

## Minutes From APCG Members' Meetings – March 2023

### Meeting 2 – Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023

**Present:** Tom J. (Chair and Minutes), Jane A. (Trustee Rep), Paul M (Horticulture Lead), x5 members (names withheld)

#### 1. Welcome:

- Tom thanked everyone for coming to the meeting despite the rain, and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

#### 2. Introductions:

- Those present introduced themselves in turn, and some of what they do at the garden.

#### 3. Apologies:

- x1 member

#### 4. Members' Covenant:

- Tom pointed out the Members' Covenant on display in the cabin, and thanked those present at members' meetings in November 2022 for their contributions to it, as well as inviting comments and any suggestions to improve it.

#### 5. Funding for the garden:

- Tom introduced the situation around funding, the lottery project, and the goal of being significantly more financially self-sustaining in three years' time.
- A member spoke to those present about the recent first meeting of the APCG Members' Fundraising Group, who hope to provide the spark of enthusiasm to get independent volunteer fundraising for the garden off the ground. Their ideas included:
  - One off events.
  - Courses / talks at the garden.
  - Pay it forward scheme for memberships and food.
  - 'People power' – getting volunteers motivated to turn ideas into action.
- Another member suggested an independent beer festival at the garden! Would we need a licence? We've had one before.
- Other suggestions were made by those present:
  - Seek local corporate funding – e.g. Tesco 'bags of help' scheme
  - Corporate team days – 'charity of the year', staff members have an experience day at the garden.

#### 6. Update from APCG Trustees:

- Jane outlined the current focus of the work of the Board of Trustees, and her own role within it:
  - Current focus is implementation of the three year National Lottery Community Fund project.
  - Jane is assisting with tightening up processes involved in the running of the garden and the charity, starting with job descriptions.

- New Trustees are being recruited and co-opted at present to bring in greater depth of skills around fundraising, project management, project evaluation.
- Tom clarified the role of the volunteer Board of Trustees in running the APCG charity.

## 7. Community Partnerships:

- Tom invited those present to consider any contacts or suggestions they can suggest as the garden looks to establish delivering benefits to prospective members on a formal basis. Suggestions included:
  - East Kent Colleges – a member present knows the CEO, but suggested local Principals as the point of contact
  - Another member suggested local mental health teams – KMPT – Jane to contact her colleague and cc Jacqui
  - Job centres – prospective participants for the horticulture course?
  - A further member suggested contacting the ‘Home Education Team’ – parents home-schooling children may be interested in garden courses and experiences.
- A member spoke about the need for us to be sure of what our offer is to those we seek to partner with. Tom agreed that this is a priority, and is being worked on by managers and staff at the garden. There was discussion of making horticulture a part of this:
  - courses / events with an end product / take-home – plants, crafts, sustainable gardening items
  - Tuesday horticulture group (catchy name needed!) a part of the offer – take-home (besides skills, confidence, social connections) is folder and certificate
  - Horticulture Lead to come up with suggestions for such events / courses, workshop with Suzanne and Tom.

## 8. AOB

- A member present enjoyed running a market stall in the town in 2022, and would be keen to volunteer to help with this again. Plants were sold, as well as memberships to the Garden.
- Another member felt it would be helpful to have a formal reminder about membership. A further member wondered if running all memberships from January to December would help simplify the system. Tom clarified that, at present, with members joining and resubscribing throughout the year, from a variety of sources and with many points of contact at the garden, asking them to renew their membership when it is due is the simplest system we have found. Also that we are open to all possibilities as we are currently investing in a complete evaluation and subsequent overhaul of the membership process, alongside seeking to implement a CRM solution.
- A member wanted to know if the handwashing station by the cabin was back in action. Tom said he would make sure it was after the meeting (it is, soap should always be available there too!)
- Another member present spoke passionately about paths to greater sustainability through
  - Water harvesting – this led to general discussion:
    - money in the budget for more / large butts? Tom thinks so, it is a named feature of the lottery project
    - no roof left behind – a butt for every roof?
    - gather water in the winter, save for the summer
    - get a really big butt (1300 litres available), these could be made into an aesthetically attractive, free-standing central feature for the garden, a member present to research online and produce a demonstration plan of how this could be achieved
    - will the water get stagnant? A member present didn't think so, but thought it would be no worse for plants than treated tap water. Water butt purifying compounds available.

- Solar power – Tom clarified that this is something that has been brought up a few times at members' meetings and AGM. We haven't found the time to investigate it seriously, and there may be a complication with our power coming from a third party (landlords), but it is not off the table.
- Jane thanked everyone for attending and for enthusiastically sharing such good ideas.
- Tom asked those present if they would be interested in volunteering to help the garden open at evenings and weekends – x2 members present may be interested.

#### **9. Date for next meeting:**

- Tom thanked everyone for coming and taking part – next week of meetings in July 2023 – dates TBD.