**Chignals & Mashbury Community Jubilee Orchard**

**Minutes of the Chignal Parish Council**

**Orchard Sub-Committee Meeting**

**7th December 2017 at “Anlora”, Chignal St James**

**Present:**

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

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

**Apologies:** Steve Middleditch, Sarah Scott

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Agenda items** | **Action points** | **Responsible** |
| **1.Outstanding actions from 3 October 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”. The Clerk to be requested to ask Cllr Aldridge to confirm land ownership.  SL to be provided with a new shed key.  Other Sub-Committee actions were picked up on the agenda. | MF  LB |
| **2.Orchard events** | **The Fruit Celebration** on Sunday 15th October 2017 was well attended with generous contributions of fruit and produce from local gardens. The event raised £61.80 in donations. The bird scarers made at the event would be put out on the trees, with any necessary adaptions, from February and moved about until April to maintain the element of surprise. Additional bird scarers would be required and committee members were asked to make some using materials such as using foil and CDs.  It was suggested that tea and coffee could be provided for next year’s Fruit Celebration.  SS had reported a positive response from a representative of the Beavers organisation in Chelmsford about encouraging children to get involved in orchard projects, such as making bird scarers. Further information and possible dates to follow.  The **Halloween event** on Friday 27 October started with a pumpkin display in the orchard and a procession to the Village Hall. The Chignal Community Group donated part of the profit from running the event to the orchard: £107.00.  The **Wassail event** will be held Saturday 6th January at 5pm. MT circulated a detailed programme based on previous years. Several musicians and dancers may be available to lead the dancing by visitors and laminated song sheets produced for earlier Wassails could be re-used. Norman Smith to be asked to MC the event.  The grass needs to be cut around the entrance and shed before the Wassail, possibly using the recently donated Flymo mower.  A poster will be designed to promote the event and an email sent out to Orchard Friends.  Orchard Committee members present at this event should wear High Viz jackets and put out safety tape and metal rods to indicate the orchard entrance way.  Village Hall Committee to be approached to hire the car park for this event. | All  MF  SS  SL  MT  LB  MF/GP  SM/SS  MF/SL/GP  LB |
| **3.Orchard maintenance** | The trees are suffering due to lack of water because of drought conditions over the last 18 months. MT had been watering the most vulnerable trees during the summer but further action was now required. The mulch mats were not allowing sufficient rain water to percolate through to the tree roots so after seeking professional advice, it was agreed to remove the mats as soon as possible and to hand weed an area at least 1m way from the trunk. The soil would be left bare over the winter to allow water penetration and then covered in a tree mulch in the spring, as recommended by Barbara Miller, a local arboriculture expert and Orchard Friend. Samples of tree mulch to be obtained to ascertain its suitability. BM to be asked about quantity of mulch required so that a bid for CIL funding can be submitted to the 8th January Parish Council Budget Committee.  Orchard Friends to be informed that hand weeding around the fruit trees will take place on Thursday mornings, starting in January. Members of the Committee to meet at the orchard on **Friday 8th December at 10.30am** to start removing the mulch mats furthest from the shed. The mulch mats and pins to be retained and stored in the shed.  The hedges around the orchard need to be cut back to about 5 foot high. It was agreed to start the pruning on **Thursday 22 February**. Cut material to be taken to the back of the village hall for burning when dry. Orchard Friends to be informed of the date.  A replacement ‘Pearl’ apple tree had been ordered. The soil in the old planting hole needs to be removed and replaced with soil from the mound next to the shed. | LB  MF/LB/SL  SS  LB |
| **4 .Review of the Orchard Budget** | Income: £61.80 (Fruit Celebration); £107.00 (Halloween event)  Invoices paid: £83.40 to MF for hire of a power scythe; £23.95 for 1x ‘Pearl’ apple tree.  Approved new expenditure: tree mulch tbc (subject to a CIL bid); hire of village hall car park for the Wassail tbc.  CCC had been asked about waiving rent payments: response had not been received in time for this meeting.    Cost of providing secure storage facilities and power machinery for the orchard to be sought to support a bid for CIL money to be discussed at the Chignal Community Event on 3 March. | SL/LB  LB  LB  MF |
| **5. Date of next meeting** | **Thursday 8th February 2018, 9.30 am at “3 Pitt Cottages”, Mashbury Road, Chignal St James** | LB |