**Chignals & Mashbury Community Jubilee Orchard**

**Minutes of the Chignal Parish Council**

**Orchard Sub-Committee Meeting**

**4th July 2017 at the Jubilee Community Orchard**

**Present:**

Parish Cllrs: Lynn Ballard (Committee Secretary and meeting chair), Steve Middleditch

Co-opted members: Sandra Bailey, Simon Leadbeatter, Geoff Pitts Moira Tarrant

**Apologies:** Malcolm Feltwell (Committee Chairman)

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

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| **Agenda items** | **Action points** | **Responsible** |
| 1.Outstanding actions from 21 April 2017 Committee | Following several vehicle collisions and other incidents at Howletts Corner, the PC asked ECC to address road safety concerns, for example, by re-instating the lay-by that had been sited outside “Howletts”. Cllr Aldridge to be asked to confirm ownership of this land.  It was noted with thanks that the tables and benches had been treated with preservative in time for the Spring event.  Hedge cutting: noted that the hedge that was cut earlier in the year would need to be pruned annually and that the newly established hedge shrubs alongside the road at the western edge of the orchard would also need to be pruned from next year.  Other Sub-Committee actions were picked up on the agenda. | MF  MF/SL/GP  GP/MF |
| 2.Orchard events | In reviewing the **Orchard Spring event** on Sunday 7 May, the following points were noted:  \*the fruit blossom had finished by the time of the event so recommend holding it a week earlier on 29 April 2018;  \*the hoop making and dancing had encouraged participation by children and parents and would be repeated;  \*the recorded music worked well but need to purchase a 50m electric cable;  \*the marquee lent by the Village Hall Committee was essential to provide shelter and a focal point for the event and it was agreed that discussions would be held with the Village Hall Committee and the Gardening Club to purchase another marquee for community events;  \*consideration need to be given to storage and providing suitable means of weighing down the marquee in the event of high winds;  \*grateful thanks were given to Tony Towns for providing straw bales for this event.  **The Fruit Celebration** would be held on the same Sunday as the St Nicholas Church Harvest Festival (N.B. date confirmed following the meeting as 15th October 2017). Because of poor fruit set and bird damage this Spring, the orchard fruit harvest will be down on last year so the event will focus on fruit sharing from local gardens. It was suggested that visitors to this event be asked to make bird scarers that could be put on the trees in late February/March.  **The Wassail event** would not be supported by the Good Easter Molly Gang next year as they were now committed to playing at the Thaxted Community Orchard’s Wassail. Ideas for another type of Wassail event would be discussed at the next meeting of the Orchard sub-committee in September.  **Funding of events**: it was agreed that events should be largely self-funded but that there were several items of equipment that need to be purchased to improve the management of events and orchard maintenance. Grants should be sought from the Parish Council’s Community Infrastructure Levy funding and from other grant bodies for the following items :  event marquee; storage pavilion in the Playing Field; tractor mower; electricity supply to the orchard; flagpole; village signs; new orchard shed. | SB  SB  SM  LB/SM/MF  SM/MF  MT  All  SL/LB/SM |
| 3.Orchard maintenance | MT urged us to water the most vulnerable fruit trees from the water butts and her donation of a new water butt at the western end of the orchard was noted with thanks.  MT had noted the trees suffering the worst summer aphid infestation. Ladybirds were predating on the aphid but we could wear gloves to remove them as well. This method should also be used in Spring in preference to using sprays.  MF had suggesed that the mulch mats were harbouring ants which were ‘farming’ aphids on the trees. MT explained that the mulch mats served to keep down the weeds around the trees and conserve moisture: if they were removed, an alternative form of mulch, such as 2 inch depth chipped bark, would need to be applied. It was agreed to review the mulch mats following the hand removal of aphids.  The next dates for Orchard Friends to help with grass cutting were agreed as follows: Saturdays at 10.00 on **15th July, 19th August and the 16th September.**  LB had suggested asking Darren Lerigo from Modern Mint to come to the orchard with his Austrian Scythe to see whether it would be an appropriate tool to do the main orchard cut in Aug/Sept instead of hiring 2 brush cutters. This was agreed.  MT had been surveying wild plants, such as Birdsfoot Trefoil and an unusual Knapweed (Centaurea nigra spp. nemoralis) on the orchard site for inclusion in a revised “Flora of Essex” publication. A Moth trapping session was planned for the following week. | All  All  MT/MF  SB  LB  MT |
| 4 .Review of the Orchard Budget | Updated balance for the Orchard budget: £1,074.24  Income: £10.00 from a tree sponsorship and £23.20 from the Spring event donations to be given to the Clerk to be banked.  Invoices to be paid: £11.00 to SB for ribbons etc for the Spring event; £14.08 to SM for music CD and Performing Rights fee for the Spring event.  Approved new expenditure: purchase of electric cable estimated £30.00.  See item 2. Orchard events funding for details of potential future expenditure.  It was agreed to seek a meeting with Andrew Large, CCC Estates team to discuss the first rent payment, due in 2018. | SL  SL/LB  SB/SM  SM  LB/MF/SM  LB |
| 5. Orchard Committee 8 May actions | The main action to arise from the Orchard Committee meeting on 8 May was a proposal to seek support and funding for a storage pavilion in the Playing Field (see above). | MF/LB/SM |
| 6. Date of next meeting | **Tuesday 5th September 2017, 12.00 at the Orchard (or at “The Saddlery”, Mashbury Road if raining).** | All/SB |