

Stoke Environment Group

Minutes of Meeting 15 on 23rd November 2022

Attendees: Karen Housego, Dave Smith, Andrew Boyle, Polly Burns-Cox, Sarah Evans, Ian Upshall, Dave Evans, Nicolette Williams (8)

Apologies: Fi McQueen

- 1 Welcome and Apologies.
- 2 Minutes of the last meeting on 22.10.22 agreed.
- 3 2 Minute Reviews of Projects (All)
 - **Hedges & Trees**
 - one of the trees at the playing fields has fallen over and the other recently planted trees have not survived.
 - Waiting for 19 whips to replace those that have not survived from the village hall planting by SEG of 420 whips.
 - Tree down by Dark Lane, unlikely to be saved. Ian and Jason have offered to remove.
 - **Mobility and transport**

There has been a suggestion for a viewpoint bench as you walk along the ridge towards Moredon, North Curry, from Coates. Two options for either a simple homemade plank bench, or to fund a bench seat which may be an eligible use of the CIL funding. **Action: Sarah to look into costings for benches and to liaise with Mrs Perry who has offered to be involved.**
 - **Bus stops:** IU proposed in order to save Parish Council funds for SEG members to re-paint bus shelters and tidy up surrounding areas. The Meeting agreed to help with tidying up and cutting back vegetation at the bus stop at the top of Dark Lane and to re-paint. **Action: IU to take back the offer to the Parish Council.**
 - **Home energy and waste:** IU is in touch with the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) in Bristol and Eco South West based in Taunton. CSE has offered to do 'train the trainers' for those who may be interested to become ambassadors for energy saving tips.
 - **Information Hub (Playing Fields entrance telephone box)** KH is investigating options for cleaning the glass. KH has bought some shrubs and has planted foxgloves and bulbs (receipt passed to PBC).

- **Biodiversity** – Village Hall Spinney: Proposed for the new year to trim some of the taller trees and to put up bird feeders and nesting boxes. Discussed potential locations for groups of swift boxes to be put up, perhaps on the side of the pub walls?

4 **Finance update**

SEG bank balance is currently £4,000. Includes £2.5k from CIL fund and £250 donation from Bob Dennis before he left the village.

Action: All to contribute ideas and suggestions for use of available funds

5 **Wild bulb planting**

Further to the Group planting wild bulbs around the village on 22 October, IU has obtained a further 250 bulbs: KH agreed to plant 30 at the telephone box; AB – 50 for Huntham; NW – 40 at the Stoke St Gregory sign at Meare Green; PBS – 40; DE – Stoke House Darke Lane wall.

6 **Community resource hub** – IU waiting for response to follow up local opportunity of a 20ft shipping container to store community tools, materials and equipment.

Location options discussed:

- Mother Hubbard Storage Yard
- Near Willments Farm
- Playing Field, next to a new container to be sited for sports equipment.

7 **Newsletter** – KH has produced a 2 sided A4 insert to be included in the December edition of the Stoke Newsletter. Going forwards the Steering Group will deliver these to 550 households independently of the Newsletter.

Action: Karen to liaise with printer for print run asap.

8 **Community Woodland Garden** – IU reported that the land agents GTH are waiting for formal instruction from the Diocese Office to look into church land which could be repurposed for the benefit of the community and all stakeholders who have an interest. IU is updating proposal document to consider climate change impact, community cohesion, care of individuals' wellbeing.

9 **Village Plan**

All are encouraged to complete the Village Plan survey when issued within the 3 week window, by 15 December. Views will form the basis of the plan going forward.

The Steering Group discussed comms for the Village Plan Group and for SEG. Points noted:

- Recognised the need to not rely on social media which is not used by all in the community.

- SEG website: The Group agreed the website needs to be updated and be more dynamic and clickable with working links.
- Could use SEG email distribution list more frequently to advertise events or features. **Action: DE / SE contacting other village groups to widen communications base for the new year.**
- SEG Notice Board discussion: proposed to get a window case notice board for outside the village shop to be able to use it more effectively.

10 AOB

- **Renewal of Insurance for SEG** - £100 due in February 2023 to RHS. This will include RHS discount card which all members can use.
- **EnviroFair – 3 June 2023** – IU has started inviting groups who have previously attended. Confirmed attending 2023: Bumble Bee Conservation; Planet Brew – environmentally sourced coffee and teas who are based at Mother Hubbard Storage; Louise Grinter, who hand makes sustainable homeware gifts. KH offered to run a nature art workshop. **Any suggestions for invitees please let IU know.**
- **Tree grafting** – The Group welcomed the proposal of an informal talk in 2023 by Andrew Boyle for SEG members and anyone with an interest on how to graft and create new trees.
- **SEG Banner** – NW shared some draft designs for a banner to be used at events. **Action: The Steering Group to feedback comments to NW.**

Next Meeting – Wednesday 14 December 2022. The meeting will be combined with a social gathering inviting all SEG helpers and supporters. The meeting will take place in the Royal Oak Function Room at 7.30pm. This will be followed by drinks, for those wishing to partake, in the bar.