Minutes of Greening Steyning steering group meeting – 6 Sept 2023

Present: Geoff, Vicci, Melissa, Malcolm, Ronnie, Nicola, Sarah, Robin, Laura

Apologies: Sally, Shona,

1. Green Day 2024

Plans starting to crystallise for Green Day on 25 May next year. Rough outline as follows:

   11.00 Children’s animal themed fancy dress parade led by Keith Ellis, with wildlife corridor theme
   11.30 Activities for young children led by Keith Ellis + story telling with Abbie Simmonds
   14.00 Weald to Waves talk (maybe with Isabella Tree) in marquee
   15.30? Performance event for teenagers, hopefully involving SGS + Jan Hobson

   All day – range of stalls by local green groups + veggie/vegan food trucks
   All day – “I’m on the Map” sign up to Weald to Waves map (need fun way to do this) + wildlife garden videos showing in marquee

Nicky, Geoff, Vicci, Melissa & Ronnie have formed working group - all ideas welcome.

2. Autumn Green drinks programme

   Sept 25th – Solar Evening : moved to Athletics club. Need to organise wine glasses, drinks delivery & bar rota nearer time. Chance to test out this new venue.
   Nov food event : Vicci & Nicky talking to Carina from Fair Share to discuss possibility of a cooking with food waste event in Steyning Centre. Need to get ticket pricing right and avoid it being too complicated to run. Fallback option is to have a straightforward social get together in a pub.

3. White Bridge update

   Bridge closure obviously bad news. Working Party doing it’s best to get info out of WSCC and to act as channel for communication on what’s happening. Public getting angry and will be more so if there isn’t a clear explanation and timeframe for the replacement work. GS may need to do some lobbying if WSCC drags its feet.

4. 20mph zone update

   Latest response from WSCC is that they are defending their proposal for a very minimal scheme focusing only on High St. SPC Communities Committee discussed yesterday and will invite WSCC officers to attend an urgent meeting of the 20mph Working Party, which will be expanded to bring in schools and other stakeholders. It may end up as take it or leave it – which will be a tricky choice with arguments both ways. Geoff to contact Deborah Urquhart (Depy Leader WSCC) for advice on how to proceed on this and White Bridge.

5. SPC update

   HEAT Group has submitted their energy audit of the Steyning Centre, which will be considered by the Premises Committee. Vicci reported that a new climate friendly small grant scheme is due to be launched shortly. A meeting is being convened to discuss next steps on Chandlers Way park.

6. New Ideas from Lifestyle Group
**Tool lending library** – Nicky keen on this. Several models out there. Online versions where people share their kit sound easier to operate than those where there’s a central library of tools – as this brings storage, maintenance & insurance issues. Whatever we do we need new volunteers to run it. Will include an article in the next newsletter seeking volunteers to develop the idea. Might also put up on the Reach volunteering website.

**Refills** – Vicci to talk to new manager at Post Office to see what their plans are. Not much enthusiasm for setting up our own refill scheme for Farmers Market/Repair Café. Some diplomacy needed to clarify our connection with Sussex Green Living on plastic recycling.

7. **Schools update**

Robin shared a presentation from the new Eco Council staff rep and collected ideas on how Greening could chip in. Bike repair lessons. No mow May. Getting the school involved in Green Day has good possibilities. May be opportunities to put things on their new notice board and in their planned newsletter – though will need some thought to make it attractive to youngsters. Melissa a key resource. Can start now with simple stuff and make school links a focus for our next HDC funding bid. HEAT group keen to meet new Head of School, Aiden Timmons, to talk about energy saving options.

8. **HDC /WSCC updates**

Geoff had a friendly catch up meeting with Helen Peacock, the lead climate officer at HDC, in early Aug. It is all systems go there, with consultation underway on their quite ambitious new climate strategy. They are trying to get feedback from ‘hidden voices’ in Sept and have consultants involved to help. Aim to sign off strategy by Jan. A new network of Parish councils has been created, with online portal and bi-annual meetings.

Offered Greening Steyning support in finalising their strategy. Passed on suggestion that their planning officers needs to be more proactive in supporting retrofit, especially in conservation areas.

