



Eastbrook Community Gardeners

Eastbrook Community Gardeners (ECG) Inaugural AGM1 23rd February 2021, 1-2pm, Zoom meeting

Chair - Mike Dixon, voting - Maxine McMinn, minutes - Carol Springgay

Attendance (16): Duncan Anderson (CEO South Downs Leisure), Gerard Rosenberg (Shoreham Society, Shoreham by trees, Adur Arbour), Richard Stow (Consultant Ecologist), Paul Moore (Pastor, Lighthouse Community Church, Fishersgate), Jasmina Vuckovic (Volunteer), Tom Baker (Green Tides fundraiser), Caroline Moore (Layland Court Garden), Stuart Colwell (South Square Garden), Deborah Nicholls (TCV Project Officer), Beth Osmond (TCV Senior Project Manager), John Haigh (TCV Operations Manager), Andrew Scoon (Brighton Dolphin project), Spencer Chapman, (ECG committee member)

Apologies (12): Keith Walder (A&W Parks Ranger), Maria Sfora (Adur Homes Housing Officer), Gwenn Parker-Tregoeat (A&W Project Officer and ex-TCV engagement officer who initiated project), David Balfe (Adur Councillor), Hayler Packer (Original committee member), Katrine Boyten (Original committee member), Dave Burnett (Original committee member), Thea Taylor (Brighton Dolphin Project), Polly Child (Shoreham Port Kitchen Manager), Ben Walsh (Secretary, Southwick & Fishersgate Horticultural Society), Jill Lennon (Co-founder, Adur Gateway Community Hub), Sue Johnson (Secretary, Friends of Hove Lagoon).

1. Chairs Welcome

The Chairperson Mike Dixon welcomed everyone and mentioned how delighted we were to have everyone attend. Carol was one of the original founders of the group which was set up with the support of The Conservation Volunteers (TCV). Mike originally joined as a volunteer and recently became Chairperson and Maxine came on board recently as social media and events person.

A political map of Eastbrook ward was shown to illustrate why we have called ourselves Eastbrook Community Gardeners, the Eastbrook area boundaries Old Shoreham Rd in the North, Southwick Street in the West, Trafalgar Rd in the East and Shoreham Port to the South.

2. Financial Update

Carol Springgay updated, we had received £320 from Adur East Lions towards the cost of fruit trees for Southwick Orchard, but has been returned due to Impulse Leisure going into administration owing to the pandemic stopping progress on the project. It is hoped the funds should be available again if the project re-commences.

3. Changes to Constitution

The aims of community group were changed from “To enhance the green spaces of Eastbrook” to:

“To enhance the public green spaces of Eastbrook and surrounding areas for the benefit of wildlife and communities. Through this work, we would like to promote neighbourhood social interaction and the building of community spirit. Thereby supporting the physical, mental health and wellbeing of our community”. This was voted and agreed upon.

4. Committee elections 2021/2022

The following people were nominated, seconded, voted on and elected as follows:

Chair: Mike Dixon

Secretary: Carol Springgay

Treasurer: Carol Springgay (Temporary)

We are seeking a treasurer so please contact us if you are interested

Social media and events: Maxine McMinn

5. Presentation on Current Projects and future ideas for projects

A presentation was given via YouTube video and can [be viewed here](#).

A summary of the presentation is below:

Our three current projects are

1. St Aubyns corner

The initial inspiration for the St Aubyns Project came from seeing some wildflowers at Field Place, this sparked a desire to create a wildflower display in a local grass verge at St Aubyns, Fishergate and piloting what impact it may have on both the local community and on biodiversity.

St Aubyns corner is a car park which has verges and an area for trees. We achieved one successful wildflower bed in 2020 and we sowed seed for the remaining beds, but disappointingly the seed failed due to drought and birds. We were recommended by a garden designer that perennial wildflower turf would be more successful, so we will be fundraising for this and plan to try again in spring 2021.

We plan to trial planting three birch trees and sow more wildflower seed in the tree area and come up with a design for the redundant area that attracts fly tipping; we will continue to maintain the current beds in the area. We plan to grow our volunteer base so that ongoing maintenance is sustainable. We would also like to encourage local people to consider how they can utilise their own gardens for attracting pollinators.

