**Chignals & Mashbury Community Jubilee Orchard**

**Minutes of the Chignal Parish Council**

**Orchard Sub-Committee Meeting**

**7th September 2018 at “Warwicks”, Chignal St James**

**Present:**

Parish Cllrs: Malcolm Feltwell (Committee Chairman), Lynn Ballard (Committee Secretary), Steve Middleditch

Co-opted members: Sarah Scott, Moira Tarrant

Apologies: Barbara Miller, Geoff Pitts

**The following matters and actions were discussed and agreed.**

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| **Agenda items** | **Action points** | **Responsible** |
| **1.Outstanding actions from 9 July 2018 Sub-Committee** | The Clerk to be requested to ask Cllr Aldridge to confirm land ownership of the former lay-by at Howletts corner.  The Clerk to be requested to inform the Parish Council’s insurers of the intention to erect a new shed and purchase a mower.  Other Sub-Committee actions were picked up on the agenda. | MF  LB |
| **2.Orchard events** | **Orchard Fruit Celebration** on **Sunday 14 October from 3pm – 5pm**.  It was agreed that a marquee and wooden tables would be required: the Village Hall Committee to be asked to loan them for use at the event. The marquee to be erected on Sat 13 Oct at 10.00 and grass cut that morning if required. Orchard Friends to be asked for help in erecting the marquee.  MF, LB, SM, MT and SS will be available to manage the event.  It was reported that the fruit crop this year is meagre due the hot summer weather and pest damage from aphids. Orchard Friends to be invited to bring along surplus fruit and preserves and committee members to bring frozen fruit such as damsons.    The Fruit ID database to be promoted at the event to encourage visitors to use it to identify their own fruit.  Table cloths/banqueting roll to be used to cover the wooden tables and bunting provided to decorate the marquee.  Orchard Friends to be reminded to attend the event and invited to bring along any surplus fruit or preserves and a picnic tea. Car parking to be arranged on the playing field.  It was agreed to draft articles about the orchard every 2 months in Chignal News: items to be agreed at each committee meeting. Copy required by end of Oct for the next edition on the Fruit Celebration, Essex Orchard Group and an update on planting new fruit trees.  Emails to Orchard Friends need to be more frequent: at least two emails promoting each orchard event plus a reminder close to the date. Visitors to events to be asked to join the Orchard Friends.  Efforts need to be made to involve more young people in the orchard. Contact to be made with the person who sends emails to the local church group and with the editor of the Little Hollows Facebook account to ask whether they could promote orchard activities. | MF/LB  SS  MT/LB  MF  SM/MF/SS  SS  MT  SS  SS |
| **3.Orchard maintenance** | The fruit trees have suffered from the hot weather, lack of rain and pests such as aphids, leaf cutter bees and the larvae of the Eyed Hawk Moth. Tree 69 was particularly badly affected.  One of the Seebrooks Red and two of the D’Arcy Spice apple trees need to be replaced this winter. The Essex Orchards Group members may be able to suggest suitable replacements from amongst the Essex heritage cultivars.  Fertiliser will be applied at the end of the year and it was agreed to use 50 x bags of Strulch (composted straw mulch) around the fruit trees in early Spring. This is expected to last two years and will be lighter and easier to apply than rotted farmyard manure.  The avoid disturbance to bumblebees and other insects, the old mulch mats stacked up around the edge of the orchard will be removed in November. The hedge cuttings need to be burnt off-site in the winter: Village Hall Committee to be consulted.  The two wooden benches have rotted and one has been removed as it is unsafe. Both seats should be replaced with more durable oak benches, similar to those used in the playing field. The City Council Parks service to be consulted on suitable types of bench and a bid made to the Parish Council for CIL funding.  The Parish Council has approved up to £2,000 for a larger shed with a suggestion that the Orchard Committee investigate log cabins and they are considered to be more secure and weatherproof. The City Council, as site owners, were consulted on this proposal and have agreed subject to keeping any dust pollution to a minimum. It was agreed to purchase a log cabin: details to be presented to the Parish Council on 10 Sept.  The purchase of a motor mower was approved in principle by the Parish Council subject to receiving details of the make and model. It was agreed by the Orchard Sub-Committee that a sit-on mower was required, preferably with a trailer that could be used to transport hedge cuttings, mown hay etc. The mower needed to be comfortable to use, robust, capable of dealing with the uneven ground and able to manoeuvre around the trees. The choice had been narrowed down to a Husqvarna TS 138 lawn tractor. A recommendation will be made to the Parish Council on 10 September.  The hired power scythe, Austrian scythe and strimmers had made a good job of the main orchard cut on 6th September. Volunteers had been sought to help with the raking of cut grass on Saturday 8th September at 10.00. | MT  LB  MT  MT/LB  MF/MT  LB  MF  MF  MF/SM  LB |
| **4 .Review of the Orchard Budget** | No new Invoices or Income.  Parish Clerk to be asked to provide an up to date balance for the Orchard account for each Sub-Committee meeting.  Approved new expenditure: 3 replacement apple trees, (approx. £60); 6 x Tree Gaiters (approx. £140); 50 sacks of Strulch (approx., £355); ground anchor for new shed (approx., £40).  It was agreed to submit bids to the Parish Council for CIL funding to pay for the tree gaiters, Strulch and ground anchor and to make investigations into CIL bids for acquiring 2 oak benches, a marquee for events and a water stand-pipe that might also link to the proposed pavilion in the playing field. | LB  LB  MF/SM/LB |
| **5. Orchards East Project** | LB and MF attended the newly formed Essex Orchards Group on 23 July. The group will operate as an informal network of orchard experts. MT will attend the next meeting later in September. | MT |
| **6.Wildlife survey update** | A moth survey undertaken in the orchard was reported to Orchard Friends. | MT |
| **7. Date of next meeting** | **Friday 19th October 2018, 9.30 am at “Anlora”, Mashbury Road, Chignal St James** | MF |