

St Ives Community Orchard & Nature Reserve Group

AGM

29 June 2021

Location: St Ives Community Orchard

Time: 4.00pm

Attendees:

Elise Langley (Chair), Rupert Manley, Mattie Pochee, Phoebe Sampson, Josh Quick, Emma James, Sarah Taylor, Elise Worrall, Sue Hopper, Jill Wigley, Lynn Archard (minutes)

Apologies: Angela Challacombe, Duwayne Langley

1. Welcome from the Chair to the 2021 AGM

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the last two meetings, held in December 2020 and March 2021 were agreed.

3. Orchard Report (EL)

- In an interesting year, the Orchard has been a place of refuge and escape for many in the community. Volunteer work parties have been allowed to continue and a great deal has been accomplished.
- A new pergola has been underplanted with vines; a shed is now on-site to store tools; a compost toilet has been built; additional water containers are in place to collect the rainwater from Matthew Stevens' roofs.
- The compost bin is being regularly used by locals, including brewers who are bringing their grain along with donations of sawdust and coffee grinds which can be used as mulch around the trees
- The worm bath is also receiving regular donations of kitchen scraps and is creating liquid fertiliser
- A lot more trees of a wide variety have been planted including Asian pear, mulberry and figs amongst many others
- It's been a great time for learning events, with 15 different events last year, including foraging and nature walks and herbal medicine
- There have been trips out (pre-Covid) to a forest garden in Falmouth and also Chyan which has provided ideas and inspiration
- In the circumstances there has not been as many events as in previous years although there have been some great collaborations with the Foodshare team, for example, World Food Day
- The space is being used more frequently by groups like the Phoenix Singers and a samba band for rehearsals
- There are now 5 beehives although no honey yet
- 100 litres of cider was made from last year's apples along with 40 litres of apple juice

- Over 50 risk assessments have been carried out via the new Jot form
- Time credits are still being accrued with the new system working well
- The Orchard is proud of the collaboration with the skatepark and they are keen to work with us
- On a slightly less positive note, there has been some amount of vandalism

4. Nature Reserve & Management Plan (RM)

- In spite of Covid restrictions, 800 native trees (supplied by Eforests) have been planted on the lower slopes and western fringes of Penbeagle Hill, including 250 sessile oaks, also rowan, holly, hazel, hawthorn, grey willow and alder
- Work to save young trees being engulfed by bracken is now a priority. Those planted in Koos Govenek are doing well but again need to be cleared of bracken
- Steve Adams of Cornwall Environmental Consultants has produced a management plan for the nature reserve and Cornwall Council is progressing the declaration of the site as a Local Nature Reserve meaning that it will be designated as a protected area in planning policy documents
- Our responsibilities are to fulfil the aims and objectives of the management plan, including:
 - to enhance biodiversity and provide wildlife habitats;
 - to preserve and enhance the naturalness of the site;
 - to create an area where everyone can enjoy nature, get active, socialise and pick their own fruit;
 - to use the site for environmental education;
 - to involve the community in the management of the site;
 - to remove invasive non-native plants;
 - to manage the top of the site to increase the area of heathland;
 - to create areas of woodland on the lower slopes of the hillside;
 - to manage the field above the Skate Park as an edible woodland or edible forest garden, according to a management plan written by Sid Hill.
- Cornwall Council is developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy and is using our Local Nature Reserve proposal as an example to test their draft Strategy. One aspect of this is to ensure that projects maximise multiple benefits in terms of ecosystem services, such as flood prevention, climate mitigation, educational and leisure resources and biodiversity recovery
- We have been asked to produce risk assessments, particularly for wildfire. Given that we had a really dry March and April it's been suggested that we have fire beaters available and use existing paths as natural fire breaks
- For the year ahead we need to focus on looking after the newly planted trees this summer and look to plant more trees this winter. Invasive plants (e.g., montbretia, three cornered leek and winter heliotrope) need to be removed and we also need to scythe around the grassland heath on the top of the site and keep key footpaths clear
- We hope next year is Covid free and we are able to celebrate the creation of our very own Local Nature Reserve

5. Forest Garden & Sid's Management Plan (JQ)

- Sid Hill, a local ecological landscape gardener, has written an extensive report to provide guidance for the ongoing management of the Orchard including the edible forest garden and wildflower meadows
- The overall scope of the plan was discussed and the 5 year plan will provide future structure, on a month by month basis, for maintenance of these specific areas
- A relatively new concept of agroforestry (mix of agriculture and farming) allows for an interesting aspect of ecological design, recommending a mixture of native and non-native species
- The detailed [report](#) in full can be viewed on the Orchard website

