**Chignals & Mashbury Community Jubilee Orchard**

**Minutes of the Chignal Parish Council**

**Orchard Sub-Committee Meeting**

**9th January 2019 at “Maple View”, Chignal Smealey**

**Present:**

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

Co-opted members: Barbara Miller, Geoff Pitts, Sarah Scott, Moira Tarrant

Apologies: None

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

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| **Agenda items** | **Action points** | **Responsible** |
| **1.Outstanding actions from 19 Oct 2018 Sub-Committee** | Cllr Aldridge to be asked to confirm land ownership of the former lay-by at Howletts corner at the next Parish Council meeting on 14 January.  Other Sub-Committee actions were picked up on the agenda. | MF |
| **2.Orchard events, activities and marketing** | A **Spring Blossom** event will be held on **Sunday 14th April from 3pm – 5pm.** This will follow the same format as the event that was planned for 2018.  The event will celebrate the start of the growing season in the orchard and the beauty of the fruit tree blossom with a ‘bring & share’ tea and traditional music and dancing using decorated hoops. Orchard Friends to be notified of the event and asked to bring spring/blossom themed cakes and savouries and to enter a competition for the best decorated half hoop to use in traditional country dances at the event. Hoops and ribbon will also be available for those who wish to make their own at the event.  Car parking will be available in the playing field opposite the orchard. The Village Hall Committee to be asked about hiring the marquee. Visitors to be asked to bring their own folding chairs. Straw bales to be investigated as well.  SM will design a poster (A4 and A3) to be placed in various locations in the parish, including outside BM’s house and in the local supermarket and library. LB to email poster to local residents.  The orchard grass will be cut in the week leading up to the event. The marquee to be erected on Saturday 13th April at 10.00 and the Orchard Friends to be asked to help.  The marquee to be decorated on the Sunday morning and tables and hoops put out. Other games to be provided by MF.  Safety poles and tape to be put up at the entrance.  Tea to be provided from MF’s van.  SM to provide country dancing music. BM to organise dancing around the Mulberry tree.  Orchard Friends to be sent a reminder about the event and erecting the marquee, at least one week before.  A **Hedge Cutting Social** event will be held on **Tuesday** **12th** **February from 9.30am** with refreshments, such as bacon rolls and hot drinks provided for volunteers. Chelmsford City Council Parks & Green Spaces Manager to be consulted about their procedures for training park volunteers. Risk Assessment to be produced for this event. Participants to be advised to wear protective clothing such as thorn proof gloves, stout boots, safety glasses and helmets.  It was agreed that at least 3 events should be held in the orchard each year: the Wassail occurs every other year. Other events could include a Mid-Summer Picnic on Sunday 23 June and possibly a Dog Show: this idea needs to be discussed with the Village Hall Committee. Events that would attract children need further research.  **Marketing**: article on the new shed and the Spring Blossom event for the March edition of Chignal News to be drafted by MF with photos from SM by **25th February.** Kate Middleditch will update the orchard page on the Chignal website. Any other suggested changes to the webpages to be emailed to KM.  It was suggested that information should be provided on how the donations that are made at orchard events are spent, for example, at events, at the annual Orchard Committee meeting, in Chignal News articles and in communications about tree sponsorship. | SS  LB  MF  SS  MF  SM/BM  LB  MF  SS  LB/BM  MF  MF/SM  MF  SM/BM  SS  LB  SS  GP/SM  SS  MF/SM  SM |
| **3.Orchard maintenance** | Grass will be cut before growth starts in the Spring when the ground is dry. A mowing rota will be organised with volunteers who will receive training. A Risk Assessment will be required.  2 x Tun (dessert) and 1 x Monarch (cooker) have been ordered from East of England Apples and Orchards. Delivery date to be advised. LB to liaise with MT and BM on possible planting dates.  Fertiliser needs to be put around all of the trees, weeds removed and Strulch mulch spread when the ground is wet.  MF to liaise with Strulch about delivery options. 50 bags of Strulch to be ordered by the Parish Clerk before Spring following a period of sustained rain.    MT was thanked for pruning all of the apples, pears and quinces. The centres of the trees have been cleared and aphid damage pruned out. The three dead trees and all of the debris from the pruning have been removed from the site. Suggestions were made to prevent further damage by branches rubbing against the posts. The posts were still needed to support the tree guards which provide protection from rabbits living under the air monitoring station.  It was agreed that a 1.5m “A” frame lightweight safety ladder with large feet should be purchased for tree pruning. A bid to be made to the Parish Council for CIL funding to purchase a suitable ladder.  MT was thanked for removing mulch mats. The plastic pegs have been cleaned for re-use and will be purchased by MT.  The old shed (10ft x 8ft) has been dismantled and will be offered to Orchard Friends. The new shed will be treated with preservative in the Spring. It was agreed to purchase a shed alarm, padlock and chain and to get additional shed keys cut for Sub- Committee members.  The two damaged benches to be removed from the site. The two new oak benches to be ordered by the Parish Clerk this month so that they can be in place for the Spring Blossom event.  The picnic table would be inspected and treated with preservative in the summer if required.  The Orchard Information Board needs to be updated and is showing signs of damage from the weather. A quote will be obtained for renewing the artwork and panel for a bid to the Parish Council for CIL funding.  MT had surveyed the plants in the wildflower area and concluded that all of the initial seeding and planting of wildflower meadow plug plants had been successful: Birdsfoot Trefoil and Yellow Rattle had not been found elsewhere in the orchard.  The Sub-Committee considered a request by the son of a resident who lives near to the orchard to assist in the management of the orchard as part of his service to the community to gain a Duke of Edinburgh Award. It was suggested that he could review the bug hotel, study the wildlife living in it and renovate the structure. In addition he could assist with other orchard management tasks such as clearing the hedge cuttings, weeding around the trees and helping to spread the mulch. | MF  LB  LB  LB/MT  LB/MT/BM  MF/LB  MT  LB  MT  SS  MF/LB  MF  SM  MT  LB/SS |
| **4 .Review of the Orchard Budget** | The Parish Clerk produced a list of expenditure and income for the meeting. Three of the items: preservative paint £194.44; cycle stand (ground anchor) £39.99; and, cement £113.24 were included under “contingencies” in an approved bid for CIL funding for the new shed so should be removed from the Orchard accounts.  Invoices: Rent £200.00; Cable reel £37.79; Scythe hire £113.04; village hall hire £20.00; hose reel £29.99.  Income: Fruit Celebration £85.00; Donation £100.00  Approved new expenditure: shed alarm £16.00; keys, padlock and chain for shed tbc  It was agreed to submit a bid for CIL funding for a new Orchard Information Board and a ladder.  New income: payment received from MT for re-cycled plastic pegs and new tree plaque, £30.00.  It was agreed to review the Orchard tree sponsorship scheme at the next meeting. MT to provide a copy of the May 2016 list of sponsors. These are due for renewal every 3 years. | LB/MF  SM/LB  MT/LB  MT/BM |
| **5. Essex Orchards Group (ESORG)** | MT reported on the ESORG meeting in November. It was a useful forum for picking up information on practical aspects of tree management, such as the origins of Essex heritage fruit and the dangers of using damaged apples to make juice without pasteurisation. The next ESORG meeting will be held at The Compasses, Littley Green at 7pm on 28th January. LB and SM to attend. | MT  LB/SM |
| **6. Date of next meeting** | **Monday 4th March 2019, 9.30 am at “Bumbys”, Fox Road, Mashbury** | MT |