

OXBOROUGH DOORSTEP GREEN ACTION GROUP (ODGAG)

Minutes of Meeting on Friday 1st August 2003, 6.30pm Venue: Swallows

Present: Chris Heatley, Susan Hernandez and Allison Conder, Countryside Agency Advisor

Apologies: Charles Ashley, Chris Mathews, Henry Lambert, Barbara Pritchard and John Voaden

- 1) Allison congratulated ODGAG on being awarded the grant of £34,252.11. Susan spoke about the email from Alastair Rhind, quoting “..what excellent news, congratulations to you all, a real result and reward for all your hard work. If I can do anything further, please let me know. Also please keep me posted on progress with the project. Don’t forget, when you do any publicity/press releases, mention the funders!!!”.
- 2) Susan related a telephone call from Alan McGee, formally resigning from ODGAG as his work commitments have made it impossible for him to carry on. Susan thanked him for his involvement and suggested that we keep him informed of the progress of the project, with which he agreed.
- 3) Allison advised us that the next immediate step will be to ask for tenders from three different sources for the path, metal railings, benches and planting; Allison suggested that Charles would be likely to provide possible names of suppliers.
- 4) Any costs estimated at **more than £2000** requires a formal quote (this would apply to the path and metal railings) and ODGAG would need to compose a detailed written specification; it was suggested that Alastair Rhind be approached for his help in putting together the written specification; verbal quotes is all that is necessary for the work on the two beech trees with TPO’s.
- 5) Hopefully the actual costs would come in under the estimated figures, which would mean that the match-funding would be reduced.
- 6) The most important legal step to take is to determine whether Planning Permission for developing the project is required from Breckland Council. Susan told Allison that Charles has previously made a written enquiry regarding this and that the response had been negative. Allison urged us to show Breckland Council the actual plans and supporting paperwork just to clarify that PP is not required, as she has been involved with other Doorstep Greens which have seriously faltered when it has been discovered that PP has not been formally sought.
- 7) Allison has today written to our solicitors (John Crisp, Rudlings & Wakelam, 73 High Street, Brandon, Suffolk IP27 0AY, Tel: 0800 6523256) detailing the legal steps that have to be fulfilled for the acquisition of the land, which ODGAG must follow up on, in a few weeks time.
- 8) Our solicitor will be checking that if PP is required it has been applied for.
- 9) There is a condition of the Countryside Agency grant which protects the Doorstep Green as an open space for the next 80 years, during which time if the land is sold out of ownership of the Parish Council a relevant proportion of the selling price (ie. 70%) will be payable to the Countryside Agency. Also if Ian Monson demands a slice of any re-sell money, the Countryside Agency will not be able to support the land acquisition. Do not actually ask Ian this, as our solicitor should make the relevant searches for any such covenants.
- 10) Our solicitor will need to complete and return a Deed of Covenant and a Report on Title (to guarantee that all relevant searches have been made, PP is in place if required and that there are no covenants on the land).
- 11) Once these papers have been returned, the money will be transferred into the solicitor’s holding accounts, contracts exchanged, land registered in Parish Council’s name and the deal will be done!
- 12) Allison said ODGAG should ask the solicitor whether there are any pitfalls in the Grant Terms and Conditions of which the Parish Council should be aware.

- 13) Chris said that there might be a problem with finding match-funding for the land acquisition (fixed cost £12750) as at the last meeting with WREN, the representative had advised him that the panel will 'cherry-pick' items for funding to a total of about £10,000, and that further, **WREN do not fund land acquisition**. The Countryside Agency has committed £8925 towards the land, which leaves £3825 for which match-funding must be secured. As the Parish Council have pledged £1000 and Breckland Council £3202 (out of which a figure equal to 11% of the WREN figure must be excluded, which on £10,000 would be £1100, leaving £2102) there will be a possible shortfall of £723, and also this would mean ALL THE MATCH-FUNDING WOULD BE USED UP! Susan will contact Alastair, seeking his advice on finding other match-funders (could the Icen Partnership be approached, or Norfolk County Council?). Allison said that in the event of there not being enough match-funding she will be obliged to present this to the lottery panel in Birmingham.
- 14) Allison continued with the legal requirements which must be met by the Parish Council and ODGAG, namely the Framework Agreement, which she passed to Susan and is a two-page document and will give rights to ODGAG to carry out the work of the project on land owned by the Parish Council. It will run for a minimum of three years (the extent of the grant) although most commonly this is set at five years (no maximum). This document should NOT be handled by our solicitor as Allison considers that the Parish Council and ODGAG are more than capable of understanding the legal requirements.
- 15) The Framework agreement has three schedules:
 - Sch 1 **Services** (all the creation works, what volunteers will do, the maintenance work, the work required on the two beech trees, annual grass cutting, litter-picking, what the Parish Council will be expected to do – nothing hopefully)
 - Sch 2 **Time** – ie the length of the agreement (as discussed in point 13)
 - Sch 3 **Money** – Allison suggested writing 'Nothing appropriate' as ODGAG has already discussed organizing annual fund-raising events to raise money for maintenance etc.
- 16) The Framework Agreement (FA) needs to be signed by the Lead of ODGAG (Charles Ashley) and the Lead of the Parish Council (Henry Lambert). Allison will email Susan a copy of the model FA to work on.
- 17) Allison requested from ODGAG all outstanding expenses pertaining to the Stage 1 start-up grant, as once the Countryside Agency is in a position to release the Final Stage grant it must wrap up the stage 1 grant. Chris will send a copy of the receipt from Rick Morrish, Susan will pass to Chris a number of expenses plus 'phone calls made.
- 18) Allison suggested that Charles might be able to meet up with Malcolm Whittely, our designated Project Manager to work out the timetable of work for the project (a total figure of £2200 has been allocated for a project management consultant, of course ODGAG might prefer to engage Rick Morrish).
- 19) Susan will let Rick Morrish know that ODGAG has been successful in gaining the grant from the Countryside Agency.
- 20) Susan has a copy of the Doorstep Green A5b Legal Requirements.
- 21) Allison suggested that Alastair Rhind or Malcolm Whittely should start working on the site management plan for the next twenty years (a total figure of £600 has been allocated).
- 22) Other groups have formed a "Friends of (Oxborough) Green" where villagers pay an annual sub of £5 or £10, which money is used for maintenance.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm. Allison will be away for several weeks, so speak to Giles if necessary.