Minutes of Greening Steyning steering group meeting - 11 July 2023

Present: Geoff, Vicci, Melissa, Sally, Malcolm, Ronnie, Sarah, Shona, Robin (for part)
Apologies: Nicola, Laura.

1. Geoff began the meeting by congratulating and thanking Ronnie and Laura for a big biodiversity month. Ronnie will reward the wildlife garden volunteers with a drink at a social evening.

2. We all admired the Steyning bowl and Geoff plans to put the certificate in the co-op noticeboard.

3. Autumn green drinks programme. General discussion that £3 works well. Alternatives to Eventbrite need investigation (Robin). After discussion, it was agreed that, –
   - September-solar evening – will be held at the Penfold Hall, despite the caveats about that venue. Need speakers
   - October-Weald to waves – this will be on the 30th of October in the Steyning centre. Geoff will attend the equivalent meeting in Henfield on the 12th of July and there is a get together about the Steyning part of the project on the 21st of July. These will help with planning the evening.
   - November – long discussion about a food event. Vicci will investigate the possibilities of community cooking events with two potential ideas. Tuesdays or Wednesdays are available during November at the Steyning centre.

4. White Bridge link update: the Wilson trust have offered £125,000 funding. Horsham Council are considering funding. Once other funding sources have been confirmed a mini survey will go out from Visit Steyning that we can publicise

5. 20 mph zone update: the West Sussex county council scheme only covers the High Street and adjoining roads and eliminates those high speeding areas that we are concerned about. Needs changing or stopping and working group has been reconvened.

6. Action group questions to address: it was agreed that the Repair café would charge £5 or £10 for takeaway repairs in advance of the item being taken home. This would be done on an honesty basis at the Repair café.

7. SPC, update: Vicci reported on how things were going, and that priorities were being decided upon. Vicci will chase the climate change working group

8. Horsham DC, update: very positive news that a climate and nature emergency motion has been carried. This was proposed by Mike Croker and seconded by Colette Blackburn (cabinet member for climate action and nature recovery). Engagement is very positive from the new leadership group and we will receive more visitors to the Repair café. News that Bramber Brooks is being sold was shared, and there is some hope that Horsham council will reconsider purchasing the land. If not, is there an opportunity for the land to be split and the orchard part left to the community? Geoff will investigate.

9. Discussions regarding safety of children and transport: a working party from the partnership, led by Tim Lloyd has been convened and will look at all aspects of children and road safety across Steyning, upper Beeding, and Bramber (WP6). This needs to tie into the work that Paul Linehan is doing around safety and traffic in shooting field. Sarah will discuss with Tim Lloyd
10. Volunteer recruitment: Nicola had agreed to draft something to go onto a volunteer platform, and we thought that it would be good to replicate this article in your Steyning in September. It would be useful particularly to look for a youth coordinator person to work with the D of E scheme to enhance our volunteers. And we agreed to ask people from our action groups, whether they would be prepared to submit a photo and a little bio of the volunteering experience. Vicci will share a form of words. There is a meeting with other Biodiversity volunteers, all those who were involved in Green Day, to discuss plans and working together. It was agreed that we could discuss whether having a combined website with sharing of volunteers needed via WhatsApp or a similar platform and that we could target families. There may be an opportunity to include this in our next Horsham grant application.

11. Steyning festival 2024: ideas included approaching Sussex Green living for the theatre workshop and other supportive events. Geoff will check the date with Nicola and approach Carrie. There is a need for a Green Day committee which will be publicised in the newsletter, but any volunteers please chat to Geoff. Ronnie had an idea for a pop-up wildlife garden, Chelsea style, and will discuss this with Nicola. Great enthusiasm for this idea and for possibly moving the wildlife garden to one of the parish councils green spaces after the event. Vicci will discuss with the parish council if Nicola and the Festival endorse the idea.

12. Horsham grant: it was agreed that we would apply next in December, and include requests for support with community engagement, Green Day, schools projects, and possibly a combined volunteer website for Biodiversity.

13. Rights of rivers: Lewes council have just proposed to work towards giving rivers rights. Adur planning the same. We all agreed. This would be something we could ask Horsham to look at and will also tie in with the rivers survey that is being done by Adur council. Sally to discuss with Mike Croker https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/R7VCWKN

14. Accounts: these were not discussed at the meeting in view of time, but Geoff and Vicci will meet with Nicola to discuss the forecasting and presentation.


16. Any other business: there is a consultation coming up about the use of the Chandlers way pocket park, and Sarah will be at this meeting. Hopefully there will be an opportunity to increase the biodiversity of the land.

17. Any other business: Shona is welcoming ideas for increasing biodiversity in her field. People are welcome to visit. (Shona will be there on Tues 18 July at 1.30pm)

18. Next meeting: Weds 6th Sept – 8pm – venue tbc

**UPDATES**

Verge update (Laura):

We have now conducted surveys on both Shooting Field and Clays Hill Verges, Bramber round about was scheduled for yesterday evening but was postponed to next Monday due to weather. The results so far haven't been compared to last year's yet but it is unlikely we will see significant change so quickly.
We have had an article in Your Steyning and the GS newsletter and Christine has asked to include a slightly adapted version in the St Andrew’s Church newsletter as well which I will work on today.

We have agreement from UBPC to officially work with them on Pepperscoombe Lane / Deacons Way verge in Upper Beeding and signs will go up shortly.

Saldy Bramber roundabout verge was cut in June (unexpected) but the council did use the cut and collect machine so no harm done.

