

Chair: Bob and/or Justin

Notes: Rebecca

1. **Present:** Barbara, Ben, Bob, Gill (plus friend), Immy, Ingrid, Jill, Josephine, Julian, Keith, Lisa, Lois, Peggy, Peter, Rebecca, Stefan,
Apologies: Colin, Angelo, Louise
2. **Minutes from the last meeting:** agreed.
3. **Finances and fundraising:**
 - a. **Bank account etc:** Excluding the grant for the polytunnel, we have £451.78 in the bank account. Approximately £100.00 will be used for edging for dug-out beds and we should reserve £180 for insurance (September 2020).
 - b. **Possible new spending ideas:** if we can't fund it from the S106 veranda grant, look for funding for insulation and boarding for the inside of the club hut (not urgent). **Action: Julian/Rebecca to cost it, in phases.**
4. **Membership and Tempo time credits.** The time credit scheme has been re-funded. Bob tabled information about the party on Saturday 2 May at Brownsfield Community Centre **Update: this might be cancelled.**
5. **Updates on larger projects:**
 - a. **Green roof veranda and club hut renewal:** we are very pleased with the new windows, doors and cladding. 12 March: we have shutters on the windows. To follow soon: paving in front, guttering and the veranda itself. Update 12 March: only the doors need oiling or painting – the windows and frame are larch. **Action: Julian and Rebecca make tables. Jill and Rebecca make curtains for the door. Julian make ramp to the side door.**
 - b. **Tool shed:** the rechargeable light we ordered didn't work and was returned. Solar lighting is probably better but relatively expensive. **Action: keep under review.**
 - c. **Polytunnel:** **Action: we have ordered the polytunnel (11 March) for delivery in the next week or so.** Will then need fitting out before it can be used.
 - d. **Improved path to the garden.** No news yet. No need to chase.
 - e. **Pavilion being demolished:** scheduled for demolition in April for re-opening in October 2020.
 - f. **Policies and procedures:** we published new ones for 'Health and Safety' and 'Equal Opps'. **Action: Rebecca to update the Health and Safety one with current virus advice and look at others we need, probably safeguarding.**
 - g. **New planting and related:**
 1. **Plan for annual produce:** in previous meetings, we had decided to grow more perennials and fewer annuals – they do better and are less work. They tend to crop for longer too and garden visitors can graze on them more easily. We have found direct sowing of annuals isn't very reliable because of the weed seeds in our compost and, in 2019, we found fresh soil conditioner inhibits germination (we won't be buying it in this year). Slugs eat the baby seedlings too. It is becoming clearer where we can probably plant annuals successfully and how we might protect crops from slugs and pigeons. **Action: Rebecca to make a plan we can mark on for annuals –but we might need to do far less this year because of risk of COVID-19?** Some annuals don't do very well for us (or look unattractive) or just provide one crop a year, like carrots. They are better grown in our own gardens or on allotment plots. We had also decided to prepare the ground better for the annuals that we do want to grow, and focus on fewer varieties: tomatoes (in half of one raised bed, and maybe in the polytunnel), runner

beans (in the new dug-out narrow bed between the rhubarb), climbing French beans (in the other dug-out narrow bed), beetroot, chard, salad leaves, a few onion sets (in two halves of the long raised bed and the small blue beds), courgettes and winter squash (in the three square raised beds by the raspberries). We will repeat the edible flowers (and tea) bed in the smaller raised bed, which was popular. **Action: Julian to make a netted frame for at least half of one raised bed to help us grow produce better protected from pigeons.**

Rebecca has started some early annual seeds off (tomatoes, salad, chard) and will start more in the new few weeks (beans, courgettes, squash, beetroot, nasturtiums). She won't have capacity for growing masses of annual veg this year, including until the polytunnel is in action. We can buy some annual plants from local charity plant sales. We are also nervous about our capacity to keep annuals watered if we have a hot summer again. The polytunnel will add to our workload but also provide new space for produce; it might not, however, be ready for much growing this year. **Update: it might not be a good idea to do too much this year because of the virus crisis.**

Action: in general, mark better with labels where we sow seeds and plant seedlings – and keep checking the labels don't move.

