Minutes of Greening Steyning steering group meeting – 1 Nov 2023

Present: Geoff, Vicci, Melissa, Nicola, Robin, Malcolm, Ronnie, Sally

Apologies: Shona, Laura, Sarah

Vicci would like to step down from Co-chair role at the AGM if possible. Does anyone fancy stepping up for a bit? Please contact Geoff if so. Duties: Occasional chairing of the steering group and sharing the job with Geoff of being first on call for advice and batting ideas around.

1. Green Day 2024

Some progress on this, but lots still to firm up. Rough outline as follows:

11.00 Children’s animal themed fancy dress parade led by Keith Ellis, with wildlife corridor theme (hope to speak to KE soon).

11.30 Activities for young children led by Keith Ellis

12.00 story telling with Jon Mason (who seems very keen). Bell tent available to borrow from Ronnie’s neighbour.

14.00 Weald to Waves talk in marquee, with ‘I’m on the map’ sign up. W2W team seem keen to engage. Need creative input on how to do this in a fun interactive way.

15.30? Performance event for teenagers, hopefully involving SGS + Jan Hobson

All day - ‘Pop up’ wildlife corridor to be created, running around the playground – with foliage courtesy of Ronnie. Needs a working party to help build/take down. Sadly, Tottington Woodlanders not available that weekend.

All day – range of stalls by local green groups + veggie/vegan food trucks.

All day – Wildlife garden videos showing in marquee.

Simon Zec happy to m/c the whole day and lend his truck for transporting foliage.

? A stall around safer slower driving around Steyning

Nicky, Geoff, Vicci, Melissa & Ronnie have formed working group - all ideas welcome. Geoff to convene another meeting soon.

Would be good to involve Steyning for trees and the Steyning Downland scheme.

2. Green drinks programme

29 Nov: Social evening at the Star. Pizza van there. Suggest people gather from 8 pm – come early if you want to order a pizza. Could be quite crowded.

31 Jan: Volunteer Night/AGM. Athletics club. Same format as last year with volunteer groups on tables looking back at successes/challenges and looking forward to 2024. Try to get more contributions from active volunteers. No entrance charge but will ask people to pre book.

29 Feb: Bird Ringing, Migration and Conservation with Sue Walsh. Beeding VH. 7.30pm. £3 but 11-18s free

27 Mar: Athletics club. Heat pump evening including air to air heat pumps and boiler efficiency adjustments (with Michael Paini)

24 Apr: Need a topic. Ideas on a postcard please! Maybe Bramber Brooks?

June: Paul Brewer - Adur and Worthing sustainability lead - Sussex Bay initiative.
3. Horsham Grant

What should be bid for? Deadline 12 Nov. Yikes! Current ideas:

- Comms support as the primary cost element – presented as public engagement
- Green Day – publicity, W2W elements, materials for wildlife corridor etc.
- Library of Things – probably too early to put in the bid.
- Wildlife Garden publicity (£270 last time)
- Schools engagement (put in a budget line to support)
- LOTV signs (see below)

Geoff will pull something together and circulate. Thank you Geoff!

4. SPC update

Energy Audit next steps – planning and premises committee meeting 27th November. Geoff, Malcolm and Vicci need a pre meet re grants

Vicci hoping for Weald to waves sign up by Parish Council land, including allotments

Lost woods project engagement

20mph update. Communities Committee to decide on whether to accept/reject the current scheme at next meeting (7 Nov). If it’s rejected, could we at least have signage asking people to drive considerately through our town.

5. Finances

Maintained start of the year bank balance. All looking good.

6. Comms pipeline

Nov newsletter ready to go out.

Dec – energy saving grants, a green Christmas – ideas via social media in Nov and publish in December newsletter. We won’t do the Climate Action survey this year – leave until 2025.

Jan – repair café/schools and bird migration and volunteer green drinks.

7. Coming up

South East Climate Alliance annual gathering in early Feb (tbc). Geoff will share details and all welcome.

8. AOB. T shirts – have run out! Ask volunteers if any other volunteers want them and order appropriately.

New SumUp purchased that doesn’t require a phone.

