

**Colwall Orchard Trust**  
**51<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Board on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021, 7:30 pm**  
**by Zoom conference call**

**MINUTES (FINAL)**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Present:</b>            Andy Ball, Chris Blake, Peter Key, Lianne Llewellyn (Treasurer), Pam McCarthy, Jilly Rosser, Andrew Spray, Wendy Thompson (Secretary), Deb Turnbull, Lindsay Williams (Chair)</p> <p><b>Apologies for absence</b>            All Board members were present.</p> <p>The Board recorded thanks to Peter Hughes, COT Treasurer for 7 years, who had retired from the Board on 13<sup>th</sup> January. All were grateful for his significant contribution to keeping the COT accounts in good order over so many years.</p>	
<b>2a</b>	<p><b>Minutes</b> of 50<sup>th</sup> Board meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020</p> <p>a. The draft minutes were approved for signing.</p>	
<b>2b</b>	<p><b>Matters arising</b>            The Matters Arising report was noted by the Board.</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Board decisions by email</b>            Since the last meeting the Board had agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To postpone the AGM to summer 2021 and if it was not possible to hold a physical meeting to arrange a meeting by email or teleconference. Decision on the format of the meeting and date to be made by end of June.</li> <li>• To renew the annual website subscription of £288. Complete.</li> <li>• To purchase fencing supplies to the value of £345. Complete</li> <li>• To enter a strategic partnership with the Downs Light Railway Trust.</li> </ul> <p>Items received by Board for information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Stewardship options for future – circulated by LW on 19-01-21</li> <li>• COT Trustee Personal Risk Assessment and H&amp;S Competency by WT on 19-01-21</li> </ul> <p>The request for approval to investigate further the installation of PV panels at CVG required a response by 19-02-21.</p>	<p><b>WT</b></p> <p><b>AB</b></p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Health and Safety Report (Paper COT 51.4)</b>            AB introduced the report which raised an issue about the insurance implications of non-COG members being involved in volunteer activities. PK sought clarification and AB agreed to check the wording of the policy. He confirmed that visitors to the site were covered by public liability insurance. He would also consider suggestions made on resolving the issue.</p> <p>AB was thanked for his report which was noted by the Board.</p>	<p><b>AB</b></p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Finance (Paper COT 51.5)</b>            LL was thanked for her report and for the detail provided.            The Board acknowledged the achievement of balancing the income against expenditure in a year where many of our main funding activities were curtailed.            LL would arrange a meeting with WT and AB about headings and coding of income and expenditure.            The report was noted.</p>	<p><b>LL</b>  <b>WT/AB</b></p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Business Plan Review (Paper COT 51.6)</b>            WT and AB were thanked for the paper summarising progress towards delivering the plan and priorities for 21/22. The Board noted the report and LW thanked all for working to deliver so much since April 2019. All agreed to email WT with information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activities missing from the list of proposed work in 2021/22, along with estimated costs,</li> <li>• revisions to activities and costs set out in the table,</li> </ul>	<p><b>All</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>any other changes to the Five-year Business Plan.</li> </ul> <p>WT would then circulate the list of planned activities for 2021/22 to approve as priorities.</p>	WT
<b>7a</b>	<p><b>Estates (Paper COT 51.7a)</b> The Board noted the minutes from the 10<sup>th</sup> Estates Committee meeting.</p>	
<b>7b</b>	<p><b>Estates Committee ways of working (Paper COT 51.7b)</b> The Board confirmed approval to run a 12 month trial where the Estates Committee was replaced by coordination of activities by the Board member leads for estates work, along with task and finish groups and short progress reports to the Board. AS volunteered to coordinate the reports. The Board would also receive requests for approval and advice for high-level expenditure, and for unique or controversial issues. AS was thanked for the paper.</p>	AS
<b>8</b>	<p><b>TOFI (Paper COT 51.8)</b> The Board supported the recommendations to run TOFI again in 2021, with COG contributing volunteer time, if funding could be secured. The Board also agreed that the TOFI 2020 recipients should be offered follow-up orchard management service. The Board acknowledged the success of the scheme and WT was thanked for the paper.</p>	WT
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Orchard Liaison Services</b> The Board confirmed agreement to the proposal made by JR. WT had agreed to join a working group and JR invited anyone else interested to contact her. The Board thanked JR for presenting the proposal and taking this forward.</p>	All
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Volunteer Report (Paper 51.10)</b> The Board noted the annual report by AB on volunteer activities with thanks. In response to a question about volunteer numbers increasing in the future the Board agreed that it would be great to have the challenge of finding interesting and varied work for more volunteers. AB gave the partnership work with the Downs Light Railway Trust as an example of a new project which would involve volunteers. CB suggested that birds-eye photographs/video of CVG and Lugg's Mill orchards with a drone camera could be an interesting project.</p>	
<b>11</b>	<p><b>Colwall Allotments</b> AB had circulated a response from the CAA from the previous day which had indicated a unanimous preference for the Direct Letting option "in principle and conditional upon successful negotiation of the nitty gritty details".</p> <p>The COT Board did not wish to reject the lease option but focused its discussion on Direct Letting as the option on the table.</p> <p>The Direct Letting option assumed that the CAA ceased to exist and the Board noted that this option would involve complete responsibility for managing the allotments directly. In particular COT would need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>collect the rent and issue the tenancy agreement annually,</li> <li>undertake tenant liaison including keeping a waiting list and briefing new tenants,</li> <li>check on tenant compliance/H&amp;S (currently in the form of plot inspections once or twice a year and tool inspections monthly).</li> </ul> <p>The Board agreed that it was possible to take on these allotment responsibilities, working as a COT Sub-Group and led by a COT Trustee/Director.</p> <p>The four principles set out in paper COT 51.11 were agreed by the Board and would be relevant to ongoing discussion and agreement of handing over of responsibility from the CAA to COT.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued good relations between COG and allotment tenants – we all work hard to make Colwall Village Garden friendly and welcoming to everyone and importantly the allotment tenants. The allotments are incredibly important to us as Trustees of COG and as individuals;</li> <li>Clarity about roles and responsibilities – so that, for example, we are clear with regard to finance, legal, H&amp;S and insurance matters and where the</li> </ol>	

