

NORTHAW COMMUNITY ORCHARD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SUNDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2018, 12.00 NOON

AT NORTHAW COMMUNITY ORCHARD

Present:

Board Members: Jane Brook (JB), Angelina Khan (AK)

Orchard Volunteers: Pippa Boddy, Roger Body (RB), Isabel Boddy, Callum Newton, Brenda West, Janet Edwards, Brian Edwards, Gary Brook

Apologies: Karen Lawton

1. JB welcomed those present and read out apologies
2. **Financial report:** JB reported the finances for the last audited year (2016). The current financial year (2017) runs to December. Income was £1875, outgoings £2204, bank balance at year end £2810. The small deficit (£329) was explained by an extraordinary one-off payment of £405 to WelHat council planning department for a Lawful Development Certificate for the container, shed, yurt and compost toilet. At month 10 in this financial year (2017) the orchard is on course for a small profit.  
RB suggested that people who hired the yurt could take out their own holiday insurance.
3. **Report on Orchard Activities:** JB thanked the volunteers for their hard work over the last year which has been very successful.

**Events:** the following events had taken place over the last year– Winter Wassail, Dancing for the Orchard, Family Picnic, Willow Sculpture Demonstration, Village Day Stall, Scything Demonstration, Apple Day, Pruning Workshops. As well as providing valuable income, these events also gave members of the public a chance to see and understand how the orchard contributed to the community.

**Fruit Trees.** Several more trees had been befriended. All of the trees were growing well apart from one greengage which may have to be moved, and one pear which was dead at delivery and so was replaced. An extra pear tree variety was planted. An annual survey was performed noting vigour, any disease and fruit-bearing for each tree.

**Wildlife:** The orchard has proven to be a haven for butterflies due to management of the orchard on wildlife meadow principles. At least 14 butterfly species have been seen including the uncommon Marbled White. Also the Jersey Tiger moth had been seen. The latter two had been reported to the county wildlife recorder. The butterflies and moths were attracted to the array of wildflowers which did very well this year. The orchard is also rich with birdlife and a new kestrel box had been positioned high up in a tree. A bat survey in the summer found Common Pipistrelle bats in the orchard with 4 other species in Northaw Village.

**Volunteers:** Many hundreds of hours of volunteering have been carried out by individuals for the orchard. Groups of external volunteers from Tesco and Friends of Northaw Great Wood had also made valuable contributions. 300+ volunteer hours have been recorded so far this year. The orchard has a very good relationship with Northaw Scouts and appreciates

the use of the scout hut on occasions. In return the orchard group have used the tractor and flail-mower to cut the grass on the scout land.

**Willow:** The stand of willow varieties in willow field had been harvested with help from the Hertfordshire Basketry Group, who also donated willow to create a sculpture in Ash Field. This was designed by a local artist.

**Installation of benches:** A bench had been installed in Willow Field following a donation and a further donation had been received to place a bench in Ash Field.

4. Future Activities. There is plenty of work required to continue to develop the orchard and this depends on volunteers. It was hoped that further people can be persuaded to contribute. A grant of £2000 had been received from WelHat council which will be used to improve access into Ash Field. A further £1300 is being sought to complete that work. A Hallowe'en event is planned for local children on October 31<sup>st</sup>. The yurt will be taken down for the winter in early November weather permitting.
5. Any other business. JB had attended the first meeting of 'Orchards East' which is mapping orchards in the East of England and she encouraged people to volunteer to map orchards in their locality. There being no other business, the meeting closed at 12.45 to be followed by the Apple Day.