

Greener Staplehurst Group Meeting – 26th October 2020 (Zoom)

Present:

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

1. Apologies

Louise Pettifer
Adele Sharp
Jacqui Veitch

2. Minutes of last meeting

Approved.

3. Edging on the High Street

Bedgebury has promised logs for the High Street but transport is proving difficult. **Action: MM to put out a request for help on the Staplehurst Helping Page on Facebook.**

4. Flowerbed maintenance

The flowerbeds in the Parade need ongoing maintenance. MR looked after them through the summer. There was some discussion about whether they should be offered for adoption but MR has indicated that he is happy to carry on carrying for the beds since he knows what is planted and how they should be cared for. **Action: MR to notify the group whenever he plans to work on the beds so that anyone else who is available can also help.**

DG has amassed bulbs from donations around the village and has asked for a request to be put to the Parish Council for permission to plant them in front of the Village Hall and the Youth Club.

It was agreed that, as a matter of principle, permission for all major plantings and works should be sought from the PC in order that GSG is seen to be working with the Parish Council. This will then also provide insurance cover for any accidents that occur as part of the planting and maintenance. **Action: It was agreed that a list should be compiled of all sites to be planted and passed by the Parish Council.**

5. Rotavating

DG and DC are trying to co-ordinate diaries in order to rotavate several areas prior to planting. This will occur in early November. DG has 150 wildflower plugs for planting out once the sites are rotavated. It was mentioned that Andy from Acorn Hire is happy to help with the rotavating.

6. Wildflower beds

There was a discussion about the longer term plans for the wildflower beds. There was agreement that these should be planted with mixed native wildflowers along with a prairie mix so that there is a longer flowering season going well into autumn. 100g of seed (£52 from John Chambers Wildflowers) gives 30-50sq metres coverage. **Action: NT to investigate supplier and prices further and gain the group's approval (already granted in principle) in order to go ahead with the purchase.**

MR suggested that the cubs and scouts could all be asked to germinate and then help plant out the seeds to help them get going more quickly.

7. Treeplanting in November

GSG will be receiving a number of tree saplings in November and volunteers will be needed to help plant these out. Suggested locations include parts of the golf course and the area near the Scout Hut. **All locations will be passed by the PC.**

It was reiterated again that the saplings will have to be protected from the mowers. There was a suggestion that the trees trunks should be covered with bright orange netting in order to make them more visible. It was also agreed that the mowing contractor must take responsibility for all damage.

8. Sponsorship

At a previous meeting it had been agreed that the group would sponsor one of the junior girls' football teams in the village. The money for this was going to be the grant from MBC. However, there may be restrictions on the use of this money and we need clarification if it can be used for sponsorship. **NT will contact them to find out if it can be used for engaging/educating children through sponsorship.**

9. Finances

The finances for the year to date were reviewed. It was suggested that we should look at other sources of funding and try to apply for grants and funding wherever there is opportunity. It was suggested that for specific projects, the Staplehurst Community Events Group may grant the group money as they look to fund community groups.

10. Any other business

a. T-Shirts

Following a discussion about whether we could, it was agreed that the GSG t-shirts could be put onto Facebook for sale at £12.50 each as this would be considered fundraising rather than a pure commercial activity. **Action: MM to action.**

9.2 Poyntell Road Pond

The pond at Poyntell Road is owned by the Borough Council and in the past has been looked after by local residents. It was indicated that the Borough Council are happy for it to be managed. Now is a

good time for cleaning it up as there is little water in there but there are not enough people to help do all the work (at present under Covid-19 restrictions).

MR has kindly agreed to take responsibility for overseeing the works to rejuvenate the pond. He will get a working group together from interested people in the village. JC will put a note in the Parish newsletter for anyone interested in helping to look after the pond, get in touch. **Action: MR will co-ordinate all activities.**

9.3 Bell Lane Nature Reserve

While contact has not been made with the group that looks after Bell Lane Nature Reserve, it was agreed that the best way forward would be to get in touch and offer to help with some of the works. This matter has been left for a post-Covid time in order to make it easier to get volunteers into the working group.

9.4 White Paper on Planning

PR raised attention to the Government White Paper on planning. He indicated that he has already written to Helen Grant about this. It was suggested that the group should put in a response highlighting the need to consider wildlife and ecology before permission is granted for more development. **Action: NT and DG will write on behalf of GSG; please send suggestions/ideas for inclusion to NT.**

11. Date of next meeting

Monday 30 November 2020.

Mina McPhee

13 November 2020