

# FRIENDS OF DARTMOUTH COMMUNITY ORCHARD

## Annual General Meeting

01 May 2024 at Dartmouth Yacht Club

Present: 19 members attended (plus 2 proxy). Quorum declared.  
Apologies 7 members presented their apologies  
(List at the end of these minutes)

Peter Shaw (PS) presided over the meeting and welcomed everyone. He led a slide presentation accompanied by committee members (now attached to complete the record).

### 1. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the AGM held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 were **AGREED**. There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere.

### 2. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The committee had taken the opportunity to amend the constitution and copies of the current and proposed contents had been circulated to all Friends. Apart from obvious corrections/updates the changes suggested were principally to allow more flexibility for postholders. Julie Downing (JD) explained that like many other voluntary bodies the Friends had often struggled to find committee members. The idea of appointments being for 2 years was to signal that indefinite service was not expected. If a member didn't wish to continue, they could also resign before the end of the two years. If the Friends were not happy with any appointee, no individual had the right to continue beyond two years (and would be subject to re-election).

Robert Brookes supported the flexible approach and the amendments were **AGREED**. (Proposed by Robert Brookes, seconded by Jon Walley).

### 3. COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

PS and Alisa Kefford-Parker did not seek re-election under the new constitution.

Peter Aylward, Julie Downing, Jemma Pyne, Pamela Nicholson, Lee Thorneywork and Sally Walley all sought election and appointments for 2 years were **AGREED** in accordance with the new constitution. (Proposed by Jon Walley, seconded by Peter Forey).

JD was appointed Secretary for the year and Pamela Nicholson, Treasurer.

There were no nominations for Chair so the committee plans to work co-operatively. For the next year one committee person will act as Chair (a focal point for contact and chairing any formal meetings) for 3 months at a time only. The whole committee will be involved in appropriate tasks (except for secretary and treasurer which needed to remain discrete roles) and work as a team. JD will cover the first 3 months.

Matt Horan will continue to be co-opted (ex officio as Head of DTC grounds team). Juliet Mason-Jones volunteered to join the committee, which was warmly welcomed. She will be proposed for co-option at the next committee meeting.

### 4. TREASURER'S REPORT 2023

Pamela Nicholson's (PN) summary report (attached) was included in the presentation. The committee is once again grateful to Peter Adolphus for auditing the balance sheet.

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On behalf of PN, JD explained that the healthy state of the funds (a balance of £5202 as at 31 December 2023) was largely due to an unspent portion of a £5K grant awarded by Dartmouth Town Council. The original project was to install mains power and water at a cost of up to £12k but a re-appraisal led to a dedicated small solar panel unit being installed at much less cost (£2270) by Peter Forey. DTC were aware of the situation and happy for the Friends to use the extra funds towards our next project, repairing the pathways. The Friends have also been encouraged to apply for another grant for the pathways of up to £5k for the 2024 financial year. This has been submitted and also seeks support to buy a honey spinner and replacement bee hive.

#### 5. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE 2023

The committee's annual report was part of the presentation. Highlights/additional points:

- Praise for DTC staff and Matt Horan's grounds team for their support and commitment which has been significant.
- Huge thanks to Peter Forey for seeing through the solar panel project. The achievement of finally having power in the substation is widely appreciated.
- 20 members participated in working parties delivering 124 hours of effort.
- There are now 3 newly trained Friends who have attended Orchard Link run pruning courses.
- The tree inventory (led by Jemma Pyne) has covered about a third of the stock so far. The method is low tech and inexpensive but time consuming (using an iPhone plus google maps)
- The update to the Memorial Tree Policy was partly needed due to the dwindling availability of planting spots. There is now a limit to the number of donations that can be made by any one person and an option to 'adopt' an existing tree.
- The winter season has been challenging for all bee keepers (Janie Harford reporting on behalf of PN and herself). It has been too cold to inspect the bees and they have needed feeding for longer than usual. The polyhive is coming to the end of its life as it is no longer weather proof. A replacement would be c£500 if new, c£300 if assembled from second hand pieces. A grant application to the National Garden Scheme was unsuccessful but the purchase of an electric honey spinner etc £900+ would be an investment for harvesting more saleable honey in the future.
- The Asian Hornet threat is a new problem and a serious one. It was **AGREED** that clear photos identifying the Asian (Yellow Leg) Hornet and the non-harmful European Hornet should be displayed in the orchard with instructions on what to do if the former was sighted. So far there have only been confirmed incidents in Plymouth (and nests have been destroyed).
- Other good biodiversity news is that there is also evidence of slow worms using the refugia which were installed last year.
- Some bird boxes are coming to the end of their life. Volunteers to make new ones would be welcomed. Juliet Mason-Jones suggested linking with a GCSE DT class.
- After the apple tree stripping incident in October 2023 the installation of 'dummy' surveillance boxes is being considered. However, it was noted that there were still sufficient apples for the annual pressing.