2. Southwick community orchard

A group of people were invited by Impulse Leisure to participate in a community consultation in regard to a space the size of a tennis at Southwick Leisure Centre. The decision following the consultation was to put in an orchard and wildflower meadow. Eastbrook Community Gardeners constituted on the 14th February 2020 so that we could fundraise for the orchard and other local projects, the pandemic hit our shores at the same time, so the groundworks halted. A site suitability consultation with the Brighton Permaculture Trust took place in July 2020, that very same week Impulse Leisure went into administration. With the lack of momentum all original committee members stepped down

and Carol remained and rebuilt the committee recruiting Mike and Maxine. South Downs Leisure took over the site in December 2020 and naturally will need to carefully consider the use of space and let us know. Adur East Lions had donated funds and these have been returned until we receive further news.

3. The birch tree project

Dr Richard Stow is the founder of this project and approached us to support. We liaised with TCV who in turn connected Green Tides and Adur & Worthing Council to uplift 300 viable birch trees from Ashdown Forest, where they are considered invasive. These have been heeled in at A&W depot in Southwick Recreation ground and 100 have already planted including Southwick Green, the trees are available for urban planting by the A&W Council and community groups and schools. A birch tree steering group has been established to drive up demand in summer 2021 for the Oct 2021 to Mar 2022 tree planting season. Eastbrook Primary Academy and Shoreham Academy will be doing pilot plantings in March. The birch tree project will be a long-term ongoing project as Ashdown forest like many other heathland sites have many thousands of birch trees to clear.

Collaborating together on the 'greening the grey' mission

In 2021 we would like to connect with other 'greening the grey' stakeholders in this area including Shoreham Port, Southwick leisure centre, Dolphin project, Living Coast, Mayberry's, Laylands Court Garden, Southwick Square Gardens, Southwick & Fishersgate Horticultural Society, Friends of Hove Lagoon, Friends of Wish Park, Friends of Vale Park, Green Tides, Shoreham by trees, Adur Harbour, A&W council parks team, Adur Homes, Men in Sheds, local schools and young people. We wish to involve the local community and build a volunteer base. We believe in collaborating together so that we can support and learn from each other and not be siloed in our efforts.

Possible future projects

There are a number of projects taking place in the area and we would like to support where we can and this is why more volunteers are crucial. These are as follows: TCV are putting together a community 'secret garden' in Fishersgate. The new Shoreham Port Kitchen is being planned for late summer and they are installing some big planters; The Brighton Dolphin project are planning on rewilding some banks by the harbour shore; Laylands Court and Southwick Square garden are always needing some help from volunteers to maintain.

ECG would like to advocate for more trees in the Eastbrook area which is very industrial and some areas are almost devoid of trees. Gardner Road, Fishersgate for example is a lovely wide road with plenty of empty verges and it would look amazing and benefit many, if cherry trees were planted down this key road, with their beautiful blossom in spring. It would be lovely to hear the birdsong in this Fishersgate like we do in other parts of town.

As we walk around the local area possible opportunities are identified. Adur & Worthing Council have done a fantastic job installing the wildflower beds in Fishersgate recreation ground, they add such interest and biodiversity to the park. However, there are large swathes of utility grass next to the road in Fishersgate and Southwick outside the blocks of flats, we would like to suggest to Adur homes that large wildflower beds are planted there, bringing beauty and biodiversity in the area as well.

During lockdown the Friends of Wish Park created a brilliant mural. It gave rise to the thought about the possibility of having one in Fishersgate, on 'greening the grey' perhaps. The main

throughfare from Fishersgate to the shops involves walking past what landscape architects call 'dead frontage', the back end of industrial units. It could be possible to green this grey with an inspiring mural; we have so much history that we can celebrate, as well as being the boundary between East and West Sussex. At the bottom of Church Road Portslade is a historic boat called the 'Old Gassie', it used to transport the workers over to the gasworks in days gone-by. It is looking forlorn, overgrown and in need of some care so we would like to make some enquires about it and whether a wildflower bed could go in.

