**Ide Parish Council**

**Pynes Community Orchard Working Group**

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 3 March 2020, at 6.00 pm

At Smallridge House, The Green, Ide

**1.** **Present:**

 Nick Bradley (chair, IPC), Richard Sharman, Mel Liversage (clerk), Trevor Gardner, Carolyn Tysoe (IPC) , and new member Jessica Paine (IPC)

**2**. **Apologies** received from Peter Cloke (chair) who had recently returned from Viet Nam, Andy Bragg (licensee), Mark Thomas, Phil Willcock and Julian Perrett.

**3.** The **draft minutes** of the meeting held 3 December 2019 were approved, for circulation and publishing on the website.

Action Nick and Mel.

**4. Planting, Pruning and activity in the Orchard since December 2019.** Nick thanked all the volunteers who had planted 68 apple and 4 pear trees in January. The group felt that this was a sufficient number of trees for the whole orchard, allowing space for the other activities. In Julian Perret’s absence, Jessica volunteered for the task of mapping out the tree varieties in their various positions (see below). The next task will be mowing and strimming.

 **Two Sunday morning dates were set for this: 22 March and 26 April 2020 from 10am until 12pm.**

The group will consult Julian to ascertain which dead trees are safe and which should be totally removed. Julian will also be consulted re the planning/planting of the wildflower meadow, the paths to be cut through and the size of the circles to be left around the new trees. The ground is still very rutted from the livestock activities, but it was felt that this will settle with time.

[Update post meeting: PC confirmed that Julian had already completed the mapping of the trees. NB informed JP accordingly].

**5 Progress on the Option to Purchase and other legal issues.** NB reported that there has been no progress with the Church Commissioners and production of a draft option agreement. It appears that this is due to the delay in the CCs, the Land Registry and Pete Bishop finally resolving PB’s claim to possessory title over the disputed railway strip. The group expressed their disappointment and frustration with the lack of progress with this; and their concern that we might lose motivation and credibility with the village if there is no movement soon. Nick will write to CCs and to Strutt and Parker to see what is holding us up.

NB will also meet with Pete Bishop to clarify the stage he has reached with his claim.

[Update post meeting: PB reported to NB that the Land Registry had themselves decided to re-draw the boundary to his claim, when they had realised the eastern end involving the railway bridge had not been cultivated by him and so could not form part of his title. The relevant paperwork for this had been sent back by PB to the Land registry three weeks ago, and PB’s solicitor will press the Land Registry for finalisation as soon as possible. PB will be very pleased to make a statement to the Parish Council about the status of his claim at its next meeting on 18 March 2020].

**6. Grass control.** Peter and Nick have researched this and advise that no further grazing by livestock should occur. A public orchard where fruit may be gathered and eaten raw, or fruit pressed for unpasteurised juice, should have had no animal faecal contamination for at least one year beforehand. The grass and weeds can be kept under control with strimming and some machine cutting. PC will approach Stuart Brooking to ask if he might be prepared to help with mowing. Nick will ask Peter Cloke to check with Andy if this loss of grazing space will lose him any income.

**7.** **Finances.** Mel reported that the orchard account is £2163.44 in credit once the VAT claim has been repaid. We are expecting bills in due course from Strutt & Parker and from our solicitors Foot Anstey, of around 2,500 - £3,000 in total, so more funds will be required.

**8**. **Next PCOWG meeting:**

**Next PCOWG meeting is on Tuesday 22 April 2020 at 6pm**

**Venue: The Halt, 1 St Ida’s Close, Ide.**

END