	<p>liabilities of both COG and the individual allotment tenants (previously CAA) lie;</p> <p>iii. Future security for both the allotment tenants and COG – so that tenants feel secure that their plot will be there long-term and COT knows that its land will be used in a way that contributes to the community;</p> <p>iv. Fair and affordable rent that is sufficient to allow COT to invest in the site and to meet its charitable objects.</p> <p>The Board discussed the issues raised in paragraph 14 and gave the following steer as a position to take.</p> <p>i. The current rent was fair and affordable.</p> <p>ii. Reduced rent for those demonstrating financial difficulties should be applied if this can be done fairly. Alternative approaches suggested included keeping a plot available for those experiencing social or economic difficulties and possibly giving priority to a person referred by the Green Prescriptions initiative.</p> <p>iii. The rent should be reviewed annually to an agreed formula linked to inflation/deflation. This would be a fair and independent way to keep rent in line with inflation.</p> <p>iv. Length of lease – the tenancies with allotment plot holders would be on an annual basis as is currently the case.</p> <p>v. Responsibility – the Direct Letting model would mean COT taking full responsibility.</p> <p>The next steps would be to inform the CAA that COT will begin to work on the detail and hoped that the current CAA committee would work together with us to make the transition straight-forward, with minimum impact on the plot tenants.</p> <p>AB was thanked for all his work in the negotiation with the CAA.</p>	WT
<b>12</b>	<p><b>Produce: Annual report (Paper COT 51.12)</b> The annual report on produce was noted.</p>	
<b>13</b>	<p><b>Events, Education and Training</b> The Board agreed to the recommendation to disband the Events Committee and noted the report with thanks to WT. WT would write to the current members of the committee.</p>	WT
<b>14</b>	<p><b>Tree ordering service 2020</b> The report and lessons learned on tree orders by DT was noted with thanks. DT advised that the tree order for 2021 may need to start as early as June with a view to getting deliveries before Christmas. The Board noted that the funds raised for COT for undertaking the tree orders was around £1,000 when the TOFI trees were included. The hedge plant order had not been as successful at raising funds as there was less discount to be applied by suppliers. This would be factored into COT involvement in purchasing hedges for others in the future.</p>	
<b>15</b>	<p><b>Any other business</b> As this was Deb's last Board meeting after 10 years as a Trustee (with only a short break when she moved to Edinburgh!) LW led the Board in thanking her for her service and her contributions. She was one of the founding members of COT and the CAA and had led many achievements since 2007 before COT was formed, particularly those that benefited from her engineering skill and experience. All trusted and hoped that she would continue to work with COT on many future projects. A round of applause for Deb!</p>	
<b>16</b>	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting</b> Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021, possibly early evening (time tbc)</p>	WT