6. Opening out to the group: What brings you here and how would you like to get involved?

Gerard Rosenberg would like ECG to present our presentation to the Shoreham Society. Gerard informed the group about the Shoreham by trees and Adur Arbour projects that will re-commence once lockdown ends. ECG will be regularly liaising and with Gerard on this.

Paul Moore is the Lighthouse Community Church Pastor and does lots of great work for the Fishersgate community. Paul, his wife and volunteers run the local food bank, charity shop and in typical times they run a highly successful youth club, two thriving mum and toddler groups, holiday clubs and more. Paul thanked ECG for the fantastic work outside the church and clearing along the walkway. It has made a big difference to that area, as previously people were finding it difficult to walk along the street because it was so overgrown.

Caroline Moore is a local resident who won a £25,000 bid to have a landscaped garden put into Laylands Court flats. Caroline expressed an interest in volunteering for local gardening and also in the Brighton Dolphin Project. Caroline wanted to know the birch trees performed in this area as she would like more trees for the Laylands Garden. ECG are still yet to plant the birch trees as we are awaiting council permissions.

Dr Richard Stow (our birch tree project ecologist and project founder), responded to Caroline to highlight that 2020 was not a typical tree planting season due to drought conditions, plus the birch lifted didn't have the best root systems and as a result only half of his trees succeeded. Richard spoke about an Adur & Worthing biodiversity action plan that can be applied to recreate previous habitats on the harbour shoreline.

Deborah Nicholls also responded to Caroline to confirm that her site is a tricky location because even the hawthorn did poorly so she recommended not to have birch but instead to have Tamarisk. Deborah has two Tamarisks ready for planting Laylands Garden as soon as it is feasible.

Tom Baker is the volunteer funding coordinator for Green Tides. He spoke about the birch tree pilot project and that stakes are available to accompany these and are kindly provided by lottery funds. Also, that the website for the Adur & Worthing Wildflower Trail should be going live in March. The email address for project lead Chris Baker is thewildflowertrail@gmail.com. There is a Green Tides meeting **7-9pm Tuesday 16th March** and go on the [mailing list](#) if you would like to receive an invite. Tom mentioned about a pocket park in Shoreham being available for a community project.

Beth added some further points that Debs Stainforth the local councillor is taking the pocket parks forward as a project and TCV have some involvement. Also, that the birch tree project is ongoing over the years, so no urgency.

Duncan Anderson is CEO for South Downs Leisure (SDL), who set up a charity seven years ago and took over the Adur Leisure Centre contract in December 2020. They hope to get centres open in April/May 2021. SDL also run Field Place and the Field Place Garden was their first big

investment as a charity and commissioned Juliet Sargent, Chelsea gold winning garden designer. SDL worked with Honey Collective, Sustainable Sussex and many others. They have established the Green Dreams Festival at Field Place which Duncan strongly urges all community green space groups to attend to showcase work. Duncan needs to check the Southwick Leisure Centre site again before giving a green light, but is very supportive of these projects.

Both Mike and Carol applauded the garden at Field Place. Beth also added that Green Dreams is the most amazing green space festival and one of her personal favourites, lots of stalls, activities and workshops.

Andrew Scoon works with the co-lead at the Brighton and Sussex Dolphin project and fully supports the work ECG are doing and looks forward to continuing to being involved. Andrew asked if we could propagate from the perennials on the beds; yes, ECG have been propagating where possible, we have been given permission by the landowner. Beth answered that for verges these are generally under the management of West Sussex County Council Highways team however green spaces and parks are under the management of Adur & Worthing Council. Andrew expressed an interest in having birch trees close to harbour but it might be too close to the sea, Richard Stow can clarify.

Jasmina is a TCV volunteer and would very much like to be involved in rewilding and planting trees and is also happy to be involved with the mural. Available on weekends.

ECG will take forward volunteer requests and all points made at the meeting. ECG will be back in touch again to move forward in the greening the grey venture. ECG thanked everyone for attending the meeting and look forward to liaising together in future.

Eastbrook Community Gardeners can be contacted as follows:

via the [Eastbrook Community Gardeners Facebook page](#).

There is also a specific Facebook page for the [St. Aubyns Garden](#).

Email: eastbrookcommunitygardeners@gmail.com

Text/telephone message can be left on 07828 71 93 92