

Ide Parish Council

Ide Community Orchard Working Group

Minutes of a meeting held on Zoom at 8pm on Monday 7 February 2022

1. Present: Peter Cloke (PC, chair), David Howe (DH), Mel Liversage (ML, Parish Clerk), Jessica Paine (Jess), Julian Perrett (Julian), Richard Cottle (RC), Trevor Gardner (TG), Phil Willcock (PW), Nick Bradley (NB).

2. Apologies received from Richard Sharman, Mark Thomas and Andy Bragg.

3. **Minutes** of the meeting held on 10 January 2022 were approved. **Action: Mel will post on website**

4. Tree map and schedule. PC and Julian have yet to meet up to identify and add the mature trees to the map and new tree schedule. NB reported that all but one of the tree sponsors have been contacted and have chosen or been assigned their trees, and given a map and schedule showing which are their trees.

ACTION: JP and PC arrange to meet to add mature trees to map and schedule

5. Fund Raising. NB updated the group on the latest fund raising position. As of 31 January 2022 we have received £39,561 in donations and tree sponsorship. Three donors have agreed that their gifts to Weir Meadow fund, totalling £16,500, can be used for either project. This means that we are likely to be able to complete the orchard purchase from funds in hand, including the Viridor grant. Agree to wait until the borrowing consultation exercise has run, and the Parish Council has met on 2 March to make its decision on applying for approval to borrow before exercising the option agreement on the orchard. Thanks extended to PW for his work keeping the schedules of giving updated for both all three working groups.

Action: NB to collate results of consultation and present with report to IPC on 2 March 2022.

6. Grants.

6.1 DH updated the group on the conditions that apply to the **Viridor grant**, and how accessing the funds will work: we will be able to access the money, through DH's solicitor's account, when we have an agreed completion date. Having discussed it in detail with the officer at Viridor, DH reassured the group that he is confident the Parish Council will not be put at risk.

Action: DH and NB keep in close touch with Viridor.

6.2 PC confirmed that the bid to the **Royal Horticultural Society** for £5,000 for a third gate, tree guards, tree labels, owl and dormice nesting boxes and a storage shed has been successful. We will have to wait until we draw down on the Viridor grant before getting the gates fitted, as it will be more efficient to get all 3 done at once.

ACTION: NB Place orders for nesting boxes, tree guards and labels.

PC contact contractors with a view to getting quotes for the gates to be fitted.

7. Parish Council's proposals to borrow.

7.1 NB reported that a consultation survey returns are looking very encouraging, with 95 replies in so far, of which 86 say yes, and 9 say no. Closing date is 18 Feb.

7.2 Two open meetings on Zoom were held on 22 January 2022, at 1pm and 5pm to explain and discuss the IPC proposal to borrow from the PWLB for Weir Meadow and if necessary the Orchard,

as part of the consultation exercise. Andy Swain took the chair. NB took questions. The meetings were recorded. 10 people present at the first, and 7 people present at the second meeting.

7.3 An extraordinary IPC meeting has been scheduled for 2 March 2022 to consider the results of the survey and Q&A sessions, and a formal proposal to submit an application for approval to borrow £161,000 towards acquiring the Orchard, Weir Meadow and Northern Fields.

Action: DH and NB proceed with exercising option agreement if IPC resolve to do so on 2 March.

8. Request for variation to the Option Agreement for laying an electricity cable.

NB, PC and DH met on Zoom with representatives from Strutt & Parker, the Church Commissioners and Jackson Stops on 25 January at 11am. The points raised in our letter to Strutt & Parker were discussed. As a result a site meeting was arranged, and took place, on 31 January 2022 with PC, NB and James Gibbs of Jackson Stops. He noted our firm request for a detailed scheme and schedule of works, at no cost to Ide Parish Council, for or on behalf of Western Power Distribution to show exactly where the cable will be laid. Until we have this firm reassurance and undertaking, we explained that IPC will not be in a position to agree to vary the Option Agreement. Mr Gibbs said he will consult with a firm of electrical engineers (AWP) and get back to us as soon as possible.

We paced out the width of the available strip of land along the northern boundary at 11.5 metres: 10 metres is the maximum required, giving us confidence that the work can be done without damaging trees. We alerted Mr Gibbs to the foul drain and water pipes already running through the orchard. An email record of the discussions on site was sent to James Gibbs on 31 January. RC asked that we make sure arrangements are made for restoring and repairing after work is done. Jess asked that we find out exactly what WPD's rights will be later on if they need access to the cable. Dh responded that enforcement is the problem in such situations; but we could ask for a retention sum in advance to hold as a damage deposit. WPD will have a right of entry within x days, except in an emergency.

Action: we await further contact and information from Jackson Stops

9. Working party - PC reported that Adam Smith and James Romain had joined him and NB on 6 Feb for the working party session, but the weather proved dangerously windy, and we abandoned at 11.30am after taking out two large high bows from a mature tree swaying in the gale.

ACTION: PC to pick a date for next working party, circulate and co-ordinate

10. Biodiversity Net Gain JP reported he had been on the BNG course. We will be able to start registering in November 2023.

Action: Julian will lead on this and report back at each meeting.

11. Rules of Usage

PC reminded the group that if we are to take possession in early summer, we will need to agree some rules of usage. PC undertook to draft some rules and regulations for the next meeting.

Action: PC draft rules and regulations of usage.

12. Grass.

Discussed how to manage the grass once open to the public. Possible mob grazing by sheep proposed by PC, once tree guards in place. Or two cuts a year with gang mower, making walkways. Need balance between short grass and savannah grasslands.

Action: Julian and RC investigate and report back.

PC investigate mob sheep grazing.

13. Date of next meeting: Monday 7 March 2022, 8pm

Approved 7 March 2022

END - NCAB 13 2 22