**Chignals & Mashbury Community Jubilee Orchard**

**Minutes of the Chignal Parish Council**

 **Orchard Sub-Committee Meeting**

**5th September 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.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Agenda items** | **Action points** | **Responsible** |
| **1. Information.**  | Sandra Bailey announced that this would be her last meeting as a co-opted member of the Orchard Sub-Committee due to other competing commitments, such as chairing the newly formed Chignal Community Group. SB was thanked for her valuable contribution to the development of the orchard and for managing the Orchard Friends network over the last 4 years. SB kindly offered to help with the organisation of the Fruit Celebration on 15 October.Members agreed to sound out local residents who might be interested in being co-opted onto the Sub-Committee.Simon Leadbeatter offered to take over managing the Orchard Friends communications following Sandra’s departure.  | SBAllSL |
| **2.Outstanding actions from 4 July 2017 Sub-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.Hedge cutting: consideration to be given to means of disposing of cut hedge material such as purchasing a petrol-driven shredder. Shredded material after composting could be used to mulch the fruit trees.Other Sub-Committee actions were picked up on the agenda.  | MFGP/MF/MT |
| **3.Orchard events** | **The Fruit Celebration** would be held on Sunday 15th October 2017 from 12 – 1.30pm, (following on from the Harvest Festival at 11.00 in St Nicholas Church). SL, MT gave their apologies for this event.The event will focus on sharing fruit and preserves produced from the orchard (quince jam and crab apple jelly made by MT) and produce from local gardens, such as frozen damsons. Another important element of the event will be a workshop for making a variety of bird scarers, (CDs, glitter strips, wind chimes, bangers, flag bunting, silhouettes of cats and hawks, scarecrows etc) which will be stored in the shed in bin bags and placed in the orchard during February. The bird scarers will need to be changed and moved every couple of days to maintain an element of surprise to deter birds from pecking new fruit buds.It was agreed that some suitable materials (up to £20.00) would be purchased for the bird scarer workshop and Orchard Friends would be encouraged to bring other items that could be used on the day. Stationery, scissors etc to be sourced for the event. It was suggested that Newlands Spring school might wish to get involved in making bird scarers.The Village Hall Committee to be asked for the loan of their marquee and up to 6 tables for the event. Erection of the marquee is planned for the afternoon of Saturday 14 Oct, from 3pm and it will be dismantled after the event.Tables to be collected during the morning of 15 Oct and put in the marquee.MT to give frozen fruit and preserves to LB before the event. Baskets, tablecloths, bunting and plastic bags for fruit to be provided by members of the orchard committee.Donations for orchard maintenance to be invited using the plastic buckets in the shed.A poster promoting the Fruit Celebration to be designed, printed and displayed in the parish. Support for a **Wassail event** on the first Saturday in January is being sought from local dancers and musicians. More information should be available on this event at the next meeting. A Halloween event is being planned in the Village Hall on Friday 27 October and it was agreed that there could be a display and procession of decorated pumpkins around the orchard to start the evening’s festivities. It was proposed to split any profit from the event between the Village Hall Committee and the Orchard Committee. | MTSB/SLS/LBMLB/SMSBMT/LBSB/LBSMMTSB/SMSL |
| 4.**Orchard maintenance**  | The major orchard cut would take place on Monday 11 October, weather permitting. A power scythe had been hired for the day. SM, MF, LB, SB, GP could be available to use strimmers and lawnmowers with help from partners and friends. Start time to be advised.Raking of the cut grass would take place on Saturday 16 Sept at 10.00 instead of the usual grass cutting session: Orchard Friends to be informed. LB gave her apologies.MT reported on tree health: the two main issues are bird damage and the lack of water getting to the roots of the trees. MT had sent leaf samples, including red leaves from two of the otherwise vigorous Improved Fertility trees, to the Royal Horticultural Society. They responded that this pear rust was symptomatic of a magnesium deficiency due to insufficient water uptake by the tree roots. In addition, we were advised to keep the ground around the trees clear of grass and weeds, e.g., using mulch mats.Given the low amounts of rainfall in the last 12 months, MT has been watering the most vulnerable trees, (Queen, Seabrooks Red and D’Arcy Spice) from the water butts and others are urged to do the same when rainfall has been low. The trees are now entering dormancy so less need of water but MT recommended that the rainfall levels during the winter need to be monitored closely so that action can be taken next Spring and Summer to keep the trees well watered.Moth trapping in the orchard had taken place on a clear dry evening and produced very good results. The list of moths visiting the orchard has been recorded by MT. | MFSLAllMT |
| **5 .Review of the Orchard Budget** | Updated balance for the Orchard budget: £1,049.00Income: None Invoices to be paid: £80.00 tbc to MF for hire of a power scythe; £30 – 40 tbc to SM for electric cable. Approved new expenditure: £20.00 tbc for bird scarer materials  LB has asked CCC Estates, (Richard Wilson) to consider charging only a peppercorn rent for the orchard given the value of the site now to Chelmsford City as a community facility and its importance for biodiversity. It was agreed that a bid would be made to the Parish Council in November for Community Infrastructure Levy money to pay for a secure replacement shed, such as a container with appropriate cladding, grass cutting equipment, shredder and a marquee that could be also be used by the Village Hall Committee and other community groups in Chignal. | SLMF/SMSMLBMF/LB/SM |
| **6. Date of next meeting** | **Tuesday 3rd October 2017, 9.30 am at “Bumbys”, Fox Road, Mashbury**  | MT |