

Greener Staplehurst Group Meeting – 26 July 2021 (Zoom)

Present:

David George (Chair)
Jose Castro
Jon Grimwood
Mina McPhee
Stuart McPhee
Martin Ralph
Adele Sharp
Richard Smith
Peter Spearink

1. Apologies

David Charge
Paddy Riordan
Natasha Thomas
Louise Pettifer
Jacqui Veitch

2. Minutes of last meeting

Approved.

3. Matters arising from minutes of last meeting

a. Adoption of GSG sites

Following discussion at previous meetings, it has now been agreed that MM, DG and NT could take this forward. **Action: MM to discuss further with NT and DG in order to take forward.**

b. Herb bed slabs

Following some discussion, Jon Grimwood has kindly agreed to provide wooden slabs for the herb bed, since SP's oak needs to season for another year. It was agreed that one pathway should be made through the bed. **Action: JG to provide slabs, which DG (with help) will lay down on a bed of sand.**

4. Herb Bed

DG reported that Parish Clerk, Alison, has gained permission from Library services for GSG to take over the maintenance of the herb bed area.

5. MBC Tree Agreement

DG asked all GSG members to take a look at the report provided by the MBC Parks officer on the tree plantings proposed in Bedgebury. Document attached to minutes for reference. **Action: the group needs to get the tree planting proposals agreed by the Parish Council before October. Agree plant varieties to be bought at next meeting.**

6. Flower beds

MR has kindly agreed to keep watering the planters at the shops. The water butt discussed at the last meeting has not yet been fixed for rain harvesting. Once this butt has been connected, KCC will need to approve the work. **Action: JG has agreed to undertake the work. It was pointed out that the base and connector are at the workshop for pick up.**

The wildflower beds at Jubilee Fields and Jeffrey Cloe are looking good. The bed at Chestnut Avenue needs weeding. The issue of getting more volunteers to help has become critical. **Action: See 3 above.**

There was a discussion about the best way to plant the new proposed bed at Jeffrey Close. It was agreed that this should be lightly rotavated and then seeded with seeds similar to the nearby area which was very successful this year. The current field of wildflowers will need to be cut down. It was suggested that it be scythed. **Action: DG will check that the PC insurance covers volunteers for use of the scythe. MR/MM have volunteered to cut down the area using the scythe, once it has been sharpened. The cutting will need to be done in October.**

7. Wimpey Fields

a. Bioblitz

This has been organised for 11th August and it will be run by the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership. The publicity so far includes posters on the bus shelters and FB posts on the Staplehurst PC site as well as the Helping Page. **Action: MM to forward a copy of the post to JG. MM to discuss with Parish Clerk to see how the publicity for the event can be enhanced. ALL GSG members are requested to go on site during the day to encourage and help if necessary.**

b. Water Supply at WF

The water pressure at Wimpey Field is low but it is recognised that the problem must be resolved. **Action: DG to work with PR to organise a visit from a plumber to advise on the best way to resolve this.**

c. Security

Following recent vandalism issues the matter of security was raised. SM suggested that when an incident occurs, there may be value in not publicising it (a practice followed by locations such as Bewl Water and Bedgebury Pinetum). It was also suggested that fake signs be put up to the effect that that the site is covered by CCTV. This led to the discussion about acquiring wildlife cameras that could also incidentally help to monitor any acts of vandalism. **Action: Put up dummy signs 'Smile – you're on camera' or 'this site is protected by CCTV'. MM will speak with PC Clerk. JG will seek advice from the Hunting and Conservation Group about the most effective cameras for surveillance.**

d. Maintenance of Wimpey Field

It is recognised that there are two issues to resolve here:

- i. Backlog – over the last year, the site has become overgrown (due to Covid restrictions over the last 18 months). It is important that this be cleared. The suggestion is that the Group should pay a professional company to bring the site under control.
- ii. Ongoing maintenance – develop a volunteer group that will help maintain the site. This work can be undertaken with a GSG supervisors and a good team of volunteers.

Action: JG to provide a quote on how much it will cost to clear the backlog maintenance work, in line with the requirements laid down by the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership, for managing the site.

Post meeting, it was confirmed if the group goes down this route, more than one quote will need to be sought before the work is awarded to anyone.

