

Colwall Orchard Trust
54th Meeting of the Board on Wednesday 1st December 2021, 7:00 pm
Apple Packing Shed, Colwall Village Garden

MINUTES (FINAL)

No.	Item	Action
1	<p>Present: Lindsay Williams (Chair), Chris Blake, Peter Key, Clive Killick, Lianne Llewellyn (Treasurer), Pam McCarthy, Jilly Rosser, Andrew Spray, Wendy Thompson (Secretary)</p> <p>Apologies for absence There were no apologies.</p> <p>Resignation The Board noted with regret that Andy Ball had resigned from being a Trustee and a company director with effect from 24th November 2021. They acknowledged the substantial contribution he had made to the Board over the past five years. Andy had written to the Chair setting out the things that he would be prepared to continue doing as a COG volunteer, should that be helpful. These included contributing to orchard management and advice in private orchards, assisting with the tree ordering service, tree dedications and running the COG website. He would also continue to hand over the Health and Safety Coordinator role to Clive Killick.</p>	
2a	<p>Minutes of 53rd Board meeting held on 15th September 2021 The draft minutes were approved for signing.</p>	
2b	<p>Matters arising (Paper COT 54.2b) The Matters Arising report was noted by the Board. The following reports on items not on the agenda:</p> <p>Philly's Project – As there had been no progress with several attempts at building a project with students in further education, in part due to Covid, WT suggested that the funds were transferred to a project to re-plant the COG allotment garden currently used as a tree nursery. She felt that it would be appropriate to use the Philly memorial fund to pay for an art installation to compliment the re-designed nursery plot eg wrought iron structure for supporting espaliered trees. It was agreed that this should be explored further and discussed under Any Other Business.</p> <p>COG Shared Drive – It was agreed that the protocol agreed in May 2021 should be put in writing and saved with COG policy documents.</p> <p>COG role in relation to climate emergency LW drew attention to a piece WT had written for the Colwall Clock (parish magazine). His action to prepare a statement would be rolled forward.</p> <p>Book Value of assets – LL reported that the COG accountant had advised that the Book Value did not need to be adjusted in line with the asset value for insurance purposes.</p> <p>Quick Books – LL reported that this had been uploaded to the new COG laptop.</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>LW</p>

	<p>Tree planting in Snatford, Boadwood and Maybole – JR reported that she had discussed tree planting with Freda and it was agreed that this work was postponed to 2022.</p> <p>All other matters arising are reported later in the minutes or are updated in the Action list attached.</p>	
3	<p>Board decisions by email</p> <p>Since the last meeting the Board had considered by email the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permission to spend on items funded by FiPL including hydropress value £1,079.60 was approved on 10-11-21 • Permission to purchase items relating to TOFI as funded by FiPL to value £504 was approved by majority on 11-11-21. 	
4	<p>Organisational Risk Assessment</p> <p>WT reported that the main item listed as having ‘unacceptable risk’ was the reserves policy that had been outstanding on matters arising since the 49th COG Board meeting in September 2020. LL clarified that this was only a Charity Commission requirement for charities with a turnover of over £25,000 and so was not currently relevant to COG, however it would be required for next year. WT to update the ORA accordingly. A draft reserves policy discussed under agenda item 7.</p> <p>WT noted the need to replace Andy Ball as the lead against several tasks and would update the ORA, with LW leading on volunteers/lead volunteers and CK leading on H&S.</p> <p>The Board also discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustee training and competence – CK agreed to design a process around self-assessment against Trustee/Director/Lead Volunteer roles. • Volunteer training – LW would design a process for assessing volunteer competency and training needs. • Land and building management and maintenance plans – AS agreed to report to the Board annually in February. • COG Shared Drive – All agreed to continue to upload documents for sharing. • Safeguarding Policy – WT agreed to complete this for the February Board meeting. • External influences – LW agreed to report to the Board on partnerships which help to keep Trustees aware of external influences. • Mismanagement of COG funds – Trustees agreed that 3 Trustees had access to the COG bank accounts providing openness and transparency to check and challenge transactions that were not obvious. <p>In the light of the discussion WT would update the ORA to circulate for Board approval. Next review would be May 2022.</p>	<p>WT</p> <p>WT</p> <p>CK</p> <p>LW</p> <p>AS</p> <p>All</p> <p>WT</p> <p>LW</p> <p>WT</p>
5	<p>Lead Volunteer Role (Paper COT 54.5)</p> <p>LW emphasised the importance of attracting volunteers who were prepared to lead on tasks. At the moment there was a lot of work undertaken by a few, in advance of practical volunteer sessions and events.</p>	

