

Stoke Environment Group

Minutes of Meeting 23 on 12 July 2023

Attendees: Andrew Boyle, Helen Grant, Karen Housego, Dave Smith, Nicolette Williams, Trevor Williams, Ian Upshall, Fi McQueen (8)

Apologies: Polly Burns-Cox, Sarah Evans, Dave Evans, Bryony Slaymaker (4)

- 1 **Welcome and Apologies**
- 2 **BioBlitz 1st July feedback:** Very interesting and engaging session learning how to use Seek and iNaturalist from the SWT. All data collected through the app will automatically be part of 'Stoke St Gregory Project', which will enable the Somerset Environmental Records Centre and SWT to analyse local biodiversity (species, abundance, location) and how it changes over time. Discussed having a talk on the Stoke St Gregory Project data and conclusions at EnviroFair24 (Saturday 1 June 2024).
- 3 **Bat Detective 2nd or 3rd September update:** This event is weather dependent as it needs to be a dry and not windy early evening. We will be learning how to use a Bat Detector, which attaches to a phone and working in small groups to see how many species and numbers of bats we can identify in the village. It promises to be a fun evening and suitable for all ages. Children need to be accompanied by an adult. More details and timings will be advertised soon. NW will produce a 'Bat Detective Evening' poster for advertising from mid August.
- 4 **Village Rounders 14th July update:** SEG were invited to this event but it has been cancelled by the organisers.
- 5 **Willey Road Playing Fields phone box:** KH is organising wood being fitted inside for a notice board after it has been cleaned in the next two weeks. It will also be used for a trial recycle point for empty mixed waste blister packs (e.g. tablets and contact lenses, foil and plastic mix), which are not suitable for the kerbside blue bag. KH is also ordering a SSG sign for the top of the phone box and painting some of the glass panels.

6 **Bus Stop update:** KH has resourced the paint and TW is removing one panel so that KH can obtain quotes for replacement glass or Perspex and one sheet of metal. Once all materials are available, the bus stop will be repainted with some artwork along the bottom solid panels. The single replacement metal panel will be used as a community notice board.

7 **Finance update:** Full update in AGM.

8 **Community Orchard update:** Thank you to everyone who came along to the meeting for a look round and discussion of plans. SEG has now received confirmation from both the Allotments MC and the Parish Council to take on the management of the orchard. SEG has secured a grant of £1980 from National Grid to refresh the Community Orchard. The plans discussed include: one new bench, three raised beds for growing herbs, at least two compost bins, wild bulb planting, fruit bushes and eight espalier fruit trees. This will involve a lot of work. Dates for clearing and planting will follow. Could you please save clean cardboard for use as weed suppressant, ready for use when we get woodchip. The work funded by the grant must be completed, and evidence returned, by 31 December 2023.

Alongside the Dark Lane bench, the bus stop and phone box, the reinvigorated Community Orchard will be a part of a series of very visible projects undertaken by SEG for the benefit of both the community and the environment. The Community Orchard project will also address (at least, in part) some of the actions arising from the Community Plan, published earlier in the year.

9 **Village Community Plan update:** Discussed the Community Action Plan Tracker and what SEG can deliver. To be put on the SEG website and information included in the next Round Robin.

It was noted that there are a number of actions arising from the Community Plan, and articulated on the Tracker, that SEG can address in the future (some have already been addressed by SEG). SEG members were urged to review the Tracker and make suggestions on how the

group could tackle some of these challenges. IU agreed to distribute an electronic copy of the Tracker.

10 **AOB:**

NW suggested planting a hedge along the bank at the PF, especially either side of the gates so they look more integrated. IU and FJM noted that they had had discussions with the Playing Field MC in the past, but these had not resulted in any commitment by the PFMC or any indication they would like to proceed with the idea.

DS suggested buying a battery operated hedge trimmer and will research cost. Everyone was in agreement to purchase one. The Footpath Group are undertaking a great deal of work and some hedges are quite challenging to trim. Other hedges are not actively managed (i.e. the hedge along the allotments) and without the work of the Footpath Group and SEG in general, it is unclear whether anyone would undertake the work to maintain access for the community.

Lots of positive comments and feedback from the Round Robin.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

AGM & Next Meeting - Wednesday 13th September 2023 at the Café, HOTV at 7.30pm.

Fiona McQueen

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July 2023