

Greener Staplehurst Group Meeting – 21st September 2020 (Zoom)

Present:

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

1. Apologies

Louise Pettifer
Adele Sharp
Jacqui Veitch

2. Minutes of previous meeting approved.

3. Timber update

Peter has finished making the planters and the plan is to install them at the weekend (26th September). There is sufficient manpower and topsoil is also available.

4. Herb Bed

The planned herb bed by the library needs to be prepared: rotivation/digging. This can be done anytime between October-April. There was a discussion about the height of the planter in order to keep dogs out of it. Previous discussion was invoked to confirm that it should be two sleepers high. It was confirmed that there was a budget of £350.

5. T-shirts

These are ready for collection. PR will arrange for the Parish Council to pay for them (VAT efficient). NT has kindly agreed to take payments from individuals for the T-shirts via bank transfer and then reimburse the Parish Council. Subsequently, NT has provided her bank details on the WhatsApp group for all to pay and confirm sizes. **Action: all who ordered t-shirts to pay NT. PR will drop t-shirts to appropriate addresses.**

6. Work Priorities

Nicholson Walk – this is a high profile position for wildflowers. It needs digging. **Action: PR to raise at PC and get them to approve before any work is carried out.**

Jeffrye Close and Marden Road – wall enclosed area – MBC has confirmed that the land can be planted as a managed meadow. It was agreed that a bulk bag of native British and prairie wildflowers will make good impact as the flowering season will be extended with the prairie selection. **Action: to be rotivated and prepared now.**

Jubilee Fields -The entrance looks very good and is making an impact. More can be planted here.

Poyntell Road Pond – this has long been neglected. There used to be a group that managed the area but it no longer exists. DG has had a conversation with the lady who used to be in charge of the group managing it and she would like to see it re-instated. MR recalled that it used to be an

enhanced habitat with GN newts as well as common newts. It would be lovely to bring them back. It was suggested that the Payback team should get involved. MR indicated that we may need advice on managing the habitat and that a sump is needed to keep the pond damp all year.

The point was made that as all the habitats across the village are enhanced and improved, we also need to make sure that a continued habitat corridor is created across the village. **Action: all GSG projects and works should be marked on the Parish online map to monitor and plan for the wildlife corridor.**

Junior Monarch Football Team sponsorship – there are 14 Monarch teams who are sponsored each year at different age levels. To date 3 still need sponsors this year. Sponsorship costs £350 per team and in return GSG would be advertised as the sponsor and help raise the group's profile.

There was a lengthy discussion about whether this was a good idea. NT suggested that in return for sponsorship we should ask the team for active involvement in the village's greening activities. This is a good opportunity to get the young people of the village involved and to raise the profile of the group. There could also be opportunities for fund raising (such as, for example, plant sales) on football match/practice days), as well as opportunities to educate the children about wildlife and encourage them to plant more (eg. By giving them all seed bombs). Other advantages arising from this would be the chance for community groups work together alongside each other, an inroad into the parents and relatives of the team members for engagement and fundraising activities, siblings and parents could join in the village to do some of the greening work that is required. There was a request that the team being sponsored should be a girls' team.

It was agreed that such an expenditure would meet the group's educational objective and £350 was a good investment. There was agreement that there should be a clear return on investment. However, we need to make sure that there is a named person who will oversee/manage any activities undertaken by the team.

The motion was proposed by PR and seconded by NT. Agreed unanimously. **Action: PR to arrange loan and payment. PR to contact the team and agree the terms of the sponsorship (ie. what involvement from the team we get for our money).**

7. Communications

The point was made (by PR) that the work of GSG is getting noticed and mentioned more often in the village. The group is keen to build on this and NT has volunteered to get involved in this. **Action: NT to write for social media channels.**

8. Any other business

- a. **Bell Lane Nature Reserve (raised by PR).** The nature reserve on Bell Lane is padlocked and there is no access for anyone except the group that maintains it. In the past the Scouts have worked to clear the area of duckweed and other vegetation but not been allowed back to see and enjoy the site. The risk of habitat destruction has been cited in the past to keep the gate locked. It is currently an area that only a few select people can access. For some of the reasons below it would make sense for GSG to contact the people who are currently in charge of it and help provide wider access to the villagers:
 - i. It is a 'common' part of the village and people deserve to visit it and enjoy it
 - ii. It is a habitat which others in the village would like to help care for
 - iii. It is a great resource for learning about wildlife for both young and old alike
 - iv. GSG should be able to see how it fits into the 'wildlife corridor'
 - v. At present very little is known about who manages it and to what end
 - vi. There should be good succession planning in case of anyone of the current team stepping back.
 - vii. It is a green space which all should have access to, even if it is only limited to a few times a week.

Action: PR to contact the appropriate people and offer the involvement of GSG and the payback team.

9. Date of next meeting

Monday 26th October 2020 at 8.00pm

**Mina McPhee
5th October 2020**