

## Minutes From APCG Members' Meetings – March 2023

### Meeting 5 – Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

**Present:** Steve B. (Chair), Tom J. (Minutes), Helen C. (Trustee Rep and Chair), Sarah P. (Trustee Rep and Secretary), x9 members (names withheld)

#### 1. Welcome:

- Steve thanked everyone for coming and thanked Tom for his work as Acting Manager in 2022.

#### 2. Introductions:

- Those present introduced themselves in turn, how long they have been coming, and a bit about what they get involved with or their work with the Board of Trustees.

#### 3. Apologies:

- None.

#### 4. Members' Covenant:

- Steve indicated the Members' Covenant on display in the cabin and thanked everyone for their contributions to it during members' meetings in November 2022. Thoughts and suggestions were invited – let us know.

#### 5. Funding for the garden:

- Steve spoke about the status of the National Lottery Community Fund project, now in its second month. This is the garden's third consecutive grant from the National Lottery and focuses on developing staffed projects and the entire garden towards greater self-sustainability as the funding tapers across three years.
- Steve also spoke about the recent meeting of an independent members' fundraising group on 23/3/23. They hope to contribute towards the running costs of the garden by bringing enthusiasm and energy to turn ideas into action. Their ideas from their first meeting included:
  - Annual Wine and Wisdom event – a member has informed us the Guild Hall in town is free to hire.
  - Promoting the garden's participation in the Faversham and District Community Lottery scheme which currently brings in close to £1,700.
  - Suggestion for garden to develop ways to generate more income through membership:
    - 'tiered' memberships? As on other days there was discussion of the delicate balance with inclusivity and accessibility that would need to be struck with such a scheme. A member suggested a 'minimum' fee for all with other amounts beyond.
    - more opportunities to give more / monthly donations when joining – claiming gift aid on all amounts above £15.
  - Talks / events at the garden for members and the public to attend.
- Steve invited everyone present to consider ways to contribute to this initiative, and invited discussion:
  - A member present plays in the Faversham Mission Brass band and offered to suggest to them that a future fundraising event they hold could benefit the garden. Tom acknowledged that Mission Brass have donated to the garden before, thanked them for this, and also noted that the Lottery delivery plan includes developing a role at the garden to include routine acknowledgement and thanks sent for this form of private / organisation donation.

- Another member suggested that encouraging legacy giving would be worthwhile. Helen and Tom agreed that this has been discussed at planning meetings and is intended to be developed. A further member recommended a service 'freewills.org' for which organisations pay a subscription fee to be listed as a potential beneficiary of such bequests. Tom noted that raising the profile of the garden in general would likely eventually lead to more such donations.
  - A member suggested that having some close approximation of the running cost of the garden on display in a location where donations can be taken could encourage individual giving – the donation box near the entrance a possibility.
  - Steve asked Helen if it would be possible for Trustees to give a presentation to members about plans and progress that is being made towards this stated goal of diversifying funding. It was agreed that the AGM (set for June 30<sup>th</sup>) would be the ideal opportunity for this.
  - A member wondered if there would be any issue with events that involve music or noise? It was felt that such an event could be possible, but would require foreknowledge and consent from our landlords and neighbours.
  - Another member suggested jumble sales, a further member suggested we could participate in the Faversham Safari and suggested that the name 'jumble sale' could be re-branded!
- Helen thanked everyone for their ideas and made clear that Trustees and staff would not want to be conveying any anxiety about the need to raise funds onto members. She stressed that such fundraising is just part of a larger picture of diverse funding, including a continual process of grant applications on behalf of Trustees and staff. Helen also hoped that this would be an opportunity for members to enjoy helping to organise and run fun events for everyone.

## 6. Update from APCG Trustees:

- Helen spoke about the current work of the board of Trustees:
  - Bringing in new board members, one having been co-opted already and two soon to be hopefully, with all to be voted in at the AGM on 30/6:
    - Andrew Ireland has now been co-opted and brings a wealth of experience and contacts from his time working in mental health and as Director of Social Services for Kent.
    - Imogen Tinkler is hoping to join the board soon, brings her experience of fundraising and charity operations, and also enjoys foraging and cooking.
    - Polly Radcliffe will also be joining the board, from her background in research at King's University London she will work to develop the garden's policies and monitoring and evaluation processes.
  - Implementation and delivery of the National Lottery project, whilst considering:
    - who the garden exists to help, and who we could try to be better at helping
    - what the garden does and should work to offer
    - balancing activities with maintaining the garden as a place of refuge
    - focusing on the garden and gardening.
- Sarah explained that the Board of Trustees are also involved in developing and recruiting for existing and new roles, hoping to help the APCG to work better and smarter. It was noted that this also now applies to finding a replacement for Tom in the Assistant Manager post, Tom hoped that this would be an opportunity to bring in some very valuable skills and experience to the garden.
- Helen asked for questions from those present, emphasising that member involvement will be vital as the garden seeks to deliver the TNLCF project:
  - Steve seconded the value of protecting the core values of the garden and led off a discussion of this year's OT student placement from CCCU in Canterbury. Helen clarified that the students are with us to get involved in activities, gardening, independent projects and meaningful engagement with garden members.

## **7. Community Partnerships:**

- Steve requested those present consider any contacts or sources of information they have that could be helpful to the garden as we seek to expand our network of partners. Tom clarified that at this stage in the Lottery project we are particularly focusing on seeking to partner with organisations that can formally refer individuals who can most benefit from the work of the APCG.

## **8. AOB**

- Tom canvassed members present for their potential availability to help make the garden available at evenings and weekends: x5 members' names were recorded.
- A member noted for the record that the Men's Shed project volunteers are hoping that everyone will respect and keep clear from clutter their outdoor work area. It was agreed that this will be more obvious once the area is paved and separated by the soon to be built wooden fencing.
- Another member asked if the garden maintains good relationships with the Board of the Grammar School Trust, and if we have considered them as a source of connections within the local business community. Steve also suggested connections with Faversham Chamber of Commerce.
- A member asked when the Grammar School Trust were last invited to the garden (December 2022), and if they had been considered as a potential source of direct funding (yes, however this is available through official channels only, likely to be in the region of £3-5K)
- Steve and Helen discussed the past and future development of Trustee policy, and Tom hoped that all Trustees felt they could come along to the garden to spend time with members.

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

- Steve thanked everyone for attending, and Tom for taking the minutes, and set the next week of meetings for July 2023 – dates TBD.
- Tom thanked Steve for facilitating another successful week of APCG members' meetings.