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- Jon and Sheree Hall had kindly agreed to progress more modern communications with Friends and the general public via the website and social media. As always, the challenge is that various individuals have been involved over the years and access information, even domain name ownership details have been lost or are (temporarily) unavailable. However, Jon reported that progress is being made and they are on an improvement curve. The content is safe and it should be possible to make it generally available again in due course.
- Mary Shaw asked if it was possible to have a QR code displayed at the entrance so that individuals could access the website and content (e.g. the tree inventory which already included the type of apple) and Jon confirmed this could be done.

### 6. OBJECTIVES FOR 2024 AND BEYOND

PS noted that the committee has essentially achieved its 2023 objectives although some items e.g. improving grassland and monitoring wildlife activity were 'work in progress'.

The 2024 objectives were also noted and together with the aim of repairing or replacing the noticeboard near the college way entrance, were accepted.

### 7. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other notified business but in answer to questions raised:

- There was some discussion on how to raise money from the occasional users of the orchard which tended to be dog owners. Maybe the Friends could install a donation point (card tap) only. This will be considered by the committee.
- The historic scheme whereby Defra paid landowners for educational visits for children no longer exists.

Friends ended the meeting with heartfelt thanks to Peter Shaw for his many years of dedication to the cause. He had been one of the original group of hard working individuals that set up the Friends and worked tirelessly to see it through and make it and the Orchard what it is today. He will be sadly missed and a very hard act to follow.

Julie Downing (*Secretary*)

#### Attending:

Robert Brooke	Anthony & Julie Downing	Barbara & Peter Forey
Jon & Sheree Hall	Janie Harford	Juliet Mason-Jones
Pam Morgan	Chris & Fiona North	Jemma Pyne
Peter & Mary Shaw	David & Lee Thorneywork	Jon & Sally Walley

#### Apologies:

John & Gwendolyn Alker	Peter Aylward**	Linda Barker
Matt Horan	Pierre Landell-Mills	Pamela Nicholson**

NB \*\* = Proxy vote

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**TREASURER'S REPORT 2023**

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
Donations and Subscriptions	£1,423.79	£ 1,678.91	£ 1,479.86	£ 360.00
Seamoor Lottery	£355.50	£ 483.00	£ 510.50	£ 698.50
Grants/Investments	£5,000.00		£ 500.00	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£6,779.29</b>	<b>£ 2,161.91</b>	<b>£ 2,490.36</b>	<b>£ 1,058.50</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Solar project	£1,846.53			
Noticeboard/plaque/signs			£ 1,248.10	
RHS Insurance	£90.00	£ 90.00	£ 90.00	£ 90.00
Orchard Link subscription			£ 12.00	£ 12.00
FODCO website		£ 100.00		£ 132.75
Pathways	£95.40	£ 140.65	£ 1,153.93	
Trees and consumables	£542.67	£ 378.03	£ 509.31	£ 91.58
Beekeeping	£497.58	£ 715.64	£ 386.43	
Biodiversity		£ 595.06	£ 12.00	
Gifts	£27.50	£ 38.45		
Adjustments	£114.99			
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£3,214.67</b>	<b>£ 2,057.83</b>	<b>£ 3,411.77</b>	<b>£ 326.33</b>
<b>c/f from previous year</b>	<b>£2,161.91</b>	<b>£ 1,673.12</b>	<b>£ 2,594.53</b>	<b>£ 1,862.76</b>
<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>£5,201.82</b>	<b>£ 2,161.91</b>	<b>£ 1,673.12</b>	<b>£ 2,594.53</b>