	<p>In response to his discussion paper the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust more volunteers to be responsible for part of a task and aim to evolve this into them taking full responsibility. There was already a reservoir of talent and experience to take on more leadership; • Seek more volunteers, although it was also pointed out that there were quite a few regular volunteers (which was great!) but not enough lead volunteers to manage them on days when the current volunteers willing to lead were not available; • Clarify the role of a lead volunteer based on Andy Ball's draft. This would need to develop a hierarchy of responsibilities so that not everyone felt responsible for compliance with UK legislation and COG policies initially, for example; • Training was an important part of developing lead volunteers' competence including a familiarity with Risk Assessment for tasks and sites; • There was no appetite to introduce a 'Town Hall' pre-meeting for COG members before a Trustee Board meeting due to the administration and time that would fall to those who were already busy. • Consider doing less. • Volunteering had to be fun! <p>The Board agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak to some regular volunteers about their willingness to lead on tasks; • Contact all volunteers by email to see if they would be prepared to take on a level responsibility for particular tasks; • Use Friday morning coffee breaks to talk about matters coming up at the next Trustee Board meeting. 	<p>LW</p> <p>LW</p> <p>LW</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Health and Safety Quarterly Report (Paper COT 54.6)</p> <p>The Board noted the quarterly report, written by Andy Ball and introduced by CK.</p> <p>The following actions were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace post and rail fence by culvert at Lugg's Mill Orchard. • Postpone any further work of getting a defibrillator at Colwall Village Garden. • Switch sides of the seat to the composting toilet before Wassail. • Apply for Planning Permission from Herefordshire Council for disabled access compost toilet. • Convene a meeting of interested parties regarding an outside sink to meet food hygiene and H&S requirements. • Add First Aid post course certificates to Shared Drive. • Complete Post Emergency Action Plan and introduce to relevant Trustees. • Review Safe Ways of Working Ladders. • Wassail training session on Emergency Site Plan and Post Emergency Action Plan. • Remind volunteers who have not completed their Volunteer Information Form (eg Wassail occasional volunteers). 	<p>LW</p> <p>AS</p> <p>LW, AB</p> <p>CK</p> <p>CB</p> <p>CB</p> <p>CK</p> <p>CK, CB</p> <p>LW</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lugg's Mill Bridge structural engineers report and maintenance plan. Chase Deb to urgently get this from her contact at agreed price of £300 and/or commission someone else. • Trustee competency assessment; • Seek insurance, training certificates (eg chain saw), and risk assessment documents whenever employing contractors; • Equipment servicing system and prompts. 	<p>CK CK</p> <p>All CK</p>
7	<p>Finance Quarterly Report (Paper COT 54.7) LL confirmed that the balance in the current account was £14,041 (£16,163 in September) and the balance in the savings account £30,103 (£30,099 in September).</p> <p>The Board noted the significant items of income and expenditure which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • income from events, grants, gift aid, sales of juice and preserves, orchard advice and services and tree sales; • expenditure on orchard management, tools to be funded by the FiPL grant, and events (catering). <p>LL presented background to support a reserves policy with a recommendation that a reserve of £10,000 was retained to keep COG running should activity to raise funds cease.</p> <p>The Board thanked LL for presenting the information on keeping sufficient funds in reserve and agreed that this recommendation should be added to a Reserves Policy paper.</p>	LL/LW
8	<p>External Funding and Grants (Paper COT 53.8) The Board noted the range of external funding that had been received, or was expected to be received.</p> <p>Regarding future funding bids, there was a short-term opportunity to bid for items such as equipment (eg shredder) before March 2022, as well a longer term opportunity to apply for a FiPL grant for the year beginning 1st April 2022. LW would convene a meeting to consider projects which might be applied for in 2022.</p>	LW
9	<p>a. Estates Note of meeting (Paper COT 54.9a) The Board noted the report from AS on estates related activities.</p> <p>The Board agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To take some of the fence down by the cob oven before Wassail to aid accessibility; • A request from LW to spend £380 to pay a contractor to fix the fencing around the culvert at Lugg's Mill. <p>b. Colwall Allotments (Paper COT 54.9b) The Board noted the paper and thanked WT for continuing to make progress with the changes. The new bank account for allotment related funds would be set up asap.</p>	
10	<p>Orchard Services (Paper COT 54.10) The Board noted the paper by Andy Ball, which covered a range of COG orchard services which raised funds for COG. These included the tree ordering service, tree sponsorship and dedication plaques, pruning and orchard management for private clients, consultancy and advice for the</p>	

