

Chair: Jennie

Notes: Rebecca

1. **In attendance:** Anne, Becca, Bob, Clare H, Doug, Jennie, Julia, Julian, Mandy.
Apologies: Barbara, Jill, Keith, Ingrid, Immy, Peggy.
2. **Minutes from the AGM in May 2022** (on website): agreed.
3. **Guided discussion** (see agenda for other items to receive comments on). We ran over time, so some items weren't discussed or not in any detail.
 - a. **Planting:** we are lucky to get great ideas (and plants) from our volunteers and also the wider garden community – keep them coming! Need some focussed thinking about new trees and planting, including on 'cordon apple' side of the garden. Doug has a baby tree nursery, including a cotoneaster, which could be grown into a tree and would provide good Autumn colour, nice flowers and berries. Jennie likes idea of making and signing some 'you could do this too' ideas (for example drought-tolerant plants and 1m² beds).
Action: find time within volunteering sessions to discuss planting across the garden including new shrub bed, any new trees, and Anne's ideas of managing grassy areas for wildflowers.
Action: think about how to do more 'signing'. Compare laminated printouts on painted boards or photo-transfer onto wood and varnished - on tree stake. Could also use noticeboards in the shelter. Make more signs.
 - b. **Garden kitchen/shelter:** ramp is first priority. Keen on sturdy armchair idea. People like having the shelter as a 'blank canvas'. Think about drop-down workbench(es) and how it/they might work with noticeboard idea and using the space for exhibiting things (or we could continue to just move tables into the area as required).
Action: 24/9/22, have guidance from Mark (Access officer) about wooden ramp – need to do a design and liaise with Ian/Joe before construction.
Action all: look for suitable wooden chairs and let Becca know.
Action Becca (and maybe Keith): continue to liaise with Siva's family about chairs/dedication.
Action all: think about interior fittings – might be for 2023.
 - c. **'Orchard in the park':** opportunity to do something exciting in the park. 'Launch' consultation/local recruitment at Skip Day was postponed. People in the current 'Orchard project group' (mainly people with technical skills) are very busy so we don't have a planting plan yet. Unsure if we have a strong enough project champion. It might detract from effort needed in the garden itself. Trees will need regular watering, but we could plant just a few each season and we have the mains water (during garden open hours). People already use our water for existing trees in the park. Different models/ways of recruiting and co-ordinating tree care and also the other planting are under consideration. Could have 'Tree Tuesday', could make it social and/or combine with other tasks in the garden and/or one or two households or community groups could adopt a tree or two and do it at a time that was most convenient. Dog walkers could be recruited.
Action 24/9/22: no date for re-scheduled Skip Day. Pencilled in Sunday 30 October as an opportunity to talk to local people about the orchard project – and have some half-term fun.
Action Becca: continue to work with tree officers, Ben, Emma and Leo.
 - d. **Volunteering and working parties:** we might need more people to do practical tasks in the garden; volunteers with gardening experience and energy/strength (or who want to learn) are especially valuable. We have some non-gardening jobs (like painting) that could be good for corporate or one-off working parties. We are only insured for adults volunteering – but groups like cubs have their own risk assessments and insurance.

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Notes for Sunday 18 September 2022

Action: to trial a morning gardening session (10–12). On 19/9/22, the group decided on Wednesdays from 21 September to at least October half-term holiday.

Action: Becca/Julian: think about additional weekend working parties (have sessions scheduled on Sunday 16 October, Sunday 20 November).

Action: on 20/9/22: Becca contacted Cambs Duke of Edinburgh to enquire about volunteering.

- e. **Being social/events:** people like our get-togethers, which can be small scale but very valued or large-scale and a lot of fun. We try to match the nature of the event (e.g. creative, learning, fun) and likely attenders (e.g. volunteers/Friends, all ages, mainly families with small children) and the timing and way we promote it (e.g. word of mouth, posters, Whatsapp groups, our e-mails, garden Facebook and website, QECF e-mail, our newsletter, QE magazines, local schools/nurseries) so we don't get too many or too few people. We need to make sure we have enough volunteers to do events safely and ensure they are enjoyable for everyone, including the volunteers. For the foreseeable future, we need to remember we don't have toilets (so need events to be short) and the garden can be very cold, windy and wet in Winter; other venues that have warm inside spaces with loos might be preferable to attendees and volunteers.

Action: Julia, Becca and others think more and meet about events over the next few months including St Martin's Day.

Action: 22/9/22, pencilled in Tree dressing day for weekend of 3 or 4 December.

- f. **Learning and biodiversity:** keep pond dipping. Enthusiasm about doing more moth traps (maybe with lures), repeating the bat walk, trying a bird walk, doing butterfly counts in sunny weather, making bird boxes in February.

Action: on 19/9/21: Becca drafted 'biodiversity calendar' for 2023 and sent to Mandy, Doug and Ben for comment and to pencil in diaries.

Action: learn from Ben/Paul's nest box making event at Logan's Meadow (now on 30/10/22 TBC). Becca to update the group.

Action Becca, Julian, Doug: look at recipes for bird boxes and sort through the wood stash.

- g. **Theme for the year:** enthusiasm for birds as a theme. Bit different to minibeasts.

Action all: to think about further.

- h. **Planting and watering:** the garden is bouncing back after the drought and heatwaves but it has been tough for gardening. Raised beds make things harder.

Action: Anne, Becca and Julian: think about the oak raised beds and 'soil' options.

Action 21/9/22: Anne suggested better ways to water the raised beds – to trial.

- i. **Finances:** contact Becca/Julian with any ideas.

Action: 22/9/22: from Julia's suggestion, look into borrowing/buying a SumUp card reader to receive donations.

4. **Any other business.** Mandy introduced herself – we have talked in the past about working with her on nature connectedness, including as part of her PhD at University of Derby. New activities starting in 2024 would be best for her studies.

Action all: Let Becca know if you'd like to be involved in Mandy's project, which will start at Orchard Park.

Not at meeting: Julia has gathered some great feedback from families about activities.

Action: 22/9/22: Becca summarised feedback and drafted actions. To share with Group by e-mail.

5. **Next Gardeners' Group meetings:** all on Sundays in the garden at 2pm. 12 March 2023 'planning'; 14 May 2023 AGM; 17 September 2023 'planning'.