

Chair: Bob

Notes: Rebecca

1. **Attendance:** Anthony, Barbara, Bob, Clare, Graham, Hsin-Ling, Jennie, Jill, Julian, Lois, Louise, Rebecca, Tristan
2. **Apologies:** Angelo, Kate, Keith, Ingrid, Immy, Peggy.
3. **Notes from the last meeting in October 2020** (e-mailed and on website): no changes.
4. **Updates:**
  - a. **Finances:** brief Treasurer's report from Julian: we have several funds that are allocated to projects (polytunnel, new bench, kindness project) but not much unallocated. We need to fund insurance renewal in September ~£175. We have had several generous 'cash' and plant donations from individuals since October 2020, and a lot of herbs and bedding plants from Coton Orchard donated to the Kindness project (on 23 June).  
**Action:** start Friends group for sustainable core funding (see below) and investigate business sponsorship.
  - b. **Membership.** Welcome to our new regular volunteers: Anthony, Clare, Francesca, Hsin-Ling (and her TzuChi group), Kate and Tristan.
  - c. **Time credits.** New system is online. Some people have accounts. Not much to spend them on at the moment.  
**Action:** Rebecca to send sign-up links to new volunteers. For other volunteers, ask Rebecca if you'd like a link. We can 'back-pay' people.
  - d. **Volunteering.** We have some really good volunteers at the moment – about enough to keep the garden 'not-too-wild'.

Since the pandemic started, we have adjusted how we run volunteering sessions to follow the guidelines at the time – from just one household group to 'plus one' to 'under 6' etc.

Currently, volunteers are meeting on Tuesdays from 4 to 6 pm and Fridays from 2 to 4 pm, but they need to book in advance via Rebecca. The times were chosen to fit with the availability of the current weekday volunteers. We have also had some one-off weekend working parties and will do more of them, especially when we need to cancel a weekday one. The garden co-ordinators have limited availability because they both work too. For the group sessions, we agree on the day, whether to have the session when we know about the weather forecast.

Some people come in on their own with their own tools and do simple and obvious tasks, including adopting an area. The work needs to be co-ordinated with the volunteers – please don't just help yourself or plant without telling people.

Small groups (around 6 or so) work best for the garden co-ordinators. If we find we are short of volunteers, we could make more effort to recruit and this would be more time consuming for the garden co-ordinators.

All sessions are short because we have no toilet access. We try to work quite efficiently and don't provide hot drinks. People need to bring their own drinks (and snacks).

Notes from meeting on Sunday 27 June 2021 at 3pm (with social meet up from 4pm).

**3 July update:** from 25 July, we will try out some Sunday and Monday afternoon drop-in sessions in place of the Tuesday/Friday ones. Probably 4 to 6 pm in July and August. Still need to bring your own drink and snack.

**Action:** to review in September, including the times.

e. **Completed projects in the garden:** since October 2020:

- i. **Infrastructure etc:** Green roof and narrow 'green-roof' bed (24 June); book swap box (very popular - thanks Immy and Ingrid); seed swap box (less popular); portable pizza oven and kit (Rebecca and Julian have tried out and need to work out how to scale it up for use in the garden).

**Action:** complete rainchains on green roof. Think about using the pizza oven in the garden if it feels safe and doable. It is part of the kitchen project (by June 2022), to be shared with local groups.

- ii. **New trees and planting:** plum, gage and crab apple; Spring bulbs; grapevine (21 June).

**Action:** plant fig tree.

- iii. **Activities for families:** Autumn self-guided trail; Small doors; Rabbits on the run; Wooden xylophone; lots of pond dipping.

**2 July update:** 'A frame' installed in polytunnel as a temporary blackboard.

**Action:** all think about new features we could add to the garden. Julia L has suggested a Nature Treasure shelf, maybe for the polytunnel. Thinking about a beetle/mini-beast trail for the Autumn.

- iv. **Decorations:** polytunnel and veranda; Xmas trees and decorations; Easter decorations. Big thanks to Jill and the decoration team!

**Action:** keep under review...

- v. **Kindness project:** made a kindness garden at Wulfstan Way (including signs and bug hotel); four afternoon teas (completed) including Red Cross Area Residents' afternoon tea in the garden (20 June). Any funds we don't spend we need to return.

**Action:** need to install a water butt at Wulfstan Way; have small funds for decorating Wulfstan Way; have two gardening kits to loan out to new volunteers for work outside the regular sessions (2 July update: another one loaned out); review plans for family-friendly picnics in the garden (we have small funds for this but I forgot to put this on the agenda – they depend on the virus and guidelines – and energy levels of volunteers).

- vi. **Networking:** Hilton's new community garden (opened 26 June). Julian and Rebecca visited and dropped some donated plants off. Will stay in touch.

- vii. **Nearby:** improved path to the garden from the car park.

