

Minutes From APCG Members' Meetings – March 2023

Meeting 4 – Thursday 30th March 2023

Present: Tom J. (Chair and Minutes), Gulliver I. (Trustee Rep), x6 members (names withheld)

1. Welcome:

- Tom thanked everyone for coming and was delighted to welcome back Gulliver after a period of illness. Tom made those present aware of his plans to return to fulltime higher education in September 2023, departing from the role of Assistant Manager in August.

2. Introductions:

- Those present introduced themselves in turn, along with a bit about their relationship to the garden.

3. Apologies:

- None.

4. Members' Covenant:

- Tom thanked those present who attended members' meetings in November for their contributions to the Members' Covenant now on display in the main cabin at the garden.

5. Funding for the garden:

- Tom contextualised the current situation with the Lottery funding, the moves towards greater self-sustainability as this funding tapers off over three years, and the work of the now established independent members' fundraising group who are hoping to put ideas into action. Tom also explained that one implication of the new three year project is the need for staff to be more cautious and protective of their time, to focus on their core activities, and to seek partnerships and activities that contribute to the goals of the project.

Tom put the subject out for general discussion:

- Two members present would like to be contacted about members' fundraising, Tom to pass their details on to the member who has set up this group.
- Gulliver and a member present suggested more events based around Christmas – craft sales, Christmas parties, opportunities to bring together members and the public, and to make use of the decorations put up at the time.
- Is the garden's full sized marquee available for events? Yes, but would have to be put up and taken down either side of any event, a process which takes several hours. This is due to the preferences of our landlords as well as storm damage and to protect the lawn which has been hard hit by two years of far greater use than normal.
- Combining with local events such as the Faversham Safari – charitable stall in town to sell items and raise awareness of the garden. Open Gardens.
- It was felt that events that bring a lot of people into the garden will not harm the ethos or atmosphere as they are limited in duration.
- Could the kitchen be better used to bring in money?
- A member suggested that a high quality produced video about the garden would be an asset in seeking funds from a range of sources. This could include footage of a busy day at the garden, the different activities and ways

the people use the space, and interviews with members and staff about the work of the garden and what it means for individuals.

Tom agreed that this good idea had come up before but never got past the idea stage as it would require an amount of time and skill with video editing that we didn't feel we had. Gulliver mentioned a member and friend of the garden who has worked as a videographer and could be approached with this idea. Gulliver to contact and put them in touch with Suzanne and Tom.

6. Update from APCG Trustees:

- Gulliver was pleased to be able to return to the garden as a member and Trustee. As he has been absent for some time due to illness he has not been able to attend recent Trustee meetings. Gulliver spoke about being pleased to be back, to see Suzanne back in her post as Manager, and the importance of emphasising the charitable aims of the garden.
- Gulliver and others discussed the need to avoid becoming victims of our own success and becoming too busy at times. It was agreed that the current timetable of activities and events should continue to be monitored and updated to protect this important aspect of life at the garden.
- Tom briefly outlined the current focus of the Board of Trustees – helping to deliver the early stages of the National Lottery project, working on grant applications, evaluating garden processes, and recruiting new board members.

7. Community Partnerships:

- Tom invited those present to help the garden by considering contacts and connections they could suggest as the garden seeks to partner with new and existing groups in new ways – accessing funding from statutory and charitable groups that use the garden as a service for their clients being the first priority.

8. AOB

- A member spoke passionately about their work delivering homeopathy at the Abbey Place Clinic, near the Physic Garden.
 - This member offers free introductory sessions and prescriptions to all and would like to work with members from the garden.
 - Sessions are the last Friday of each month and can be booked online or through Abbey Place Clinic, and can be held online or face to face. Members can be referred by Tom or Jacqui.
 - Their prescriptions are intended to work alongside medicines prescribed by doctors, and they would not advocate anyone changing their medication without consulting their GP. Their sessions are intended for those who have tried conventional medications and therapy and would like to explore a complementary course of treatment for physical or mental conditions.

Gulliver suggested that he could put this member in contact with a local GP who may be willing to consider referring to this complementary healthcare option.

- A member present, as an employee of Swale Borough Council, advised that Members' Grants have been significantly cut this year and that the garden should seek to take advantage of these as soon as possible before they are gone.
- Another member would like to see a permanent price list for refreshments on display in the cabin, and suggested that two prices for smaller and larger cakes produced by the garden would be welcomed by members and visitors, others agreed.
- Tom canvassed those present about their interest in volunteering to support the garden with potentially extended opening hours during evenings and weekends in the warmer months: all members present were interested in taking part.

Gulliver suggested that the Grammar School Trust may be willing to discuss making their facilities available, and it was agreed that our landlords should at the very least be kept fully informed and where appropriate be invited to all such events.

9. Date for next meeting:

- Tom thanked all present for attending and contributing to today's meeting, next week of members' meetings is in July 2023 – dates TBD.