

Greener Staplehurst Group

Minutes of Meeting –Monday November 1st 2021

Present

Mina McPhee (chair)

Stuart McPhee

Richard Smith

Adele Sharp

David George

Martin Ralph

Shirley Wigzell (guest)

Chair's Statement

MM thanked everyone for the hard work that they are doing around the village, but expressed her frustration at her inability to plan ahead due to a lack of information. She requested more support from GSG members while acknowledging the huge number of hours that group members and Councillors already give to the community. She also spoke of her disappointment at the low attendance at meetings. Several members indicated their support of her efforts.

1.Minutes of Last Meeting

Read and approved.

2. Apologies for Absence

Paddy Riordan Jose Castro Margaret Philby Louise Pettifer

3. GSG Budget and Project Plan 2021/22

It was agreed that a budget and project plan should be prepared for approval by the SPC so that GSG could have advanced approval for some of the projects to be undertaken over the next 12 months. The point was also made that a defined project plan would give all members of the group direction and motivation to achieve projects within a defined time scale. This also means that GSG can aspire to complete some well-defined projects and its members hold themselves accountable for achieving them. Everyone is asked to put forward a plan of costed projects that the Group would like to undertake in the next financial year with an indication of likely cost and also which budget the expense is likely to be charged to. This last point was made to indicate that while GSG may be responsible for undertaking certain tasks their associated costs sit elsewhere within the Parish budget.

Please can all group members send their project ideas and costs to Mina by 25th November so that a project list can be compiled for forwarding to the SPC Finance Committee.

4. Wimpey Fields

a. Designation

There has been confusion about the designation of the Wimpey Fields (park, nature reserve and conservation area are three different ways in which the site has been talked about) and it was agreed that a decision must be made about how the area is to be described going forward. The discussion centred around some of these points:

- Taylor Wimpey do not use the term 'nature park' in their handover documentation, but refer to a 'nature conservation' area.
- Designating Wimpey Fields a 'Nature Reserve' offers more chance of extra funding.
- The designation 'Park' suggests ball games, bikes, play equipment and the associated increased maintenance and upkeep costs.

A vote was taken. The result: 6 – 0 in favour of designating the Wimpey Fields a 'Nature Reserve'.

Discussion took place on changing the name from "Wimpey" to something that is more resonant with the village and local references. The possibility of a village consultation or competition was suggested. This matter will be discussed at a future meeting.

b. Wimpey Fields Site Clearance

It was agreed that the Wimpey Fields site is in **URGENT** need of a one-off site clearance so that local volunteers and the Payback Team can then continue to maintain it.

Jon Grimwood has met with David George at Wimpey Fields and has a list of what needs to be done. A minimum of 2 more quotes will need to be obtained for submission to the SPC.

DG agreed to contact Jon to obtain the list and his quote for the work.

If the list and quote are not forthcoming from JG, then another contractor will be asked to visit the site to provide a new list of works which will be the basis of any quote.

5. Beds Planting Update

a. Herb Bed

The herb bed has been beautifully weeded. The stepping stones for breaking up the bed and providing areas for walking through the bed have been promised but not delivered. It has now been decided to create a path using bark chippings over a membrane. Herbs and plants have been planted and more will be planted in the spring. **DG to search for/buy the membrane which the volunteers will use to create the path.**

b. Jubilee Field Bed

Membrane laid earlier in the year has not worked and the weeds are coming through. After discussion was agreed that the way forward lay in having an easy to maintain bed with drought resistant, insect friendly plants and shrubs (this could include planters like those at the Parade).

MM to talk to PR about possible help with funding from Jubilee Management Committee.

c. Other village beds

Jeffrey Close wildflower bed needs strimming urgently, then raked ready for wildflower seeds. **MR to let MM know when this is to be done so that a call can be made to volunteers.**

6. Volunteer Update and Councillor Support

a. Bed Maintenance

MR weeds and maintains the large Parade planters.

DG maintains the rest of the planters. Cyclamen have been added to several of the planters. SM asked for some for the Chestnut Ave/High St bed. **DG to buy.**

b. Volunteer Numbers

6 volunteers in total so far. Volunteer Facebook Page has been created to keep in touch. Guest, Shirley Wigzell is one of the new volunteers; she described her experience and love of gardening. She also said how pleased she was that the GSG was active in Staplehurst. Shirley has indicated that she will be happy to help with the volunteers group and MM has proposed that she join GSG.

c. Work Schedule

For the volunteer group to be put to work where needed, a schedule of work is needed. Please let MM know what work needs doing on the village beds so that a schedule can be created for the volunteers to work from.

7. Tree Planting

20 trees arriving in the village for planting soon. DG has asked Peter Spearink for use of the Payback team to help dig the deep trenches, and planting.

DG also to ask Acorn Hire if they have any machinery or equipment that could be borrowed.

8. Climate Emergency Statement/Action Plan

There was a discussion about what stance GSG wanted to take on the Climate Emergency and it was agreed that the Parish Council should be leading on this in line with how other parish councils around the area are dealing with this matter.

Agreed unanimously.

9. Village Green Bin

Now that there are a number of cultivated and wildflower beds around the village, a large amount of green waste is being generated and GSG needs to be able to dispose of this appropriately. The suggestion has been made that GSG get a green waste bin although there are questions about where the bin would be located. The Village Centre is at the heart of the village and the green waste is community waste so the Village Centre may be the most suitable location. This request will need to be put to the Village Centre Trustees. **MM has indicated that she will present to the Village Centre Trustees on this subject.**

An alternative solution for the village green waste is to have a village compost heap. DG has suggested a location and **DG will contact the Parish Clerk to find out who owns the land and enquire into whether permission can be gained for the compost bin.**

10. AOB

Queens Jubilee 2022

AS requested that GSG undertake the project of planting commemoration roses and lavender at the Village Centre, inside the wicker fence. GSG has agreed that this would be a fitting tribute for the Jubilee and has agreed to help with the project. MR has offered help clearing the area although this is a big project and more assistance will be required.