



The notes from the meeting of the Open Spaces Project Group held in the Garden Room, All Saints Church, Gurnard on Wednesday 30 March 2016 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillors: Fuller and McKean

Community Representatives: Martin Bilson (Chair), Georgina Austin, Jenny Schofield, Steve and Terry Benstead. Ellis and Doreen Gant were welcomed as new members.

48 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Ben Cooke (who also needs to step back from the project for a while), Carol McKerracher, Trevor Gant and Dani Norbury

49 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Fuller declared a Pecuniary Interest as an IW Councillor with an executive role for Open Spaces.

50 MEETING NOTES

The notes of the meeting held on 24 February 2016 were amended, then approved and signed by the chairman.

51 RESOLUTIONS FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL

The recommendations from the last meeting were presented to the Parish Council on 10 March 2016. The Parish Council is concerned at the costs forwarded to set up the Community Growing area without a formal plan. A request has been made for a Business Plan and timeframe for the work. They also require that at any meeting where recommendations are made, a Parish Councillor must be present. They have agreed to “ring fence” the balance of this year’s budget (£2,233.37) to support the project on production of a formal plan. Discussions took place that the project is still very young (some 5 months old) and will need “pump priming” until alternative sources of funding can be sought. The only way that this can occur is with funding from the Parish Council which in the long term would enable funding from outside sources. It was very unfortunate that the Grow Wild funding was not successful. The Group have, however, managed to obtain support “in kind” from both Grow Wild and The Conservation Volunteers. The grass mowing was thought to be essential to move the project forward.

52 PRESENTATION FROM CAROL FLUX OF ISLAND 2000

Carol explained that Island 2000 are now managing 30 sites across the Isle of Wight (mostly owned by the IW Council). Dependent on the site, they can provide a ranger, manage regular maintenance and help apply for funding.

She explained that she has concerns about the Community Growing Area due to the lack of water on the site, together with the large start-up costs. Members discussed this and together with the withdrawing of Ben Cooke from the group, felt that at this time, maybe this should not be a priority.

Most members are interested in the conservation value of the site – the orchard, wild flower meadow, arboretum and pond areas and it was agreed to concentrate on these first. It was suggested that to obtain funding local young people need to be involved from the start particularly the Scouts and

GURNARD PARISH COUNCIL

Guides. Once the flower meadow has been established and the path mown to the top of site, events could be held which could bring in an income and publicise the project.

Martin has ordered some further free wild flower seeds and another Green Gym session has been sanctioned by the Parish Council. An informal meeting (without the Parish Clerk) will be held to construct an Action Plan for presenting to the next Parish Council meeting.

53 WAYS FORWARD FOR THE COMMUNITY GROWING AREA

Ben had previously met with Matt Noyce from Quarr Abbey and Martin when Matt suggested that a large pit could be dug with a mechanical digger and filled with top soil as an alternative to raised beds. After much discussion and debate it was agreed to delay the implementation for a Community Growing Area at this time and re-visit once the rest of the site has been established.

54 POND AREA

Due to lack of time, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

55 NEXT STEPS

- 1] Construct an Action Plan for the Parish Council
- 2] Promote the Project on Social Media

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) That a path is mown up to the top of the site as per the quotation provided - £50 initial cut and then £20 per cut as required.
- 2) That £500 is used to employ the services of Gift to Nature to manage the site and assist with funding applications.

56 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the date of the next informal meeting will be Wednesday 6 April 2016 at 7pm in the Portland Inn to produce the Action Plan for the Parish Council, plus another formal meeting on Wednesday 11 May in the All Saints Garden Room.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

.....

Chairman