6. Workshops & Potential Building (PS)

- The hosting of workshops is expanding the effects of the Orchard, along with planting the seeds of the Orchard in people's hearts and minds, the aim is also to become financially sustainable
- Aiming for a busy summer with various plant & nature based and craft workshops including weaving, making flower brooches and leaf pressing in to clay tiles
- PS is responsible for enrolment, paperwork, insurance & DBS checks
- Since the first workshop in May, just under £1000 has been taken in ticket sales, with outgoings amounting to the same
- Although weather dependant, only one workshop has had to be cancelled so far and this was due to the G7 meeting rather than the weather
- The plans for the potential new building were discussed. This is to be built on an area of land adjacent to the road and it will be big enough to hold learning & community events and also a repair café
- Currently waiting for a lease for the patch of land from Cornwall Council, who has assured us that it is being written
- The building will be constructed of rammed earth and wood, will have a green roof and be as off grid as possible with solar panels and possibly a wind turbine. The windows will line up with the sunrise, winter sun and equinox
- It may be more environmentally friendly to tap into the main grid rather than relying on batteries (that potentially may fail and have to be replaced). The Town Council have been asked for confirmation that we can connect to the water and electricity that is going to the Skatepark
- The planning for the new building is accruing some notable costs – the architect plans and it will cost £960 to apply for planning permission
- Any ideas for workshops, learning events or walks & talks will be gratefully received, especially any child friendly ideas

7. Koos Govenek Report (MP) addition to agenda

- The trees in Koos Govenek are doing well. Some of the really big ones are planted too high and a member of the Steeple Woods team will come and take a look
- The foxgloves are competing with the small trees and there are big clumps of grasses coming through (where hens were previously kept). The show of wood anemones and bluebells was an amazing sight this year
- The previously cleared area of bracken is getting weak. KG was planted the year before last so this is its' second year

8. Foodshare (EJ)

- **Volunteers** – the current opportunities provide 42 structured hours and approximately 5 ad hoc hours of volunteering over 7 days a week
- There are 13 regular volunteers and a further 12 who are willing to support on an ad hoc basis
- Some of the voluntary activity has been undertaken by young people completing their DofE awards; one young person volunteers to further her home-schooled education; a growing number of volunteers have been recruited through initially accessing the food shared every week and some of the volunteers also volunteer at the Community Orchard
- **Investment** - the Community Land Trust provided their support to provide mileage expenses to drivers in the early stages
- The F/S is ready to complete their DBS checks for volunteers
- Time credits can be claimed for hours volunteered
- There has been volunteer team building and social events organised
- **Recipients** – there are 2 delivery days per week. These are doorstep drops of fresh meals prepared by sessional chefs along with fresh produce received by daily donations to vulnerable families who are unable to attend. There are currently 22 families supported in this way and over 60 meals per week are provided
- There are 4 community collections per week and there are no criteria to access the food, with the emphasis being on saving landfill waste. On average this service is being delivered to an extra 17 families per week
- Volunteers have naturally fallen into autonomous roles where they are able to distribute surplus food left over from both sessions which supplements an extra 15-20 families per week
- Any excess is currently donated to two farms who use it to feed pigs and chickens and Paradise Park has received fruit for their birds so nothing has gone to landfill
- Food donors – the biggest donors are Co-op, Asda, Tesco, Pengenna, Cornish Bakery, Heather Britten (Carbis Bay) and Riviera Produce (via the Gleaning Network)
- Members of the public and small local businesses also make one off donations of short dated or surplus items. The biggest donation recently was from the catering hub of the G7 police – big boxes of hundreds of snacks, this was distributed to 14 other organisations and community groups in West Cornwall
- **Funding & Finance** – see link to Treasurer's report
- **Community links** – the F/S has supported the gleaning network by organising field sessions to harvest food left after commercial machinery and picking has been done.
- Have supported St Ives Junior School year 4 with their Food Glorious Food curriculum this term
- Collaboration with Heather Britten's charity in Carbis Bay
- Provide extra stock to the local pantries and also the builders constructing the new Skate Park
- **Future plans** – further voluntary roles are being developed and the reshaping of weekly activities is taking place in response of needs of recipients and the forthcoming lifting of social distancing restrictions
- There is funding in place to deliver training to the volunteers

