

NORTHAW COMMUNITY ORCHARD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SATURDAY 12TH OCTOBER 2019, 12.30 PM

AT NORTHAW SCOUT HUT

Present:

Board Members: Jane Brook (chairing), Angelina Khan

Orchard Volunteers: Pippa Boddy, Roger Boddy (RB), Isabel Boddy, Gary Brook (taking the minutes), Janet Edwards, Brian Edwards

Also present: Andrea and Fred Allgood

Apologies: Karen Lawton, Dieter Zechmeister, Carol Wilcox, Eric Wilcox, John Stredwick

1. JB welcomed those present and read out apologies
2. Minutes of the 2018 AGM were read and approved. Matters arising: a clause needs to be added to the yurt booking form advising personal insurance to the hirers although they are covered by the orchard insurance. The path and rail have been completed and are an excellent addition to the orchard. There was no vandalism reported this year. The ditch work is still to be done. A WhatsApp group still to be developed.
3. Financial report: JB reported the finances for the last audited year (2018). The current financial year (2018) runs to December 31st. Income was £1686, outgoings £4283, bank balance at year end £5442 with a £250 cash float. The loss for the year (£2597) was due to a spending of the grant from WelHat council for the path and rail brought over from the previous year. At month 10 in this financial year (2019) the orchard is on course for a small loss.

Yurt bookings had been down this year (2019) but there had been good income from various events e.g. the Apple Day, Village Day stall and Scything Workshop. There may not be a village day in 2020 so a replacement fund raiser will probably need to replace it. RB suggested another 'Dancing For The Orchard' concert.

4. Report on Orchard Activities since the AGM 2018: 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— Apple Day (with comedy group and circle dancing), Wassail, Willow Harvest, Village Day Stall, Scything Event, and Pruning Workshop. 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. No trees were lost this year and fruit production had started in several apple trees. For the first year since planting trees were allowed to fruit and some had to be thinned. One lost a branch due to the weight of fruit. We picked 21 apple and pear varieties in October 2019 and the medlars also did well. In 2018 the quince 'Meeches Prolific' bore 10kg fruit. Youths have been reported picking the fruits and using them as missiles to throw at targets. The WHBC tree officer visited the orchard and was impressed.

Wildlife: The orchard continues to be a haven for butterflies due to management of the orchard on wildlife meadow principles. At least 12 butterfly species were seen including the uncommon Marbled White again. Also newly identified this year were Brimstones and Painted Ladies. The Jersey Tiger moth has again been seen. The butterflies and moths were again attracted to the array of wildflowers although there has been a falloff in Yellow Rattle and Teasel but an increase in Primroses, Ragged Robin and Meadow Vetchling. In order to increase plant diversity we have mowed more, and a heavy horse has been hired for harrowing prior to reseeding with Rattle. The kestrel box still does not appear to have been occupied. A bat survey in the summer found Common and Soprano Pipistrelle bats in the orchard with Brown Long-eared Bats and Noctules found nearby in Northaw Village.

Volunteers: In 2018/19 there have been 227 hours of volunteering by the Directors and 'Core' group of individuals for the orchard. We have not had groups of external volunteers this year although Friends of Northaw Great Wood have made valuable contributions such as the hay raking. 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 and allowed the Scouts to use the orchard for some of their meetings. Work parties included pruning, hay raking and willow harvest. It was good to see the French Scouts who visited the scything event.

Willow: The stand of willow varieties in willow field had been harvested although several varieties had died due to dry weather. We also added to the sculpture in Ash Field.

5. Future Projects. The interpretation boards are being replaced following a grant from the Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council. It is also planned to introduce a wildlife pond fed by the spring in Ash Field. A horse harrowing event is planned next week.
6. Any other business. RB suggested an orchard membership at £10 pa with benefits including a choice of fruit. A cider tasting event was suggested.
7. There being no other business, the meeting finished at about 1.30pm