Geoff also attended **WSCC Climate Advisory Group** meeting, the first for 18 months. New lead climate officer is Tom Fourcade, who seems switched on. Tony Whitbread and I were the only outsiders. They’ve been focusing on getting their own house in order, and have made progress but it’s a big job with 50 sites & 5000 staff. Now have in-house team of 7. Now working on a Climate Action and Adaptation Plan which will look at the whole county. Have created Carbon Reduction Board with reps from Districts. Interesting to see focus on Adaptation - eg. were mentioning how our roads are not designed for the current climate and need massive investment. Are looking to roll out a climate vulnerability map where you can click on your area to show specific risks. Also aware of income generating opportunities from selling biodiversity and carbon sequestration offsets through ‘Carbon positive investments’ – though this is a very new and unregulated market. Are struggling to define their wider leadership role.

9. **Finances**

Quiet month in August. Nothing big to report.

10. **Comms pipeline**

Ronnie has drafted article on Weald to Waves for Oct Your Steyning. Float lending library idea in Oct newsletter. Laura to do note on how to avoid frying hedgehogs on bonfire night for our main and wildlife gardening newsletters in Nov. Melissa always looking for other content ideas.

11. **Next meeting:** Weds 1 - 8pm – venue tbc
UPDATES

Verge update (Laura):

Two verges have been cut (Bramber Roundabout and the top of Shootings Field, so we are planning working parties to clear the cuttings (one planned for tomorrow evening). The Clays Hill verge will be cleared by the residents and the Pepperscoombe Lane verge won’t be cut until October. We finished three Botany surveys this summer with Pepperscoombe Lane to start from next spring. We did also have a chat with local residents in Shootings Field about the greens there, that Steyning For Trees is working on, to provide a little support for their work by way of unofficial advice on wild flowers (but very clear that they are the project owners and driving force).

We are also considering adding invertebrate surveys into the plan next year if training can be secured.

Nature Map Group (Ronnie)

Following on from the hedgerow survey we did back in the summer at Annington Farm we are working with the farmer and Steyning for Trees to replant an existing hedgerow which has lots of gaps and is overgrown with brambles and nettles.

Hedging plants have been ordered for November planting.

Just need volunteers to help clear the existing hedgerow of rubbish.

At the instigation of David and Sophie Littlejohns we surveyed an old hedgerow crossing Saltings Field near the White Bridge in Upper Beeding. This is an interesting area ecologically and historically and could be better managed for wildlife than at the present moment.

BAG has agreed to help the WI manage a small woodland they planted in the 1970’s just off the South Downs Way at Church Farm Coombes. Will need a small working party to restore this neglected and overgrown wood and keep it accessible.

Community Fridge (Nicky):

Despite an increase in food collected we had started to see donations dropping off. We now remind everyone that we need donations to cover costs and that has improved donations. We usually collect around £10 a session - about £100 a month.

We are finding ourselves struggling a bit for volunteers as everyone is away in Sept. We had the same issue last year.

We have a lot of people who have volunteered and have been added to the systems but don’t volunteer. I think they need a bit more hand holding so I’m going to run a couple of training sessions and invite all the “dormants” to come along. I’ll let you know how it goes.

Transport Group (Sally)

As you know the White Bridge link has attracted funding from The Wilson Trust (£125,000) but has been delayed by WSCC finding structural probs in the bridge. To be discussed today. 20mph is up in the air because of WSCCs disappointing proposals / reduced scope of the scheme- Geoff will update at the meeting.

HEAT group (Malcolm):

Energy helpdesk continues alongside the Repair cafe on 1st Saturday at Beeding VH,
And at Beeding Hub last wed alternate months,
Steyning library trial ended in July.

**Repair Cafe Update (Robin)**

July and August busier than usual.

We have had to change supplier for our Cakes as Linda, the initial supplier has moved away.

We are now using a charity based near Henfield which uses young adults with special needs to make the cakes. We are really pleased with them, but they are quite large so we have to cut them in half.

**Schools Liaison (Robin)**

After a flurry of activity at the end of last term, making a bug hotel and creating no dig beds for Steyning primary, plus activity at the Towers it has been a quiet summer while the schools have been on holiday.

I had a useful meeting with Lauren at shooting Fields two weeks ago, and I will report on that at the meeting as there are several things to discuss. We need to think about how we want to respond to their needs.

I am having a meeting with three others in the schools, liaison group next week. We now have a happy band of four people: Simon, Katie, Jan And myself.