

## **Friends Of Colliers Wood Parks and Green Spaces Sub Group (CWRA)**

### **Notes of meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021**

Margaret opened the Zoom meeting and welcomed recently joined members Molly, Michael, Richard and Susan.

1. Apologies were received from Cllr. Laxmi Attawar, Antonia Moxham and Mark Bravery.

#### 2. Minutes of the last meeting

Margaret gave an update on the minutes. Bulbs have been planted, mulch has been spread. Monthly workdays haven't been possible since New Year due to further lockdown but will hopefully resume soon. Very little has been spent between the last meeting and this one.

#### 3. Apple Trees

Two apple trees, gifted by Abundance Wimbledon have been planted in the Rec. They have been staked and caged by idverde and will need watering during the summer. The Willows nursery have agreed to take this on.

#### 4. Willows Nursery

Willows have been sponsored to plant 15 very young trees in the Rec.

**ACTION** Margaret to follow up with Angela at Willows.

#### 5. Bulb Planting

Bulb planting went well and those planted in October are growing well and almost flowering, later planting beginning to show shoots. The funding for the bulbs and other plants and equipment needs to be accounted for to Merton Council Ward Allocation Fund team.

**ACTION** Helen to write an account and send this with photos and a list of expenditure and receipts.

#### 6. Colliers Wood in Colour

Richard suggested engaging the community in planting around street trees to enhance our streets and sense of community. He would like it to become Colliers Wood wide. Maria suggested piloting the project in Cavendish Road and thanked Richard for his public spirit in sponsoring the pilot. Richard explained the idea had started with a conversation with Zoe and was a development of a project he and his

wife and Tom W had led in 2015 in Cavendish and Park Road respectively. Phil will help with crowd funding to finance the project as it extends to other roads in CW. Maria has done a flyer for the pilot, which will be distributed to houses in Cavendish Road and Richard will provide plants which will be picked up from his garden at 10.00 am on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March. This pilot will give an idea of how it feels and how to proceed to extend to other streets. Maria suggested the idea of Richard presenting a giant cheque and then group could buy and distribute plants from a table in the park. Tom reminded us that people must sign up for the season as the plants would need regular watering once planted. Margaret will put together a list of recommended plants for this project. Richard has contacted Merton Council to inform them of the project but has not heard back. He/we would like to ensure that during the street cleaning task the plants aren't mistaken as weeds and pulled up.

**ACTION** Signs to hang on the trees to be followed up by this group

## 7. Crowd Funding

Phil G led this and suggested it would be a good way of funding street plants round trees as would be very visible. It could start with Richard's donation and then any others in the group so that there was a sum in the pot when it went to a wider audience. Phil asked if there were other ideas for projects so that he could make the crowd fund one that can be used broadly. Caroline was asked to update us on the Council response to a skate park development on land owned by Thames Water and was advised against asking permission in case it was rescinded at a later date. However, there was a range of ideas:

- A few spots for larger trees, e.g. in the Rec by the toilet block an ornamental tree would make a lovely entrance to the park
- Support funding for guerrilla gardening similar to Myrna Close, which needs continued input, e.g. at the end of Robinson Road
- Action days teaching/learning how to propagate, make compost etc.

Emily suggested making videos of the planting and she and Phil will liaise re the crowd funding and marketing it.

## 8. Feedback from Merton Climate Action Group

Daniela reported that it would be next month that 'greening' Merton will be the subject for discussion.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mertons-climate-action-group-greening-merton-meeting-tickets-141422537617?ref=eios>

## 9. Update from idVerde

There has been a lot of contact with one or two meetings and many emails. We will shortly be receiving high vis vests with our logo on and tools via an idverde community fund bid and these items will be stored in the shed in the Rec. The shed was completely cleared and rearranged for us by Simon and Tony two senior members of the small Mitcham team which serves our CW parks.

There has been hard cutting back in Wandle Park and we are working as closely as possible with the idverde team to take an active part in order to improve the consideration of the environment. A senior leader of the idverde regional team, Andrew is helping us to fulfil our frustrated bid to train to our own volunteers to do regular river maintenance which in turn should reduce the excessive growth and subsequent hard cutting back. We had been assured we would be informed when works would be conducted though and this hasn't happened which is disappointing. Susan sent information about legal requirements for cutting back in public spaces.

**ACTION** Write a letter to idverde and the council and publish it.

This gave rise to great concern about cutting back and burning in Wandle Meadow.

**ACTION** The Friends of Garfield Park and Wandle Meadow Nature Reserve have subsequently confirmed that they were aware that the work, which was necessary, was going to be carried out. They are requesting signage to explain works conducted and will be following this up.

## 10. Maintenance of Baltic Close

This area needs gardening and refreshing but the biggest problem is litter. Tom W has contacted Mark Holmes to establish the best way forward. The area needs daily street cleaners.

**ACTION** Follow up according to Mark Holmes response/discussion with Tom.

## 11. Wandle Park

Margaret reported that eco fencing had been used to replace a badly damaged stretch. It is made from recycled industrial plastic and won't need maintenance. We could tell people the back story with a notice.

**ACTION**

Notice to be written and displayed.

## 12. Community Food Growing

Tom W talked us through this in response to the many queries there have been about community gardening/food growing. There is a developing trend and Tom explained that the first task is to get hold of land for growing. The nearest to us is the garden next to Christchurch and Lesley in our group has been a stalwart there over

many years. It is small, but further afield there is community growing in Western Road and also the Community Orchard which grows heritage trees, both places are large enough to have more volunteers. Caroline mentioned wasteland in Pollards Hill which local people cleared and grow food on and works alongside the local GP surgery. Gardening is recognised as therapeutic and when GPs make referrals to the scheme it is “social prescribing”.

### 13. Any Other Business

Zoe talked about a chance piece of networking with Sergio who is a member of the Bee Keeping Association. He talked about guiding us through a planting regime which would ensure land has flowers throughout the year. She may invite the Bee Keeping Association/Sergio to talk us through this at the next meeting.

There were votes of thanks to Zoe for the work she has led in Myrna Close, and from Cllr. Caroline to everyone for all the work in different parts of CW and thanks from Margaret to everyone.

There were offers to help with the immediate work in Baltic Close. It was agreed that any time there is work planned it should be posted on the group to let people know what is going on. This has been the practice since the group started but the reminder from Emily was timely.

**ACTION** Work planned and less planned to be posted on the group and to specify when enough people have signed up to it or if open to all comers. This is necessary as a health and safety measure at all times and especially in relation to the current restrictions due to the pandemic.

### 14. Date of next meeting **4<sup>th</sup> May 7.30 pm via Zoom**