**Kingston Action Group**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2022.**

Present: Vicki Scott (Chair) Steve Berry, Catherine Dampney, David Hoare, Rob Watson, Tony Wheeler

Apologies: Barrie Lambert

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 15 June were approved. The meeting scheduled for 2 August had been aborted as it was inquorate.

 2. **Finance**

2.1 The balance as at the last bank statement dated 9 August was £3676.26 but £3000 had been transferred to the Group’s account by the Parish Council on 16 September, bringing the total to £6676.26 in credit. Money owed totalled £3939.37, including sums recently paid for crocus bulbs (£1047), other bulbs (£609),greenhouse staging( £149.98) and insurance (£144.40) The available balance was therefore £2592.49 Of this a further £1400 needed to be spent on planting this financial year. Some of this would go on plants for the Community Garden, some on wildflower seeds for the new meadows on the village greens and some on snowdrops for The Avenue. We were also committed to spending the remainder of the £350 received from the South Downs Trust (ie £200) on a pond liner.

2.2 Income remained at £338 per annum. The fate of the CARES application was still unknown, although Rob was about to send yet another reminder. News of the outcome had originally been promised by Easter and more recently, by mid-June.

3 **Planting Plan**

3.1 The Planting Plan envisaged £1000 being spent in F/Y 20021/22 and £3000 during each of the following Financial Years. The current total spent in 2022/2023 was just over £1600, leaving c £1400. Some of this would go on plants for the Community Garden, some on wildflower seeds for the new meadows on the village greens and some on snowdrops for The Avenue.

3.2 The Plan included a proposal for an entirely new meadow area on St Pancras Green. Its precise area and location had yet to be agreed with the KPC but would be discussed at their next meeting.

4 **Footpath Action Plan**

4.1 Following further meetings and correspondence with Chloe Rowling of the ESCC Rights of Way it appeared that very little improvement could be made to the footpaths in the Parish because of ESCC’s dire financial position. It was still hoped however that some minor measures could be undertaken with little or no cost.

5 **Community Garden**

5.1 The perimeter path had been completed in July. About half of the new fencing had also been installed and it was expected that this would be completed in October.

5.2 Branches overhanging the site from the adjoining garden had been trimmed back and much of the debris removed by Lewes District Council. More branches had since fallen and were overhanging the shed but had caused no damage.

5.3 It was decided to hire a 2 cubic metre Hippo Bag to dispose of all the unwanted material on the site, including a large quantity of rubble. This would cost around £200.

5.4 Following a visited to an organic nursery in Peacehaven and some research, Steve had prepared a list of wildlife-friendly plants and asked the nursery to let us know which of them they could supply. When this had been received, Rob would convene a meeting to decide on purchases and a planting plan.

5.5 Steve had done a list of work to be done over the next few months and would re-circulate this with proposed dates for the various tasks.

5.6 Bruce Adams’s advice about how we might source water for the site had not been as helpful as hoped. Catherine would investigate this issue. David mentioned that he had a water pump. Steve thought that we needed to be connected to a water supply before planting the bog garden although others disagreed. In any event, it was agreed that we should first, having bought a pond liner, cover the area intended for the bog garden with that liner, protected by weed matting removed from the central area. This should kill the weeds without having to dig them up. The bog garden could then be planted next spring.

5.7 Catherine had hopes of being able to produce a template for a projected glass- fronted notice board to be attached to the entrance gate. This could have details of coming tasks.

5.8 An appeal in the village WhatsApp had resulted in the donation of a water butt (since collected) and the offer of a Bird Cherry sapling. Someone had taken up the offer of some of the chestnut paling but there was still a quantity of this on site.

5.9 Rob would do a further appeal in the next Kingston News for plants, leaves and practical help. Steve would write something along similar lines for the Massive WhatsApp. However, an appeal on a flyer produced for the village fete and since made available in the pub had attracted no attention.

**6. Letter from Councillor Meyer**

 6.1 William Meyer, Lewes District Councillor, had written to the Action Group asking whether we would welcome our project being featured in the the District News later this year as an example of a successful community project which might inspire others. Puzzlingly, however, both the original letter and a subsequent one, having referred to the issue of the lack of affordable housing in the district and the possibility that our site might in theory still be used for this purpose, then went on to dismiss this idea and to guarantee that it would not happen on his watch.

 6.2 It was agreed that we would ask him to supply a rough outline of the sort of article he had in mind. Our reply should also point out that, so far at least, our project had actually attracted very little support from the wider community, neither was it – so far at least – far enough advanced to warrant being the subject of much favourable attention.

7. **Report from KPC**

7.1. Planning permission had been given for another house at the Saxondown Farm site, meaning that KPC could expect a further c £35,000 in respect of the sale of easement rights.

7.2 The outcome of the proposals for development at the former Audiburn stables was unknown although some clearance of the site had already begun.

7.3 A decision had still not made by the KPC over whether to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan or not but this was to be discussed at their meeting on 28 September. Tony re-iterated his offer to help should it decide to go ahead.

**8 In Bloom**

This year’s judge, Chris Murphy, had been shown around the village on12 July by Vicki, Steve and Maria. The award ceremony has had to be postponed and there was no news yet of the fate of our entry.

9 **Next meeting**

This would be on Tuesday 1 November in The Pavilion at 4.45.