

Stoke Environment Group

Minutes of AGM and Meeting 24 on 18th October 2023

Attendees: Karen Housego, Dave Smith, Andrew Boyle, Rob Hensley, Trevor Williams, Fi McQueen, Ian Upshall (7)

Apologies: Nicolette Williams, Polly Burns-Cox, Briony Slaymaker, Helen Grant, Dave Evans, Sarah Evans (6)

AGM

- 1 Voting with a simple show of hands of the attendees, for the three positions below for the next 12 months. The following was unanimously voted:
 - Chair: Ian Upshall
 - Secretary: Fi McQueen
 - Finance Officer: Polly Burns-Cox
- 2 Review of second year (IU): See attached.
- 3 Annual financial summary: Finances are healthy. Current balance: CIL £1532, NGG (Community Orchard) £159 and SEG general funds £1152.

Meeting

- 1 Welcome and Apologies
- 2 Review of Meeting 23 Minutes and Actions Arising - None
- 3 Reviews of current Projects (All): A huge thank you to everyone involved, all their hard work and continued efforts.
 - *Footpaths (SE)* - Anne Merritt gathered a few Polkesfield residents and with some of the footpath group and cleared the path from Dark Lane to the kissing gate and a bit beyond. Anne and SE then met Debbie Ebsary (Somerset Footpaths Officer) there a few days later to see if she was able to clear any of the overhanging trees. Unfortunately this was not in her remit as the right of way was clear and walkable. SE has made the decision not to do any more strimming until towards the end of October as undergrowth is still growing rapidly. The maize is starting to be cut and hopefully will be completed by this meeting which should make footpaths easier to be trimmed. Walking with secateurs is always helpful. Footpath at Gottards maize field has now been cleared and is now walkable. Positive feedback on leaflets of local walks.

- *Bus Stop (KH & TW)* – Glass for the bus-stop is now ready to be picked up. IU agreed to do this. Three panes of glass will be fitted. The fourth frame will be fitted with a solid panel which will be used as a community noticeboard. The refurb needs to be done on a Sunday, as buses don't run on a Sunday and there is a safety issue to be factored in. The framework needs to be washed down, then treated with an acid to remove any oxides, primed, and painted. The new panels will then be fitted.
- *Telephone Box (KH)* – Sadly, the recycling trial of blister packs has been stopped. Although it was very well used, with lots of positive feedback, on several occasions all the blister packs have been thrown around the playing field and track. It is noted that the door is not weather-proof and there is a significant risk of any contents becoming damaged by water ingress. Discussed the idea of whether the telephone box could be moved to the garden of the café HOTV, which would be safer. The HOTV has been asked about this. IU will report back to the Parish Council.
- *Community Orchard (All)* – TW has ordered five different cordon apple trees at £20 each (Charlton Orchards). They will be available mid-November. Also ordered ten raspberry Joan J, two blackcurrant Ebony, three gooseberry Hinnomki red, one tayberry, one loganberry, and two fastigiate crab apple trees that grow to about 2 metres. All of the latter will be available mid-January 2024. Costs should be well within budget. TW has refurbished a bench with new wood and it was discussed when and where to put it. Four raised beds have been set up, which are now ready for planting herbs.
- *The Spinney (IU)* – Tidying up is on hold at the moment until a resolution has been reached regarding the poor standard of work undertaken by National Grid contractors (a site meeting is to be held on 2 November). Sadly some of the signage about the wildlife at the Spinney has been damaged and thrown onto the roof of the village hall.
- *The Hedge at Village Hall (IU)* – The hedge is looking very healthy and is growing well. The weeding which was done last month has made a huge difference. There was one third left to do, which was completed on Saturday 19.10.23 at 10-2pm Weeding at Village Hall hedge and Community Orchard. Huge thanks to those who helped.
- *Round Robin (KH)* – Have had lots of positive feedback and is proving to be popular. KH has agreed to continue with the RR for the next year. All suggestions for content welcome. FM offered to help with the distribution of the newsletter.

4 Community Woodland update (IU) – See attached review of year.

- 5 EnviroFair24 discuss and update (FM) – General discussion. It was concluded that the Envirofair would be run in 2024 and to build on the success of the previous three Envirofairs. It was suggested that a theme could be adopted to help bring some focus to the event and this will be the main topic of discussion at our next meeting. If there is something you would like to see at EnviroFair24, then please do let us know. The Village Hall has been booked for 1st June 2024
- 6 Discuss future projects for 2024 – Community Plan actions. See attached. Discussed future projects and it was decided that as a small group of volunteers we need to think carefully about the projects we take on moving forward. Requests were made for the Bat Detective night to run again next autumn. Any suggestions for next year are very welcome.
- 7 AOB
RH has noticed lots of dead toads on Huntham Lane at this time. Discussed could we have put out signs next year, it will raise awareness and also be a bit of fun. Sadly the hedgehog that RH rescued did not make it. There has been an increase in hedgehog sighting in the village this year which is very positive.

DS shared that it is free to borrow a thermal imaging camera that fits into mobile phone from a Somerset library when you are a member.

Next Meeting – 6th December 7.30pm HOTV café

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