- The social eating experiences that were funded before lockdown restrictions came into force can soon go ahead. These will be weekly seated communal meals and less frequent events at the Orchard
- The F/S is working towards becoming a separate entity from the Orchard whilst maintaining close community links between the two organisations

9. Community Interest Company (Directors)

- Over the last year and a half, the Orchard has been looking to adopt a more formal business and legal structure and it was agreed in late 2020 that the most appropriate vehicle to do this would be a Community Interest Company (CIC). The St Ives Orchard CIC was established in April of this year and a core group of St Ives Community Orchard and Nature Reserve Group (SCON) are now registered as directors – currently Elise Langley and Phoebe Sampson and two further members have volunteered to become directors – Josh Quick and Rupert Manley
- The group is looking for a 5th director – ideally with a finance background
- The directors were introduced to the meeting. Thanks were given to Phoebe Sampson for becoming involved. It was noted that Phoebe has a degree in herbal medicine
- Josh Quick has been involved in the Orchard from the start and is qualified in sustainable horticulture and has substantial experience in social enterprise and foraging
- Rupert Manley has been a huge advocate involved with setting up the project from the beginning particularly in regard to having part of the site registered as a nature reserve. A doctor and a well-respected member of the community, Rupert has been instrumental in setting up social prescribing in the form of community referral to the Orchard
- There is now a proposal to merge the St Ives Community Orchard and Nature Reserve Group (SCON) and the St Ives Orchard Community Interest Company (CIC) which she explains in greater detail
- The main discussion point is that the SCON constitution is absorbed into the CIC Articles of Association and those signed up to the original constitution now need to become members. Voting members and directors financial liability is limited to £1 each; a signed membership form and register will be created
- The proposal will be carried forward to the next meeting to formally decide if the two groups will be brought together

10. Financial Review (Elise Worrall)

- The Treasurer reported the income and expenditure statement for the 6th April 2020 - 5th April 2021 to the meeting
- The opening balance as of 6th April 2020 was £1,930.74
- The Orchard income received during this period was £15,638.97 and expenditure was £8,668.66. Income was mainly from grants and the major expenditure went to the new shed & container and surveys and expertise
- The Foodshare income received was £35,483.64 and expenditure was £6,780.36. A sizeable DEFRA grant provided the majority of the income and the major expenditure went to food & packaging, kitchen equipment and Freelancers employed to continue project

- The breakdown of income and expenditure can be found in the Treasurer's report [here \(hyperlink to report\)](#)

11. Town Deal Bid (PS)

- It was noted that the Town Deal Bid precedes the G7 summit (which took place the 11th-13th June) and nothing has been heard with regards to the G7 legacy funding
- St Ives put in a bid for £25 million and the government announced that the town would be awarded £19.9 million in funds. The Orchard's portion of the bid amounts to £268,000 to be used mainly for capital funds, the building of the learning centre, solar panels etc.
- The Orchard is one of thirteen projects that made it through to the next round of funding and has been partnered with the Skatepark café and a vertical farming project. A coherent business case will need to be built together. The focus will be on the provision of training and the role of a largescale community Orchard
- The addition of secured planning permission for the new building will help build the case and the Town Council have provided assurances that we can have the strip of land needed for the new building
- There is a plan to make a community consultation by posting out the plans along with a questionnaire
- For the purposes of the Town Deal a demonstration of revenue stream will be beneficial
- EW has experience of compiling business plans and the kind offer of assistance was very gratefully received
- The timescale for receipt of funds was discussed without conclusion
- The lease for the land that includes the new area is overdue by 2-3 months
- It was noted that the Town Deal are also looking for additional board members
- Retrospective planning permission for the new building was discussed and it was noted that Cornwall Council need to be notified 21 days before any application of planning
- It was agreed that the new building would be a beautiful example of a sustainable structure and a real asset to the community

Meeting ended 17.20 due to unforeseen circumstances

12. Other matters (carried out by group email)

- The nominations of Chair, Treasurer and Clerk were proposed virtually. Elise Langley voted and Rupert Manley seconded that Mattie Pochee to be nominated as Chair, Elise Worrall as Treasurer and Lynn Archard as Clerk
- As every attendee that was present at the meeting was included on the email circulation for the nominations, they were voted to be appointed and agreed unanimously.

Date of next meeting: TBC