Ideas of wild areas around perimeter of MPF backing onto gardens. Vicci to raise with Parish Council as part of Weald to waves conversation at community committee.

Cancel paid for zoom account

11. Next meeting: Weds 10 Jan - 8pm – venue Geoff & Sally’s
12. Updates from action group leads previously circulated via WhatsApp

Verge update (Laura):

Nothing major happening as all verges surveyed and most cut and cleared for the year, but a few challenges have come up:

1. The Clays Hill verge hasn’t been cut yet (although WSCC confirm it should be cut today), this is very late, makes it difficult to clear the cuttings in this weather and has disappointed the verge neighbours. (cut today)

2. All but a few of our signs (and the WSCC CRV signs) have been removed from our verges so new signage will be needed for next year sadly at a rough cost of £80-£90 - any ideas about how to more securely attach them most welcome.

3. Volunteers feel disconnected from other biodiversity volunteers. The volunteer evening should help.

Hedgerows (Ronnie)

25th of November is planned, weather and ground conditions permitting, to plant a new hedgerow with Steyning for trees at Annington farm

Community Fridge (Nicola):

Little to report this month. Paid quarterly electricity bill which was down to £130, which is covered by donations. The Church continue to pay 30% of the cost.

We have a good trickle of volunteers for the Fridge but we are not converting them into active volunteers. In order to overcome that I will conduct a series of inductions for new people, and offer it to those inactive volunteers on the list, in the hope it will encourage them to become more involved.

Transport Group (Sally and Sarah)

The Wiston cycle/footpath is open - hooray!! We responded to the WSCC Active Travel/LCWIP saying rural towns are left out. Coming up with a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Steyning BB under umbrella of parish councils is a potential way of highlighting what we need- would take a lot of work.

New crossings at the top of Upper Beeding (near the nursery) and across the A283 for the South Downs way – hopefully a catalyst for a crossing from Castle Way.

White Bridge update (Geoff)

WBL - an update is being circulated in Your Steyning etc. The main developments are that Bridge really is in bad shape - with very severe corrosion. So it does need replacing. Work has begun to survey the site to start planning for a new bridge (probably upstream of the current one).

WSCC seem to be treating it as a high priority - but won’t be drawn on likely time frames, because they say it is a very complex job. The Working Party is keeping close tabs on it and have decided we don’t need a public ‘We need our bridge’ campaign just now, to put pressure on WSCC. But that
could come later if we find evidence of this falling off the agenda. The Wilson Trust and HDC are still on board, so hopefully the WBL project is not doomed - just delayed.

**20mph zone update (Geoff)**

Vicci & Geoff took part in a 20mph Working Party meeting last week where we discussed whether to go with the proposed cut down plans or say thanks but no thanks. We fed back the Greening SG’s views that we should not proceed, but could consider a ‘people's 20mph campaign’ as an alternative. The majority at the meeting agreed with this line, unless WSCC are prepared to modify the plans at least a bit. This is being conveyed to the SPC Communities Committee, which will meet on Nov 7th, to make a decision. Since then, Paul Linehan has mounted an independent survey to garner local views, via a leaflet delivered to some but not all homes in the area (details uncertain). He says this is to help him to make up his mind on whether to support the scheme. He’ll share the interim results ahead of the 7 Nov meeting. It has generated a flurry of mostly negative reactions on Spotted - so the pot has been well and truly stirred. All will be revealed on the 7th.

**HEAT group (Malcolm):**

Energy Helpdesk continues alongside the Repair Cafe. We'll have our last one at Beeding Hub end of Nov.

Numbers have often been low, but it's more about depth and quality of conversations.

Later this month we're Visiting the PECAN Eco cafe at Petersfield to share experiences.

Plans for next year include expanding online presence and eco houses events

**Repair Cafe Update (Robin)**

The RC continues to be popular and lucrative. See below.

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**Schools Liaison (Robin)**

Limited progress on School front.

UBPS asked if the RC could do anything with their pupils. The volunteer repairers were very keen and suggested several ideas which I have put to the school. No response yet.