

Colwall Orchard Trust
66th Meeting of the Board on Monday 13 January 2025, 7pm
Apple Packing Shed, Colwall Village Garden, WR13 6HB

MINUTES (FINAL)

No	Item	Action
1	<p>Present: Lindsay Williams (Chair), Chris Blake, Clive Killick, Pam McCarthy, Jenny Papettas, Andy Pyle, Jilly Rosser, Lynne Drew (Minute Secretary).</p> <p>Apologies for absence None.</p>	
2	<p>Minutes of 65th Board meeting held on 14 October 2024 The draft minutes were approved for signing.</p>	
3	<p>Outstanding Actions and Matters arising from previous Board meetings All actions other than those discussed below had been updated via email prior to the meeting and these updates were distributed to the Board via the Action List Document COT66-3.</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
4	<p>Board decisions by email Since the last meeting the Board had considered by email the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotment rent for 2025 to increase in line with CPI as agreed at Board meeting on 13 December 2023. (Approved by Board majority 12 December 2024) • Request by CK to increase insurance to cover £24,500 in increased equipment. Cost will be in the order of £200-£250 with a further amount of £150-£200 in February to cover the hay making equipment. (Approved by Board majority 12 December 2024) 	
5	<p>Finance AP presented his Finance Report. He noted that this was less detailed than previous quarterly reports and asked the Board to inform him if they would prefer more detail. The report showed that a good amount of cash was held in the bank as at 31 December 2024 and also set out the grant income received and due to come in up to April 2025. It is likely that COG accounts will show a surplus in both January 2025 and January 2026 accounts but our reserves will be reducing to January 2026.</p> <p>The report also set out the finance projects for the next year. Action 65.4 is ongoing – review bookkeeping help and look at budgets and reserves for next financial year. Action 65.4 is ongoing – investigating an alternative bank account. JP asked about our current banking arrangements. AP explained the disadvantages of the Co-Op only offering the facility for one person to initiate and approve payments. He needs to set up the bookkeeper first and then review the banking arrangements. He also noted that the allotment invoicing should be reviewed, potentially using the bookkeeper and systems. PM asked if this could also be considered for membership payments and AP agreed.</p>	

6	<p>Grants</p> <p>LW presented his report which was for information only.</p> <p>LW had spoken to CK and JR about the equipment we need to buy and we will probably go with the tractor option. The disadvantage of this is that it cannot be driven under the trees.</p> <p>The Board offered thanks to Kath and Clive for COG's use of their tractor.</p>	
7	<p>Events</p> <p>(LW requested for Events to be moved to this point on the agenda.)</p> <p>The planning for the Wassail was well underway, but LW admitted that is it behind schedule due to ongoing discussions about torches and he was struggling somewhat with the organisation and coordination. There are plenty of volunteers for the actual event.</p> <p>The subject of the use of torches at the Wassail and the risks involved had been raised via email prior to the meeting and LW wished the Board to discuss this so an agreement could be made on whether the use of burning torches would be allowed at this year's Wassail. The Board were aware that the use of torches had been an integral part of the Wassail for many that attend so this subject was given a large amount of the meeting time so that all opinions could be heard. A robust discussion took place and included a variety of viewpoints.</p> <p>Points of discussion included:</p> <p>The risk of burning wax torches around lots of people especially children and risk reduction methods.</p> <p>Concerns over the use of the torches in last year's windy weather which caused the torches to burn down quickly and splashes of wax. Whether suggested changes to last year's plans would result in a sufficient reduction in risk.</p> <p>What compromises or solutions might be possible such as static torches or torches just held by volunteers. There were concerns about putting static torches on land that we do not own and the number of volunteers available to do other jobs such as first aid and fire marshalling.</p> <p>The liability position for COG and how that can be managed.</p> <p>The concerns expressed and risk assessments made by the Board's Health & Safety Officers.</p> <p>How important torches are to the Wassail experience and how it would be affected if there are no burning torches.</p> <p>Are torches being used at other Wassail events elsewhere? The trend seems to be that Wassails are moving away from lit torches.</p> <p>The Board's final decision was to follow Health & Safety Advice; therefore, no torches will be available for public attendees at this year's Wassail. The key 'character' volunteers will still have paraffin torches and static torches at Lugg's Mill Orchard.</p>	
8	<p>Health & Safety</p> <p>CK presented his H&S report. No incidents had been reported since March 2024 which although good, Clive reiterated the need to report all incidents no matter how small. Anything requiring first aid treatment or minor injuries should be reported.</p>	
9	<p>Projects</p> <p>Action 62.9 – LW reported to the Board that the improvements to the car parking area had turned out to be a much bigger job than previously thought. Costs are likely to be higher and he will report back to the Board with that information in due course.</p>	

10	Safeguarding JP noted that there had been no safeguarding issues since the last meeting and there was nothing to report.	
11	AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CB has a quote in the region of £800 to improvements to the pond area. He will circulate this to the Board following the meeting. • Action 64.4 – The Board discussed a confidential matter which has been minuted separately. • AP suggested it would be good to agree the details of the site upgrades at the next meeting. JP noted it would be helpful to know baseline running costs in order to make capital spending decisions and AP committed to have these by the next meeting. 	
12	Date and time of next meeting Monday 31 March 2025, 7pm in the Orchard Room was provisionally agreed.	All