**Members’ meeting – Greening Wingrove – 7th Sept 2024**

Chair: Katy Sillem. Secretary: Jo Ellis. Also present: Ben Page.

**Directors’ update:**

KS gave an update of the year’s activities – as per circulated document.

Graham Wyckes asked if any funding applications had been submitted. KS replied that this was not being done at present, but that Connected Voice were working on a bid for a climate action project which would involve GW. Capacity was an issue. A cautious approach was supported by Ruth.

Gerry Hunwick asked whether hirers of the BG needed to have their own PLI or employers’ liability insurance. KS invited him to email her or JE.

Brian Hannah asked whether the funds in the bank account were ring-fenced or time-limited

Linda asked who was responsible for safeguarding. KS replied that GW has safeguarding policies but that groups operating within the BG should also be responsible for safeguarding. GW was reviewing whether its members and volunteers should be DBS checked.

Lin Harwood asked how much income was brought in by NS and whether another business could do the same; she opined that there was a problem with a co-operative hosting a business. KS replied that the relationship between GW and NS was under review at present. The contribution by NS is in kind.

Attendees were asked to suggest positive points about GW now or in the past and the following were suggested:

* Outreach session
* Litter-picking in the terraces
* Working across both wards
* Apple Day and other events
* Planting on streets
* Bugs and Insects day (ie Planet Action Street Arts’s event last summer)
* Interest from people
* Norman’s work litter-picking
* Community consultation
* Work in Spital Tongues - volunteers run a litter pick there
* Biodiversity monitoring via Wild West End
* Involving different cultures
* Having a worker (Nasreem) that can make connections with different communities
* Wild West End
* Shared spaces
* Buying litter pickers and providing free tea and coffee

**Working group exercise**

Attendees were asked to write down three things that GW should focus on on post-its which were then grouped according to the working group structure. These points are listed in an appendix.

**Member discussion**

Q1: Dave Webb argued that co-operative values and adherence to GW policies had been lost. He stated that £20K had been raised via a crowdfunder for a project [ie. the “Turbocharging..” project?] which had met obstacles for delivery. NS had sole control over the facebook page and the bookings system for the BG and refused to give access to other members or staff of GW. There had also been concerns raised over bullying. DW had put in a formal complaint which had not been dealt with; this led to his resignation as secretary. He argued that NS was ignoring rules and the Board did not know what was going on in the BG; that Urban Green’s agreement is with GW, not NS, and that GW are vulnerable if NS don’t follow rules; that there is a conflict of interest if the NS proprietor is on the Board.

BH added that UG are going to ask us to pay bills at some point; we need to know we’ll be responsible.

Phil Rigby said that the utilities issue highlighted the importance of securing a lease. GW should also be looking into community asset transfer and rebuild of the premises. Currently, since there’s no meter, UG can’t bill us!

 RT asked what was stopping GW from having access to the booking system/ FB?

DW asked for a show of support for the following proposition: the Secretary and Board should have access to the booking system and FB by the next meeting, or there would be repercussions for NS. **This was unanimously agreed by those present.**

Q2: Ruth Hayward noted that trees had been removed from the General Hospital site. She asked attendees for their support in sending out a press release in GW’s name, protesting about this. Benni argued that 3 trees should be planted for every one removed. GH argued, however, that the proper time to object to this would have been at the planning application stage, and that some of the trees removed were diseased. KS suggested that RH and GH should discuss this matter outside the meeting.

Q3: Gus said he was excited about the prospect of being able to define what we can do collectively, and develop processes; this will build a group that is stronger.

Q4: Lyn argued that lots of people who consider themselves to be members aren’t registered as such. They don’t want to go to working group meetings but do want to be consulted. There has to be a “scaffold” in place to be able to keep things organised.

JE stated that there is now an online membership form [actually, there are two] and efforts would be made to ensure that instructions on how to join GW are put up in the BG and elsewhere.

JS stated that when she was working for GW, information to members and others was blocked by lack of access to FB.

GW argued that issues relating to NS were historical and that GW should focus on moving forward. He stated that without NS, the BG wouldn’t exist as it does. But he recognised the need for regulation.

Grace Gorman suggested that independent mediators could be asked to resolve the situation.

Date and time of the next meeting:

PR argued that the next meeting should be held outdoors, so that people could join us. However, there were objections to this on the grounds of noise. It was suggested that the meeting could be held outside when the space wasn’t open to the public.

PR expressed his appreciation of KS and the rest of the Board for their work; **this was agreed**.

KS announced that the next meeting would be the consultation on the Bike Garden, on 28th September, 3-5 pm, to be followed by a small celebration. It was noted that this clashes with the AGM for the Arthur’s Hill council.

Gus, JS and JE volunteered to organise the next members’ meeting – in the next 2 months, possibly outside.