

Kingston Action Group

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 9 April 2024

Present: Vicki Scott, Steve Berry, Catherine Dampney, Will Dorman, Rob Watson and Tony Wheeler.

Apologies: David Hoare, Barry Lambert.

1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 20 February were approved.** There were no matters arising not covered by agenda items.

2. Finance

2.1 A summary of the current position had been circulated before the meeting. The balance shown in the most recent bank statement dated 12 March was £1399.64 Taking account of various payments owed, the true balance was £837.57 We stood to get £1326.76 from the SDNP via the CARES (Community Action Resilient Ecosystems Sustainability) grant although had heard nothing from them since the claim was submitted in early March. A reminder had been sent on 26 March. Rob and Steve were due to meet Jessie from the SDNP on 15 April and it was hoped that she would have positive news.

£1154.31 was still earmarked for village planting. Cheques were issued to Rob (£71.35 – pebbles and first aid kit) and Steve (£490.72 – plants, pots and compost).

2.2 Money would be needed in the near future for an amendment to the sign and perhaps for repairs to the notice board. We would probably also need to buy more plants, especially for the bog garden.

3. Community Garden

3.1 The new sign had been installed on the main entrance gate. It was agreed that this would benefit by the addition of the word “Welcome” below the main text.

3.1 Four pots had been purchased for the vicinity of the seating area, two medium-sized and two large, one of which had been planted with a witch hazel. The raised bed which had been damaged, presumably by a reversing vehicle, had been repaired and planted with a selection of attractive native perennials. The remainder of the donated woodchips had been spread over the flower beds as a mulch. More sawn wood had been introduced, but we needed to drill holes in it to make room for nesting solitary bees.

3.2 It was hoped that the weather would allow work to begin on the bog garden on 12 April. Pebbles were to be delivered on 10th. The carpet would be cut up and removed. If there was sufficient pond liner left over this could be used to make a small and shallow pond. It was hoped that there would be enough water diverted from the greenhouse roof to ensure that the bog garden remained wet. We had been given some guttering, brackets and a downpipe but would need more bits and pieces to complete the operation.

3.3 Wet weather throughout most of February and March had obstructed work but weeding had now been resumed and some seeds sown. Additional perennials and shrubs had been bought and planted. The surviving herbs had not yet been labelled but this was still planned.

3.4 The draft risk assessment circulated at the last meeting was greeted with approval. Actions arising included:

- writing to the Lewes D C Tree Officer about the danger to our site from trees overhanging from the neighbouring garden in The Street (Steve)
- checking the terms of our insurance policy to see if we were required to display a notice advising people that they entered the site at their own risk (Rob)
- checking whether the defibrillator at the school was available for the use of the public (Catherine)
- removing the uncovered water containers next to the shed (Steve)
- checking with The Juggs whether we could use their landline in an emergency (Catherine)
- walking around the site to check on and remove any hazardous material, especially broken glass (all, regularly).

3.5 There was still no news from LDC regarding the ownership of the fence separating our Garden from the adjoining land at 9 Gows Croft.

4 **KPC update**

4.1 Following the hearing on 21 August on the proposed footpath between the ridge (Windmill Field) and Ashcombe Lane at Audiburn, the Inspector's decision had at last been announced. It was, in essence to accept the proposal with modifications. The route would be modified after consultation with affected landowners and others. Tony had written an article for The Kingston News to explain the background to the decision and the next steps.

5 **South East In Bloom**

5.1 We had now formally entered this year's competition. Tony would, again, revise our entry. Steve would forward some photos taken by others and it was hoped that more would follow as the seasons progressed. The judge would not visit until July. It was agreed that – ideally - someone from KPC should accompany the judge on his/her visit.

6 **Nature Recovery Group (NRG)**

6.1 The revised proposals for changes to the management regime on St Pancras Green and other suggestions for managing both land owned by KPC and that over the management of which KPC had some influence (eg verges owned by ESCC or LDC) were discussed at the 16 March meeting of KPC. Opponents of the changes were vocal but outnumbered and the Council accepted the paper as it stood. However, the turf stripping (and subsequent sowing with wildflower seed) had had to be postponed until October.

6.2 It was agreed that it would be helpful if the respective roles of the Nature Recovery Group and the Action Group could be clarified. Steve would raise this before the next meeting of the NRG on 20th April.

7 **Planting in the village**

7.1 Steve had yet to contact LDC about failings in the management of Snednore.

7.2 2000 snowdrop bulbs had been planted in verges in The Avenue on 22 February, making 5000 in all in 2024.

8 Traffic

8.1 No further sessions of Community Speedwatch monitoring had yet been held.

8.2 Damage to verges along Wellgreen Lane and Ashcombe Lane continued, exacerbated by the wet weather and contractors' vehicles being parked partially off the roads - action which sometimes forced pedestrians with wheelchairs or children's buggies into the road.

9 Litter

9.1 There had been a major litter collection along the C7 on Saturday 24 February but in addition Ray Harrison (and others) had continued to remove litter throughout the winter.

10 **The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 14 May at 4.45 at The Pavilion.**