

**Weaverham Community Memorial Orchard  
Annual General Meeting  
The Scout Hall, Church Street, Weaverham  
Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016, 7.30 pm  
Minutes of the meeting**

**Present**

Geoff Hornby, Irene Bush, Roger Johnson, Steve Doughton, Lynne Rafferty, Fiona Casson,  
Sue Hornby, Peter Sayers, Tina Johnson, Mike Hornby.

**Welcome**

Tina Johnson thanked the Scouts for their hospitality and all for attending. Apologies have been received from John Freeman, Brian & Jacque Williams.

**AGM minutes from 2015.**

Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Steve Doughton, seconded by Lynne Rafferty and agreed by the meeting.

**Chairman's report**

The Chair's report is reproduced below.

**Presentation and adoption of Accounts**

In the absence of the Treasurer, Tina Johnson and Mike Hornby answered questions on the accounts presented. Peter Sayers proposed acceptance of the accounts, Irene Bush seconded and the meeting agreed.

**Election of Trustees**

Tina Johnson, Brian Williams, Mike Hornby, Steve Doughton and Peter Sayers were re-elected, having been proposed by Lynn Rafferty and seconded by Geoff Hornby.

**Any other business**

Roger Johnson raised the matter of our projected expenditure over the next few years and asked how we propose to raise the funds needed to develop the orchard and fund the running costs. Although the Chair was able to outline a wish list, with estimates of cost, it became clear from the discussion that we need a properly costed budget and plans to meet costs. Roger J recommended a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund amongst other suggestions. The Chair thanked Roger for his input and the action group will consider the issues raised.

Tina closed the meeting by thanking Sue Hornby and Irene Bush for putting on refreshments and invited all present to partake.

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## Chairman's Report for the Year 2015-2016

In 2014 the Woodland Trust offered us almost an acre of land in Thorn Wood on which to plant our orchard. After the lawyers had worked on the details we eventually signed the lease in November 2015 and we are very grateful for the support given by Neil Oxley of the Woodland Trust who has taken a lot of interest in this project.

Although we were already a charity registered with HMRC, as a condition of the lease we had to register as a Company Limited by Guarantee. Our Registration Number is 9657902. As a consequence of this we had to alter the date of our financial year which, together with summer holiday dates, meant changing the month of our AGM.

Bearing in mind the position of Thorn Wood between the villages of Weaverham and Hartford it was decided that, although it would be time consuming and expensive to alter the name of the charity and of the Company Limited by Guarantee, we should name our main orchard 'The Memorial Orchard' as we now feel it should be a facility for both villages as well as surrounding communities. Our aims are:

- To establish an orchard in memory of all those who fought in two World Wars and in more recent conflicts
- To commemorate the centenary of the First World War
- To plant additional pocket orchards of Wareham Russet apple trees in the locality
- To provide an amenity for Weaverham, Hartford and neighbouring communities
- To facilitate educational visits and social events

Since our last AGM we have received a donation of £2200 from CWaC councillors Charles Fifield, Paul Williams, Harry Tonge, Susan Kaur, and Patricia Parkes using their discretionary community funds, £1000 from Saltscape (who, in turn were sponsored by the Heiritage Lottery Fund), £300 from Co-op Funeralcare Northwich, £150 in July 2015 and another £150 in May 2016 from Weaverham Parish Council, £200 from Hartford Parish Council, £50 from Weaverham History Society, £25 from Weaverham WI, £25 from 1<sup>st</sup> Weaverham Sea Scouts, as well as money from many individuals who have sponsored between one and four trees each. This is the second year that our CWaC councillors have sponsored our orchard and Weaverham PC has sponsored us three years running.

In 2015 a group of volunteers cleared the ragwort from the orchard area and we began planting our first batch of grafted trees in February this year (2016). Our second batch of saplings, which were grafted in February, was planted in July. We have now planted 45 Wareham Russets and 36 other Cheshire heritage apple trees only one or two of which have been unsuccessful. We eventually hope to plant around 120/140 fruit trees, at least half of which will be Wareham Russet apple trees. The rest will include Cheshire Prune damsons and Hazel Pears associated with the neighbouring village of Acton Bridge and used to dye uniforms Khaki during the First World War. The Weaverham Trust has also planted two Wareham Russet apple trees in the Bottom Pitch. (Our first pocket orchard?) Since February our volunteers have been visiting the orchard twice a month in order to weed the area around each young tree and to remove litter and dog poo. Not a pleasant job! Between 21<sup>st</sup> July and 15<sup>th</sup> August we increased our visits to twice weekly in order to remove the ragwort. We also joined Saltscape at Thorn Wood for a day of ragwort pulling on 1<sup>st</sup> August. We continue to visit the orchard twice monthly to maintain the paths, keep the area clean and to look after the trees.

On September 12<sup>th</sup> we held our first public event: an ecumenical Service of Dedication and Remembrance. Members of the Royal British Legion and of the Burma Star Association laid wreaths. Councillor Charles Fifield, representing Graham Evans MP made a speech and the service was attended by Neil Oxley of the Woodland Trust, representatives of our sponsors (previously mentioned), representatives of Groundwork, Civic Voice, The Royal Voluntary Service, local organisations, clubs and societies, some of our volunteers and local villagers. We were also pleased to welcome pupil and teacher representatives of local schools. We are grateful to our local Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic priests

who led the service.

We would like to thank Pat Daffern for updating our display stand which attracted attention at the Weaverham and Acton Bridge Show and which, like the former display, will be used at future events. We are also grateful to Cue Marketing for taking drone photographs of the orchard.

We continue to contribute to the Weaverham News and have recently had an article in the Hartford News as well as receiving publicity in the Northwich Guardian.

What of the future? Once we have finished planting in the Memorial Orchard and created some pocket orchards, we would like to install a notice board, an interpretation board and some picnic benches at the main orchard. These all cost money, and so our fundraising efforts will continue. Once the trees have grown a little we will hold Apple Days and Wassailing events and welcome schools and village groups on educational visits. We hope that, by careful management, we can return the land between the trees in the orchard to a wild flower meadow. This will take several years.

I would like to thank our volunteers for all the work they have done this year, planting, slashing, mowing, litter picking, ragwort pulling and so much more. I am particularly grateful to our Action Group members who have not only worked hard at the orchard but have worked tirelessly behind the scenes in so many other ways: Irene Bush, Steve Doughton, John Freeman, Mike Hornby (secretary), Peter Sayers, Brian Williams (treasurer) and Jacquie Williams. Finally I would like to thank all of you for your continued support and for coming here this evening.

**Tina Johnson, Chairman, 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016**