2. **Trees:** have planted a Winter-flowering cherry for Clare. **Action: Rebecca and Angelo to think about a sign.** Rebecca has plotted all our trees onto the Curio.xyz website. The new pear tree is heeled in but will probably move to Queen Edith's school, maybe not soon though.
3. **Pollinator-friendly beds:** Lois is working on two. **Action: Julian to order tanalised edging and install.**
4. **Digging-out narrow beds:** Several narrow beds have been dug-out – might be a couple more that could be dug out (and probably move the passion flower). **Action: Julian to order tanalised edging and install.**
5. **Perennial fruit and veg:** We have new rhubarb beds and the old one is now doing well and also has Jerusalem artichokes planted. We have extended the areas for raspberries and the loganberries have started growing better. **Action: Julian to add wires for the loganberries.** Rebecca has started off some interesting perennial veg: walking onions, two kinds of perennial leeks, Chinese artichokes (and some are being propagated on their allotment for later planting). **Action: to grow some of these as polycultures, with companion planting) in the three dug-out beds by the horse.** Maybe some in the long, raised beds.
6. **Decisions to make:**
 - a. **Outdoor cooking area:** enthusiasm for a covered space to handwash, dishwash and prepare food for regular sessions and events. Agreed it could encourage incoming groups to use the garden more. Update: Guy recommends a portable pizza oven 'Ooni', which gets up to heat in just a few minutes and cools down enough to out away quickly. It is probably safer than a cob oven and doesn't need so much labour. **Action: Rebecca to continue to work on plans. To contact City Council for further advice before a funding application.**
 - b. **Impact of and response to coronavirus.** Desire at meeting to continue regular sessions when possible. People to decide if they want to come to sessions and not to attend if they are unwell.

Update: science now is suggesting that many or most infections are from people before they have symptoms¹. Rebecca has drafted a modified health and safety policy and sent it to the council for advice but this will probably need to be re-drafted when there is more guidance available. Action: Rebecca to circulate to the Group for information. If Julian and/or Rebecca are unable to attend, the sessions will need to be suspended (no volunteers at the meeting to lead sessions in their absence). Most people have their own gloves and some are bringing their own drinking containers. Gloves have been washed and some new ones purchased. Update: we have been advised we should wash in soapy water (or disinfect) shared tools too. Action: to make sure we wash up mugs, plates and forks with clean, hot and soapy water. Action: Ben/Jill to enable hand sanitiser gel supplies. To keep under review the hosting larger groups.

- c. **Workshops:** agreed small workshops would be good at some point and will be easier when the veranda and polytunnel are available. Other ideas include something about bees, a bat walk and growing dahlias from seed. Action: review when the building work is completed and when we know more about social distancing and the virus crisis.

7. **Dates/events in 2020:** Action: to continue to review sessions to be cancelled.

- a. **Easter in the garden:** some enthusiasm for decorating the garden with coloured feathers. Action: coloured feathers have been purchased. Rebecca, Ingrid and Immy to do some planning.
- b. **Monday 27 April:** RHS outreach staff plan to visit us. TBC.
- c. **Sunday 10 May 2020 at 4pm.** Gardeners' Group AGM. TBC.
- d. **Thursday 14 May at 2 pm:** Cambridge Garden Club (they meet at St John's) to visit Nightingale. TBC.
- e. **Sunday 23 August:** Jazz/Brass Band in the Park. TBC.
- f. **Sunday 20 September 2020 at 4pm.** Autumn Gardeners' Group meeting. TBC.
- g. **Sunday 29 November:** last session of the year. To re-open in mid-January 2021.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2020/mar/12/coronavirus-most-infections-spread-by-people-yet-to-show-symptoms-scientists>