	<p>Malvern Hills AONB referrals (including FiPL applications on behalf of private clients in Garden Orchard and Alfrick), a commission to plant trees for the Malvern Hills Trust, and proactively selling the surplus tree stock on the COG nursery plot. Andy was thanked for his work in selling trees on the tree nursery allotment plot which was almost clear and had raised funds of around £700.</p>	
11	<p>Fruit tree pests and diseases (Paper COT 54.11) The Board noted the update from JR and additional information that Stephen Shaw would write a paper for COG on what signs of pests and diseases to look for in winter.</p>	
12	<p>Equipment loan policy (Paper COT 54.12) LW introduced the discussion paper and invited thoughts on whether COG should hire out its equipment and if so, would COG need a policy.</p> <p>In discussion the following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was agreed that sharing equipment was good for the environment and would help to lower consumption. • Loaning out equipment was also good for public relations and partnership. • There were a number of examples where COG borrowed equipment with no formal arrangement with the owner. Sometimes a donation was expected. • What process would need to be in place to record details of loans and how would the state of any equipment loaned out be checked before and after the loan. Who would be responsible on behalf of the Trustees? • Would Safe Ways of Working documents be issued with the equipment loaned? • It would be necessary to check the insurance situation and COG liability for accident, damage or loss of items loaned out. Could there be a disclaimer that was valid in law. CK agreed to check these points. • Would there be charges for hiring out some higher value items? • How would all requests be treated equally and fairly? • If COG members were asked for opinions on whether COG should hire out equipment (as proposed in the paper), how would Trustees ensure their legal obligations were explained clearly? • If agreed, any loans should only be to COG members or local organisations. <p>LW would draw together a proposal for the Board.</p>	<p>CK</p> <p>LW</p>
13	<p>Education and Training (Paper COT 54.13) JR updated the Board on educational activities and drew attention to many ideas for educational activities that would allow COG to claim payment under the Environmental Stewardship scheme. These included 3 more Herefordshire Wildlife Trust Watch sessions, and activities with the Downs School.</p> <p>In response to a question about the age of participants that counted towards an attendee at an educational activity, LW agreed to check the Environmental Stewardship guidance.</p> <p>WT said that she would help with a pond dipping activity in the Spring with pond life experts, and COG members Richard and Phyl King.</p>	<p>LW</p> <p>WT</p>

	<p>AS would confirm grafting courses and CK agreed that Kath Killick would run a wool and felting workshop.</p> <p>JR would liaise with those who had expressed interest. All to let JR know of educational activities that they would lead or assist with.</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>JR</p>
14	<p>Apple Juice Production (Paper COT 54.14) The Board noted the excellent progress and scaling up of apple juice production in 2021.</p>	
15	<p>Events (Paper COT 53.15) The Board noted the report on Apple Day and the plans that were in hand for the Mistletoe Fair on 4th December and Wassail in January 2022.</p> <p>There was discussion about charging £5 a ticket with several Board members suggesting that this was too much. Others felt that the effort we put into organising such an event justified this charge. The matter was not concluded and would be raised with the Wassail Working Group.</p> <p>WT, along with the Wassail Working Group, would be keeping a close eye on anything that would put holding the Wassail at risk, including Covid restrictions and bad weather conditions. If it still seemed safe to proceed at the middle of December, tickets would be offered to members. Later, they would be promoted to the general public. Commitments to entertainers and caterers would need to be made in early December but financial commitments would be limited to what was necessary.</p> <p>WT announced that she wished to stand down as events coordinator after Wassail 2022.</p>	<p>WT</p>
16	<p>Any other business</p> <p>a. COG Allotment Garden project Andy Ball had suggested using the COG allotment garden Plot 31, to create a special place to show case trained fruit trees. In discussion with JR and WT the idea had expanded to include step-over fruit bushes and soft fruit bushes to supply fruit for the preserves which COG sold to raise funds. The garden would provide a place for children to harvest fruit for juicing and a place to sit and relax within the allotment site.</p> <p>WT had suggested adding wrought iron installations for training fruit trees and bushes. JR proposed that trained espaliered fruit trees should be ordered in advance from Frank Matthews with a view to planting next autumn. Funds would be from the Waitrose grant and the Philly memorial fund, possibly topped up from COG funds if required. The Board gave approval to proceed with the £1,500 budget.</p> <p>b. COG Trustee email accounts JR asked whether it was possible to have a COG email address. WT confirmed that it was and that any Trustee could have a dedicated NAME@colwallorchardgroup.org email address with one.com, and to let her know if they wanted one.</p>	<p>JR/WT</p> <p>All</p>
17	<p>Date and time of next meeting Wednesday 9th February 2022, 7:00pm</p>	<p>WT</p>