5. **Upcoming visits and events:** Queen Edith school (29/30 June); have cancelled members' very informal social (on 4 July); Cambridge Garden Club to visit (6 July).

**2 July update:** Streets and Open Spaces volunteers have been invited to the Garden in August for a social (date to be decided, Rina to organise).

## 6. Planned projects:

- a. **New bench** described the design for under the 'climbing tree'. We have funds.  
**Action:** Julian needs to finalise the design, find some time to buy materials (Larch sleepers) and make it.
- b. **Club hut interior.** Currently used for storage and is a bit of a mess (having no lights doesn't help). Only one household group uses it (and toolshed) at a time because it is an inside space. Will probably mostly be used for storage in medium-term, at least while SARS CoV-2 is spreading by aerosol. The polytunnel provides another, better ventilated meeting space and might be warmer. We could insulate and board out the club-hut but this would be costly, and might not be needed given what it is used for.  
**Action:** tidy up (COVID-19-securely); Can think about approaching local firms for support... not a high priority. To continue to review.

## 7. To discuss:

- a. **Groups:** need to be careful that starting new groups that use the garden for non-gardening activities doesn't impact the energy to support the garden itself. Best to work with others or encourage others to start their own groups. Need to be cautious about activities that employ people – we don't really have the governance for this. There was Members support for two very informal meet-ups for 'DIY' Little Nightingales (Louise and Rebecca to support). 'Doing creative things in the garden': Jill, Kate and Rebecca are keen but a bit lacking in time at the moment... probably start very informally. Always need to check that what we do is covered by insurance and risk assessed.  
**Action:** Rebecca to promote DIY Little Nightingales. Keep other groups under review.
- b. **Nature connectedness project:** Rebecca explained link with a local prospective PhD student<sup>1</sup> but we'd like to do things in this area anyway, especially 'something beetle' for the RHS/Wildlife Trust campaign this year. Already making new habitats: bee bank, dead hedge.  
**Action:** could add on new activities linked with Mandy's studies. Such as bat walks; beetle trails; nature club. Probably in the Autumn.
- c. **Polytunnel:** funding was mainly about growing and learning. It became obvious during the pandemic that a flexible, covered, well-ventilated space was very useful. Members support continuing to use the polytunnel in this way.  
**Action:** keep under review. In longer-term could do propagation workshops etc.
- d. **Outdoor kitchen/activity prep project:** need to deliver by June 2022. Have S106 funds but not yet transferred. Very good to engage with other groups who might use it, like home educators, cubs, brownies, school etc. Wondered if we should have drop-down sides/shutters to keep the area well ventilated. Where could we add mosaic etc?  
**Action:** Members to volunteer (to Rebecca) to be on a subgroup to refine design, find contractor etc. Probably start later in the Summer.
- e. **Call for S106 funding:** Nothing 'capital' came to mind at the meeting.  
**Action:** keep an eye on any funding priorities announced – probably Summer/Autumn 2021.
- f. **How to work as a group?** Current constituted group works well – informal but sufficient governance. But we need to make the garden financially more sustainable – for running costs including annual insurance, and also to spread the work further beyond Julian and

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.derby.ac.uk/research/centres-groups/nature-connectedness-research-group/>

Rebecca. Funding is very dependent on donations from a small group of volunteers and infrequent donations from garden users. We would like to involve more people for greater ownership of the garden – like Rock Road Library. We briefly discussed Friends of Rock Road (and Cherry Hinton Brook, Mill Rd Cemetery) as models. For us, a Friends group would be a project of the constituted Gardeners group. We would NOT plan for it to become a formal charity to replace the Gardeners group. It would be for support, maybe to help with fundraising, maybe to help organise social events. We liked ‘£10 or what you can afford’ annual membership. The Group constitution will need updating a bit.

**Action:** all to do a bit more thinking and get back to Rebecca with any ideas about what a Friends group should/should not do. Should we have group membership and individual?

How would we use/do a newsletter attached to it? How often? Do we need to print it out? How would it work with the website, facebook etc?

Do we need a new noticeboard?

Do we want to produce and sell things – like T shirts?

Rebecca: aim to get a Friends/newsletter plan together over the Summer. Contact Rebecca if you'd like to be involved in any way – we will need to find contributors and editors.

Rebecca to redraft Constitution, for September AGM.

Rebecca to look at membership software, linking with payment – probably should be online but able to accept paper/cash inputs (so far looked at Member Mojo).

Rebecca to look at what software to use for a newsletter (so far looked at Affinity Publisher, Canva, Mailchimp, existing Squarespace website). Contact Rebecca if you have any expertise or experience.

## 8. Any other business.

Action: in general: look into sponsorship by local businesses for specific resources, but also general funds.

9. **Next meeting:** 12 September 2021 in the garden in the afternoon, probably 2 pm, with an informal social afterwards.