up as a sub-group of the Parish Council Committee. As such there is a requirement that the PC should be able to access all its social media sites. Jean (PC Administrator), as a representative of the PC, has therefore been given access to the GSG Facebook page.

Action: PR will discuss with Jean.

6. Football sponsorship

NT clarified that she has now discussed the football sponsorship with the grant funders. The original application for a grant made no mention of a football sponsorship of the kind that the group is proposing. It is therefore not considered an appropriate use of the funds.

Action: PR will notify the football club of this.

7. Any other business

New group member - PR proposed that Vince Fordham, who attended today's meeting as a guest, be accepted as a member of GSG. The motion was seconded and approved.

T-shirts – the invoice for the T-shirts has not yet been paid and it is now due. More T-shirts need to be sold on. All monies received for the T-shirts will go towards paying the invoice. For the present, though, the invoice will be paid using some money received from the Carp Farm which is being held.

8. Date of next meeting

19th April 2021

Mina McPhee

29th March 2021