

## **FRIENDS OF MIDSUMMER COMMON COMMITTEE MEETING ON 9 AUGUST 2022 (by Zoom)**

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

Apologies: Kate Hurst, Inbali Iserles

### **1. Orchard**

1.1 S.106 award of £15,000: Kit has had no response to her recent email requesting an update from the Council (we were advised about this award in October 2021, since when we have been waiting for the Council to appoint a project team). Kit will contact local Councillors to try and put pressure on the Council. To move this forward. **Action: Kit**

1.2 Mowing grant:

- The Council have agreed to pay the mowing grant for 2022/23, and also to pay £500 for the purchase of a shed to house some equipment securely. We will research types of sheds and pricing. **Action: Kit**
- The Council have also asked if we would consider embedding the Council's grant arrangements in our Orchard licence. This requires further consideration. **Action: Peter/Kit/Jeremy**

1.3 Damage to trees: there have been two recent incidents on damage to trees in the Orchard. Agreed that there is very little we can do about this except visit the Orchard as often as we can.

1.4 Wood chipping:

- Kit will arrange the hire of a woodchipper to deal with the debris currently stacked round the Orchard. She will also consider if we should ask the Council to deliver wood chips as they have done previously. **Action: Kit**
- Kit recommended that all recently planted trees and those likely to be stressed by dry weather should have a wood chip mulch applied. **Action: Kit**

1.5 Theft of mower: It was noted at the last Committee meeting that we would make an insurance claim for the theft of our mower. This claim was agreed by the insurance company who have paid us £400.

1.6 The Eastern Pound and Midsummer House areas: Kit is still considering what we can do with these areas. The prospect of more frequent heatwaves in future suggests that drought resistant trees would be appropriate for the Eastern Pound. **Action: Kit**

1.7 Update on other issues:

- There will be a scything event (run by the Council) on 22 September at 3 p.m.
- Jeremy has asked Charlie Hattersley to discuss with Calverleys if they would like to make a donation re the hops we supply to them. **Action: Jeremy**
- The date for Apple Day is likely to be 18 September, but Kit will confirm when she can. **Action: Kit**
- The grass paths will need attention when the drought is over. We expect that some of the repair work will be covered by the S.106 award, but we need to agree a maintenance plan for future years. **Action: Kit**

## 2. Communications

### 2.1 Newsletter:

- Steve advised that he doesn't have time available to be responsible for the Autumn newsletter. Rosica volunteered to put a draft together if Jeremy and Kit would write their usual articles. There will also be updates on cycling, and the S.106 award together with the usual pictures. It was agreed that it would be useful for the newsletter to be distributed before the AGM in October, so we should aim for a first draft by the end of August.

**Action: Rosica/Jeremy/Kit**

- It may still be possible for us to print some hard copies as well as distributing electronically. This will depend on the printing cost which Kit has researched.

**Action: Kit**

### 2.2 Website:

- Steve has made some enhancements to the website, for example a 'donate' button which has generated donations from two new members. It was agreed that we need a plan for further enhancements (e.g. a private area for the committee to store non current information). **Action: Steve/Kit/Jeremy**
- Steve provided information from Google Analytics for visits to the website in the past month. Around 60% derived from Google (or other search engine) searches and 35% for people using the FoMC web address. 5% came from other websites. The most popular searches were first for 'Midsummer Common' and second for 'upcoming events on Midsummer Common'. This suggests that we should put more effort into updating the upcoming events area of the website. **Action: Steve/All**

### 2.3 Database of members:

- Steve has set up a Google Docs page to record information on members. This will feed information about new members from the website, but needs more work to ensure that:
  - We agree the fields needed
  - We agree how to transfer information on members from the existing system,
  - We review the information we currently have on members to ensure that it is, as far as we know, complete, and
  - We comply with all relevant data security requirements

**Action: Peter/Jeremy/Kit/Inbali**

2.4 Social media: We have a new Facebook account, and Rosica shared with the Committee the latest statistics (6 posts in the last month reaching a total of 328 individuals). **Action: Rosica**

## 3. The Common

3.1 Cycling: Jeremy has regularly followed up the discussion he had with the Council and Police last November about the dangers on unrestricted use of the Common by escooters, eycles and other electric vehicles. However, it seems clear that no

progress will be made until the Government make decisions about this issue. Jeremy will continue to monitor this. **Action: Jeremy**

- 3.2 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**

- 3.3 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: The Treasurer reported that we have received insurance proceeds of £300 for the theft of the mower, and the Council have agreed to finance the purchase of a shed to provide better security for our equipment in future. Apart for these items, income and expenditure are roughly in accordance with budget for 2022/23.

- 4.2 Accounts for 2021/22: the Treasurer will be arranging for these to be reviewed by the independent examiner. **Action: Peter**

- 4.3 The Council have suggested that the calculation of their future grant might in some way be set out in our licence agreement. It is not clear how this might work, and it was agreed that the Treasurer and the Orchard Manager would engage with the Council to understand better what they have in mind. **Action: Peter/Kit**

- 4.4 It was also agreed that it would be sensible for us to prepare an orchard maintenance plan for the future, so that irregular items such as path repairs were planned and budgeted. **Action: Kit**

#### **5. Membership**

- 5.1 The Secretary advised that we have had 4 new members since the last committee meeting, two of whom had made donations totalling £45.

#### **6. Committee**

- 6.1 The Chair advised that the Secretary is outside the UK until next June, and he expects to spend no more than three months a year in the UK after that. It will not therefore be possible for him to continue as Secretary. The Chair thanked the Secretary for his significant achievements, in particular starting an excellent newsletter, and transferring the website to new software. The Committee will decide how the Secretary's responsibilities should be divided in future (the Secretary indicated that he would be prepared to carry on managing the website if no one else could be found to do this). **Action: Jeremy/Kit/Peter**

- 6.2 The Chair announced that he will be retiring as Chair at the next AGM, and Kit has agreed to take over this role. This will be confirmed at the AGM.

#### **7. AGM**

- 7.1 It was agreed that we should plan for an AGM to take place in early October. If possible, this will be in person, but with the ability of attendees to join remotely. We will try and find a suitable place, possibly Christ Church in Newmarket Road.

