**FRIENDS OF MIDSUMMER COMMON**

**COMMITTEE MEETING ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2023**

In attendance: Kit Holland (Chair), Jeremy Francis (Treasurer), Inbali Iserles, Belinda Sinclair

Apologies: Peter Gotham, Rosica Bates

1. **Communications**
   1. Newsletter

* Agreed that we would aim to distribute the Autumn newsletter no later than 15 October, i.e., at least a week before the AGM. Kit will organise the text and the pictures, and Inbali will edit. Peter can then do a mailing with the Newsletter and announcement of the AGM details. **Action: Kit/Inbali/Peter**
* Kit will ask the printers if the colour on the printed version can be improved. **Action: Kit**
* It is now about three years since we started delivering printed copies in the local area. We think we have covered the most likely streets (i.e. excluding those more likely to associate with Logan’s Meadow or Jesus Green) but we have not been keeping detailed records. Jeremy will make a proposal for future distribution. **Action: Jeremy**
* We agreed that we should continue with two newsletters each year, with the Autumn newsletter being distributed before Apple Day and the AGM.

**1.2** Website

We need to find someone to be responsible for loading new information on a regular basis, there are only about 25 documents each year. **Action: Kit**

1. **Orchard**
   1. S.106 works:

* The award of £15,000 was made in September 2021, but little progress has been made by the Council in spending the money. The works so far agreed are expected to cost less that the award of £15,000. We do not yet know how the balance of the award is to be spent. **Action: c/f**
* We are unable to spend money on new tools etc until we have a safe place to store everything. The S.106 money is due to be used to instal secure storage, and there seems no reason why the Council could not authorise this even if other agreed works are delayed further. We discussed the possibility of paying for new safe storage out of our own funds, but this should be a last resort.

Sam Carling is the new Open Spaces executive at the Council and seems engaged. Kit will try and set up a meeting with him to progress matters. **Action: Kit**

* 1. Bees: unfortunately, the bees did not survive the harsh 2022/23 winter. Kit will clean out the hive and try to repopulate it in Spring 2024. **Action: Kit**
  2. Apple Day: this is to be organised for the end of October. We will need to rent an apple press if we can’t borrow one owned by other local orchards. **Action: Kit**
  3. Scything: this will take place in October subject to the weather (or use a strimmer if scything not possible). **Action: Kit**

1. **AGM**
   1. The AGM is being planned for October. We should like to use Christ Church again. Kit will draft an agenda, Peter will prepare to send out the notice to members. Kit will print and laminate some signs to put on the Common. Action: Kit/Peter
   2. Jeremy will arrange a booking at Christ Church for the week ending 27 October. **Action: Jeremy**
   3. Kit has found a speaker from Friends of the Cam to talk about protecting our river (water quality, abstraction etc).
2. **Finance**
   1. As previously noted, the Council awarded us a grant of £1,000 for 2023/24, but we didn’t get a separate mowing grant. Our budget for 2023/24 included spending on new tools, but as noted above, we haven’t purchased these as there is no secure place to store them.
   2. Jeremy reported that the balance in the bank account is £2,152.
3. **Other matter discussed but no action agreed**
   1. Eastern Pound: Kit still thinks that there might be a ditch there that can be opened up and will explore further (e.g., can we find someone with ground penetrating radar available? Also, could the Council plant more trees there?
   2. Could we improve the Council’s mowing regime, e.g., by mowing in strips?