Matters Arising and Action list: 1st December 2021

Date	Action Ref	Detail	Target date	Who	Status @ 01-12-21
26-02-20 20-05-20 01-12-21	47.3 54.16	Philly's Project – WT to report progress (note relevant to restricted funds) Transfer funds to installation in allotment garden Plot 31.	ASAP	WT	Delete New (See below)
17-09-20	49.4 50.2b	Financial reserves policy – LW and LL to prepare a first draft	Feb 2022	LL	In progress
19-05-21	52.5 54.4	Google drive document security protocol	Feb 2022	AS	New
19-05-21	52.5	Non-payment of invoices – tracking system	Sept 2021	LL	Roll forward
15-09-21	53.2c	COG's role in relation to climate emergency - proposal	Dec mtg	LW	Roll forward
15-09-21	53.4	Advice from Accountant on whether book value of assets needed to be amended in the account	Nov	LL	Complete
15-09-21	53.5	System for recording H&S checks and inspections (inc equipment checks)	Nov	CK	Roll forward
15-09-21	53.5	What to do in an emergency aftermath	Nov	CB	In draft
15-09-21	53.5	Lugg's Mill bridge engineers report and maintenance plan from Deb Turnbull	Nov	CK	Roll forward
15-09-21	53.5	Board competency and associated training process	Nov	CK	Roll forward
15-09-21	53.5 54.12	Loaning equipment policy Proposal for Board	Nov Feb	LW LW	Roll New
15-09-21	53.5	Ladders Safe Ways of Working update to reflect changes to legislation	Nov	CK	Roll New
15-09-21	53.5	H&S training records posted on COG Shared Drive	Nov	CB/ All	Roll New
15-09-21	53.6	Add Quick Books to new computer for COG book keeping and accounting	ASAP	LL	Complete
15-09-21	53.7	Set up Working group to investigate and develop options for major sire improvement projects	Nov	LW	Roll forward
15-09-21	53.8	Begin water distribution improvements	ASAP	CK	Roll forward
15-09-21	53.9	Check formula for using CPI to adjust allotment fee	ASAP	LL/AS	
15-09-21	53.9	Set up an COG allotment bank account	ASAP	LL	Roll forward
15-09-21	53.10	Arrange grafting training for Herefordshire Wildlife Trust	?	AS/ JR	Roll forward
15-09-21	53.11	Arrange meeting with Freda re planting trees	Sept	JR	Complete
01-12-21	54.4	Update ORA and circulate to Trustees	Dec	WT	New
	54.4	Volunteer competency and training assessment	Feb	LW	New

Date	Action Ref	Detail	Target date	Who	Status @ 01-12-21
	54.4	Land and building management and maintenance annual report to Board	Feb	AS	New
	54.4	Safeguarding Policy	Feb	WT	New
	54.4	External influences – partnerships paper to Board	Feb	LW	New
	54.5	Lead volunteers – implement actions agreed to encourage more to be lead volunteers and feel more involved in COG decision making	Feb	LW	New
	54.6	H&S <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace post and rail fence by culvert. • Move seat to the composting toilet. • Apply for Planning Permission for disabled access compost toilet. • Meeting re outside sink. • Wassail training session on Emergency Site Plan and Post Emergency Action Plan. • Chase for Volunteer Information Forms 	Jan Dec Jan Jan Jan	LW AS LW/AB CK CK/CB LW	New
	54.12	Equipment loans – Check insurance, liability issues Proposal for Board	Feb Feb	CK LW	New
	54.13	Education – age of participants eligible for ES grant	Jan	LW	
	54.13	Education – JR to liaise with offers and coordinate programme	Feb	JR	
	54.15	Events – Wassail ticket price decision	Dec	WT	
	54.16	Allotment Garden project – progress report	May	JR/WT	