Ide Parish Council

Pynes Community Orchard Working Group (PCOWG)

Note of First Meeting – Tuesday 12 December 2017

The Hub, Ide Congregational Church, 1 High Street, Ide

Present:

Nick Bradley (Parish Council Chair), Andy Bragg, Trevor Gardner, Richard Sharman, Julian Perrett, Carolyn Tysoe, Peter Cloke.

In attendance: Jackie Chadwick

Apologies: Barry Hookins (Ide Parish Council (IPC) representative), Mark Thomas, Mel Liversage (Parish Clerk)

1. After his welcome and introductions Nick Bradley(NB) gave members an update on the stage of negotiations on buying the orchard from the Church Commissioners (CCC):

* The CCC were willing to sell the orchard to IPC for community use.
* Agricultural values would put the value of the land at £3 – 4 K per acre.
* The purchase of both the orchard and Weir Meadow were being taken forward together. Negotiations on price for Weir Meadow were more advanced. NB was dealing directly with the CCC and not via a third party
* The Ide Neighbourhood Plan would contain references to both sites and to the future development of Pynes Farm

1. NB briefly outlined the accountabilities, role, scope and purpose and potential membership of Council Working Groups. He proposed that Peter Cloke (PC) be invited to Chair PCOWG and this was agreed by members. The appointment of a Vice Chair and secretary could wait until a subsequent meeting.
2. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the group as set out in the PCOWG paper discussed by IPC on 15 November were confirmed by members with individuals able to align themselves to specific areas of experience and interest. PC invited members to consider whether additional area of expertise might be needed over time and to suggest additional working group members. A number of individuals in the community had offered to join the Friends Group to help with work in the orchard.
3. Lease/rental and outright purchase options to acquire the orchard were discussed and it was agreed that the latter gave the best long term security and potential for the community.
4. NB briefly described the ongoing issue of the land within the orchard site near the old railway line currently being used for a garden. Members agreed that whilst it would be helpful for this to be resolved by the time the orchard was acquired, it need not be a barrier to progress.
5. NB was invited to take forward the negotiation on purchase price for the orchard with the CCC. Andy Bragg (AB) offered to commission an up to date independent valuation to inform NB’s discussions and this was welcomed.
6. Cas Tysoe (CT) said that the Allotment holders were highly supportive of the acquisition of Pynes Community Orchard and were proposing to offer the profit from the Ide Open Gardens Day towards its purchase.
7. Contacts with Orchard Link were discussed and PC proposed that Charles Staniland, its Chair, who had addressed the village open meeting about the orchard last January, be invited to PCOWG’s next meeting.
8. Members offered to explore assistance with the development off the Orchard within their own networks.
9. NB confirmed that it was the CCC’s responsibility to keep the existing tenant of the land up to date with any developments. The tenancy of the orchard is in place until September 2018 and it was difficult to foresee any way in which any work, for example to maintain existing apple trees, could be done before acquisition of the site.
10. Next meeting: Thursday February 15th 630-730 at the HUB.

PC

12/12/17