PS requested that the most urgent work at present is for the Payback Team to put down the stakes for the dead hedge.

e. Wimpey Field engagement plan

The Engagement plan circulated in advance of the meeting was discussed. An Open Day for the Wimpey Field has been agreed as Sunday 5th September. PS has kindly agreed to lead 2 walks: 11.00am and 2.00pm. Each walk will last about one hour. These walks will be to introduce visitors to the Wimpey Field and will not hold out to be nature walks. PS already has a map of the site which can be made available to all visitors. The question was raised about whether it would be possible to have signage of the names of the various areas before the Open Day. **Action: MM to finalise details with GSG members and the PC Clerk to help with publicity.**

8. Dates of next meetings

The dates for the meetings for the rest of the year are as follow:

23rd August

20 September

25th October

6th December

9. Any other business

None.

Post meeting – David George has stepped down from being Chair although he will continue to be an active member of the Group. GSG sincerely thanks DG for his energy and hard work in getting the group going and his ongoing commitment to the Group and to Staplehurst.

Mina McPhee

28th July 2021

Wimpey Field Action Plan for Engagement	
Objective: To raise awareness of Wimpey Field for two aims:	
a. encourage greater number of visitors/users to the site b. maintenance and management of site for nature and enhanced biodiversity through recruitment of a body of regular volunteers	
Strategy:	
1. Wimpey Field Open Day 2. Regular Working Days (say, one per month to start off with)	
Action	
Wimpey Field Open Day – Sunday 5th September 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guided nature walks 10.30am, 12.30pm and 3.00pm - Bring a picnic/bring your family - Simple refreshments offered <p><i>Messaging:</i> Wimpey Field is your local nature reserve; have you been to WF yet? What wildlife will you spot? Come closer to nature?</p> <p><i>Audience:</i> families with kids, retired people, nature lovers</p> <p><i>Publicity:</i> Posters on all village bus shelters and notice boards; FB – Village page and GSG; school leaflets for kids to take home (or mention in school newsletter).</p>	
Regular Working/volunteer days: 2nd Saturday am of each month starting 11th September <p><i>Messaging:</i> look after nature, nurture biodiversity, improve habitat, give back to your community, volunteer, get to know other villagers, have fun outdoors, do something valuable</p> <p><i>Audience:</i> healthy/fit villagers, DoE teen volunteers, senior scouts</p> <p><i>Publicity:</i> Posters, social media, school, senior scouts, leaflets to hand out on the open day</p>	

Proposed Social Media Communications and Messaging for WF Project

Message	Timing	Image suggestion
<p>Staplehurst is lucky enough to have its own nature reserve! Have you discovered Wimpey Field yet? Entrance at the top of The Bartons? Take a walk today!</p>	28 July	WF pond/WF vista
<p>Have you discovered Wimpey Field yet? If not, why not join a guided walk around Staplehurst's very own nature reserve on Sunday 5th September</p> <p>Alternative text 1: Date for your diary! The Wimpey Field open day is a great way to discover the nature reserve on your doorstep. It will be a lovely relaxed outing for the whole family.</p> <p>Alternative text 2: Discover nature on your doorstep! Discover Wimpey Field on 5th September. An introductory nature walk for the whole family.</p>	30 July; 5 th August; 12 th August 19 th August 26 th August	WF open day poster/ WF vista/Wildlife
<p>If you want a walk full of the wonders of nature without even leaving the village, visit Wimpey Field.</p>	1 st August	WF vista
<p>How amazing are these beauties, now to be found around Wimpey Field. Discover them for yourself with a walk in the nature reserve.</p>	Every Tuesday and Sunday	Dragon/damsel flies/wildflowers/butterflies (whatever is in season).
<p>Do you enjoy being outdoors? Do you want to help biodiversity thrive in Staplehurst. Join the Wimpey Field volunteer group make a difference to nature and to your community.</p> <p>Alt text 1 – New to the village – want to make friends and get to know the village? Join the WF volunteers who meet once a month to help enhance biodiversity at Wimpey Field.</p> <p>Alt text 2 – Time out in nature is proven to enhance mental and physical wellbeing. Join the Wimpey Field volunteer group and spend time outdoors as you help to maintain our local nature reserve and make new friends.</p>	Once a week throughout August	<p>Volunteer poster</p> <p>Content:</p> <p>Volunteers wanted; working at WF; once a month; great opportunity to make new friends and spend time outdoors; learn about nature; help biodiversity by managing habitats</p> <p>Contact:</p>