A member of the group is interested in helping protect the orchids around Steyning museum and library so is liaising with WSCC on who manages it and what could be done.

Grass cutting of all verges will take place in early September so more working parties will be arranged nearer the time. We are tentatively planning a catch up in August however.

Finally, any advice on more robust safety measures for the survey next week would be welcome. The crash that occurred yesterday afternoon (luckily before the team were scheduled to arrive) involved one of the cars driving over the part of the verge the team would have been working on. I have asked them to take a warning triangle, wear high vis jackets and of course it’s a 30mph zone, but anything else you think we need in place please do let me know.

Nature Map Group (Ronnie)

We surveyed five hedges and beetle bank which was sown eight years ago to improve the biodiversity on the farm. at Annington Farm in June. A report was sent to Angus and Ben Vick who run the farm. There is potential for improving one of the hedgerows and extending another. Ben is particularly interested in doing so a meeting has been arranged with Steyning for trees.

Ben is particularly interested in doing this so a meeting has been arranged with Steyning for trees to discuss whether or not they could take this on or not. Hopefully, they could source the hedging from the Woodland Trust and have enough volunteers to carry out the work over the Winter.

Ben might be persuaded to increase the width of the beetle bank by reseeding it.

Two new potential survey sites have come up. One is a hedgerow running across Saltings field in Beeding, East of the river and a conservation site.

The other may be Shona’s horse field. Watch this space.

Steyning in Bloom (Ronnie)

Open gardens day was a great success. Those opening up their gardens enjoyed doing it and the wildlife friendly gardens had lots of visitors. Cathy’s meadow had 146 people through the gate. Roger Brown's garden between 80 and a 100 visitors. Comments from visitors were very positive. Would definitely do it again.

Weald to Waves (Ronnie)

Meeting between GS, SCO on 21 July

Climate Cafe (Ronnie)

Numbers have grown and there is a well used App.
Unfortunately, we are losing Dawn as one of the facilitators so are looking for someone suitable to take her place.

Community Fridge (Nicky):

We have had a few occasions when food donations have been less than usual. This was managed by reducing the promotion the night before thereby reducing our visitors.

Volunteers’ holidays have meant we’ve struggled on a couple of occasions to get food collected but thankfully we haven’t had to cancel any sessions. (Thank you Shona!)

The article in the newsletter has produced a couple more volunteers. I think we can expect another busy holiday period in September so we will encourage the dormant volunteers to wake up!

I’d like to do a Summer drinks in my garden for all Fridge volunteers and for the Steering Group. I don’t think this will cost more than about £50/60. Perhaps you can give me the go ahead, or not, or this please.

It’s been a good month for donations. The Wilson Memorial Trust paid us the second part of their donation which was £375. We applied and were awarded a donation from Southern Coop for £500.

Transport Group (Sally)

Transport group : the White Bridge link may be split into 2 phases to help funding, some funding is looking hopeful from the Wilson Trust, and several other applications are in. Plans for a crowdfunding campaign have been postponed until other funding is firmed up.

EV charging points in Priory Field installed, waiting for Bramber and Steyning car parks.

20mph plan was produced by WSCC, but it was extremely limited to the very central area of Steyning- the SPC Working Group has been reconvened and meetings are planned with WSCC to challenge this.

NB all these transport projects and others re crossings and traffic calming in the bypass are under the wing of other groups - mostly the Community Partnership. So the GS transport group function is more a ‘keep an overview and discussion group’ rather than an action group. We can review with our members whether to carry on in this mode at our next meeting in Oct.

HEAT group (Malcolm):

The Energy Helpdesk has been the main focus of our efforts, running alongside the Repair Cafe and also at Steyning library (monthly) and the Beeding Hub (alternate months).

Numbers of punters has been down since the start of spring, and I anticipate this will continue until autumn.

On the other hand, we have drawn interest from other communities and organisations, and there’s the possibility of developing and extending our model into a broader network.

We had a guest presence at the Amberley Eco fair last month, and this model could be something we could develop.

We have a program of meetings to discuss relevant matters, and are having site visits to view buildings with interesting and good energy efficient practice.

We are also considering site visits for people wishing to ‘green up’ their houses, and are seeking Guinea pigs for this.
Repair Cafe Update (Robin)

The RC continues to run very effectively.

We are entering the summer lull and it was definitely quieter last Saturday than it has been. We also, interestingly took a lot less money and I’m not quite sure what to attribute that to - it could be that both Vicci and I were on the sharpening desk, and therefore not badgering people in quite the same way that we do at other times.

Also, we’ve been having a discussion about home repairs and we are fairly sure that the majority of owners of items repaired at the repairers home don’t actually make a contribution to the repair café. We are thinking about making a standing charge of £5 or £10 depending on the complexity of the repair for any repair that we take home thus guaranteeing that we get some income and hopefully reducing the number of repairs that our repairers have to take home.

I would like feedback from the Steering Group about this please.

I am midway through inducting a number two called Guy Standen who is happy to run the repair café when I am not available. He did quite a bit of the organising for the July one while I was away. I think this will work quite well.

Schools Liaison (Robin)

I have written a short article for Your Steyning documenting the activities that we have recently been undertaking with the schools. I can’t send it due to our lack of internet but perhaps Geoff or Melissa could put it on here. Thanks.

Aside from that it is worth noting that we have successfully added one new member to the schools, liaison group, Simon, Parker, and it looks like we might have another. I’m hoping we can build this group as the schools are very enthusiastic about our involvement.