



FRIENDS OF MIDSUMMER COMMON COMMITTEE MEETING ON 18 MARCH 2022

In attendance: Jeremy Francis (Chair), Peter Gotham (Treasurer), Rosica Bates, Inbali Iserles, Kit Holland, Steve Cheek (Secretary)

Apologies: Kate Hurst

1. Orchard

1.1 S.106 Award: Our application covered path improvements, irrigation, plus new raised beds, benches, bins, and signage. The Council have advised us that a Project Officer will be appointed by them when someone is available, and they will agree with us exactly what the money can be spent on, and manage the work for us. Agreed that Kit will chase the Council on this every 2 to 3 months (is there a time limit for us to use the money?).

Action: Kit

1.2 Newmarket Road entrance: Kit reported that the renovation project has been successful.

1.3 Update on other matters: Kit also reported that:

- wildflower seeds have been sown,
- she will follow up on 'Good to Grow',
- the bee hotel will be repaired, and
- she has notified Emmanuel College that we intend erecting some tall poles for our hops.
- Also, Kit will investigate getting a moveable sign that we can erect to explain any works in progress to the public. **Action: Kit**

1.4 Theft of mower:

- After discussion, we agreed that we should make a claim under our insurance policy even though this may well increase our annual insurance premiums.

Action: Peter

- Kit will investigate whether we can get the insurance we need (public liability and cover for our volunteers) more cheaply than the current policy. It was agreed that we don't need separate insurance for our tools. **Action: Kit**

2. Communications

2.1 Newsletter:

- Steve asked for articles for the Spring edition to be sent to him by 28 March. These will include an Introduction by the Chair, Inbali on hedgehogs, Peter on the S.106 grant, and Kit on the Newmarket Road entrance and the Eastern Pound.
- After discussion, it was agreed that we would only print hard copies for one edition of the newsletter each year. This will save significant costs, and also allow us to have more pages for editions where there are no printing costs.

- Agreed that we would print the Spring newsletter, and focus our deliveries on blocks of flats, and local Vets practices.

2.2 Website:

- Steve has spent a lot of time getting to website to its present state which is appreciated by the committee.
- Suggestions were made for enhancements – a private area for the committee to store non current information etc, also a ‘donate’ button. **Action: Steve**

2.3 Database of members: Steve proposed that his next project will involve the following:

- Allowing members to opt out of receiving emails **Action: Steve**
- Share the database of members with Peter, with a view to ensuring that we have a complete list of members. **Action: Steve/Peter**
- Investigate Mailchimp as a means of communicating with members **Action: Steve/Peter**

2.4 Social media: Rosica has updated Facebook but is still not able to access Twitter (suggested that we switch to using the Orchard twitter account). **Action: Rosica**

3. The Common

3.1 Eastern Pound: the exploratory dig did not uncover a lost ditch. Kit suggested that the best way to develop this area would be to plant trees. **Action: Kit to discuss with Guy/Kenny**

3.2 Cycling: After the last committee meeting, Jeremy and Peter attended a virtual meeting with the Council and the Police to discuss ways in which eycles and escooters could be controlled on the Common. At the end of the meeting, the Council agreed to formulate a plan, but despite reminders from us, they have not yet produced anything. **Action: Jeremy to follow up**

3.3 Trees: The Council have now planted two more Dawn Redwoods. Kit is arranging for all three to be watered regularly, continuing for the first two years after planting. **Action: Kit**

3.4 Events: Jeremy reported that he met Ashley Read (Council events officer) and the organiser of the recent Half Marathon. Noise seems to have been well controlled and litter was collected within three days afterwards. We will continue to engage with the organisers of future events. **Action: Jeremy**

4. Finance:

4.1 Finance update: Peter estimates that we will have about £1,000 in hand at the end of our financial year on 31 March. This after taking account of expenditure on hops, and the Spring newsletter print costs.

4.2 Council grant money:

- The Council main grant for 2021/22 has been confirmed as £900 (cf £1,200 requested). We need to revise our budget to allow for this, and agree with Kit what the budget for the Orchard is. **Action: Peter/Jeremy**

- We have not received confirmation of the separate mowing grant of £285 for 2021/22. Peter will continue to follow up with Alistair Wilson, and will also write to the Grants Team. **Action: Peter**

5. Membership

5.1 The Secretary advised that we have had 5 new members since the last committee meeting.

Next meeting: We could consider having our next meeting in person, depending on covid rates. One possibility is an early evening on the Common. **Action: Jeremy**