Minutes of Greening Steyning steering group meeting – 10 Jan 2024 (via Zoom)

Present: Geoff, Vicci, Nicola, Robin, Malcolm, Sally, Shona, Laura, Sarah, Ronnie

Apologies: Melissa

1. Finances

Nicky presented draft 2023 Accounts. Headlines were that:

- Expenditure was significantly up on 2022, due to our increased level of activity and more ambitious comms efforts.
- Income was down as we didn’t get an HDC climate grant this year, but we carried forward over £3500 from last year’s grant which we spent this year.
- So overall we made a loss of just over £1000 on the year (since revised downwards).
- With our events breaking even, and the steady donations coming in for the Repair Café and Community Fridge, we’re in good shape.
- Applying for grants allows us to be more ambitious, but our core operations are looking financially sustainable going forward.
- So good news!

2. Plans for 2024


Verges (Laura) – have completed full year of proper management, so impacts starting to become visible. All the signs have mysteriously disappeared though, so will need replacing. Planning an invertebrate survey next year.

Transport (Sally) – some frustration as every idea seems to run up against HDC/WSCC buffers. Overlap with the District Partnership also has its complications, as roles are not always clear. Meeting planned on Feb 6 to talk this through and decide on future of group. One idea is to make a start on a Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) - which will draw together all the ideas discussed up to now. But will need legitimacy to have any impact, so working with the District Partnership will be crucial. If this can be figured out, Vicci suggests a plan could come to the Joint Parish Climate Committee for endorsement.

Repair Café (Robin) – All going well so more of the same planned for 2024. Making a profit. Plenty of volunteers. Using it as a venue for community activities, like a visit from the Neighbourhood Wardens.

Community Fridge (Nicky) – Similar picture. It pretty much runs itself. Occasional surpluses of food at its sell by date could be dealt with by advertising to other volunteer teams.

Schools (Robin) – Links with UB Primary going well. Hand-on repair sessions planned. Steyning Primary and SGS have proved much harder work of late, and not responding to emails. May be a cyclical thing with staff/management changes. Hoping that Lauren Foster will get involved in the suggested bug hotel activity at Green Day.
Homes & Energy (Malcolm) – going well. Plans for 2024 include Eco Open House weekend, online Helpdesk sign up form, and a couple of Green Drinks expert sessions. We’re sharing experience with other groups thinking of doing energy stuff – and are taking the Helpdesk on the road to Henfield.

Year on the Farm (Nicky) – discussions underway on whether to do another year, possibly making it quarterly rather than monthly.

Social media (Shona) – got thumbs up to her suggestion of posting a ‘one easy thing to do’ each month, starting with Green Banking. To coordinate with Melissa.

3. Horsham Grants

Earlier Community Climate Fund bid turned down but we have been encouraged to resubmit in Jan. They are keen to fund concrete new initiatives that lead to change, and carbon savings, rather than general costs – like communications. Suggest we focus it on Green Day and the Eco Open House weekend – so Geoff writing revised bid with this in mind.

We were also encouraged to bid for another funding pot – Community Grants. They offer up to £500 for a range of community activities. Submitting a bid based around the Open Garden Trail.

4. Green Day 2024

Good progress. Programme coming together nicely. Wildlife Groups all now signed up and enthusiastic. Main variable is around school involvement.

The Climate Café are keen to be involved. Suggested they take over part of the actual café area.

One new idea is to do a ‘plant a sunflower’ activity for kids, and hand out wildflower seed packets.

Two suggestions were made for celebrity speakers to fill the youth spot, if the SGS trail goes cold – photographer Hamza Yassin (wildlife photographer), and Megan McCubbin (Chris Packham’s stepdaughter). Vicci to follow up on contacts.

5. Volunteer Night & AGM – 31 Jan – 8pm Steyning Athletics Club

Similar format to last year. Aim to celebrate, thank people, recruit new volunteers, meet each other, and gear up for a busy year ahead. HEAT group to run bar. Agenda:

- Welcome & intro – Geoff
- Ice breaker – move around introduce yourself to someone you don’t know (x2).
- Tables for each volunteer group. Settle on the one you’re most involved in as a volunteer, or most interested in as a newbie.
- Group have 5 mins each. What were you happiest about what you achieved last year? What was the biggest surprise? What have you got in store for 2024 to tempt new volunteers?
- People to circulate between tables to chat informally (30 mins)
- AGM
  - Accounts: Nicky (copies available. Will send via email to those who’ve signed up)
  - Reappoint Geoff/Nicky – stress Geoff actively looking for co-chair
- Wrap up – encourage newbies to sign up on volunteer sheets on tables. Dates for diary.
6. Green drinks programme

29 Feb: Bird Ringing, Migration and Conservation with Sue Walsh. Beeding VH. 7.30pm. £3 but £11-18s free. Vicci to introduce. Geoff, Sarah, Nicky able to help on bar etc. Geoff to sort licence.

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

24 Apr: Nothing planned at present.

26 June: Paul Brewer - Adur and Worthing sustainability lead - Sussex Bay initiative.

7. Election Year
- Yes we will publicise the Greenpeace vote for the Climate Campaign
- Agreed we will try and run another Hustings event this year, provided it’s not in May.

8. Coming up

South East Climate Alliance annual gathering in Brighton on 3 Feb. Geoff will share details and all welcome.

9. Next meeting: Weds 13 March - 8pm – venue Geoff & Sally’s