

Willingham Action Group

Report for Annual Parish Meeting – May 2022

It was another quieter year due to the pandemic and, as mentioned in the 2021 report, because two members of our board are heavily involved in producing the new Community Plan along with some of our occasional volunteers. However the Sustainability sub-group organised by Alex looked at all the possible issues that come under the umbrella of sustainability and our plan, given the Covid restrictions, was to continue to produce documentation on sustainability matters such as reducing plastics and food production. The piece de resistance of this action was to hold a plastic-free tea party on the Green on Sunday 18 July. The event was well attended and enjoyable with tea, coffee and cakes being served in the small marquee (although the weather was wonderful so the marquee served to provide shade). Not even a tiny bit of plastic went into the production so we hope it served to show that we don't need to rely on all things plastic!

In our last report we mentioned our involvement with the international movement of the Repair Cafes but that running such could not be done due to pandemic restrictions. However, over recent months Alex and our repairers have been planning for the first outing which will take place on Sunday 9 July. We hope it will be the first of many.

Recently we have been involved in achieving greater biodiversity and we have liaised with the Parish Councillors with responsibility for Sustainability. We were able to get a grant of just over £400 from South Cambridgeshire District Council (our thanks go to them) to buy six half-barrel planters which have been placed around the village - at the Public and Ploughman Halls and on the Green. They were filled with summer plants and later a winter selection with a great deal of help from councillors Linda King and Valerie McKee. We are also ready to help with any developments to the Meadow Road site and Barton Field and have been involved with hedge planting and rubbish clearing at Barton Field and have successfully applied for a grant of £500 to produce a signboard detailing the history of the field and the biodiversity.

Last year, in consultation with our partner groups, we abandoned any plans for the social activities of the 2020 Feast. For October 2021 we considered what events might allow for some social distancing and so there was Custard Comedy at the Social Club, the Sportif charity bike ride, exhibitions of local art work and photography, and finally the wine tasting quiz. As has become a tradition not to be ended, we also were visited by Thurston's funfair on the Green.

WAG has continued to discharge its responsibility towards maintaining the trees planted during the Tree Project for well over five years. Trees have been replaced as necessary as part of the undertaking given to sponsors but hopefully that necessity is coming to an end.

The WAG Enviro group continues its work at the orchard and QEII field. The first of the fifty trees planted on the QEII are now contributing to the landscape having made impressive growth creating shade for summer picnics.

The orchard and woodland have become established as a valued village resource and well used by a range of residents. It is therefore important to consider how best to safeguard that legacy as the trees will

outlive the coming and goings of us mortals and organisations. It is intended to form an Orchard Working Group independent of WAG which will continue to carry out the routine management and maintenance tasks in collaboration with WPC in the future. WAG is also considering a scheme whereby residents can adopt a woodland tree thereby having a dedication label on their chosen tree. We were unable to satisfy the demand for sponsoring trees during the initial planting so hopefully those who were disappointed will take advantage of the opportunity to adopt a tree. There will be an element of donation and the thinking is for surplus funds to be used for mass bluebell planting. Once again we would like to express our appreciation to Edd Gilbert of Queenholme Farm for continuing to cut the orchard grass and perimeter, as well as helping with other tasks requiring tractor power.

Michael Tidball

Secretary – Willingham Action Group