

# Edible Landscapes London AGM - 8/5/15

## Present

Jo Homan – Hazel Foreman – Alex Sylvester – Gilly Birch – Jane Howson – Gemma Harris – Richard Vials – Poppy Pickard – Carrie Anker

## Last meeting's actions:

There were several uncompleted actions from the last meeting, including:

-The idea of holding a debate/conference about the role of forest gardening in local food production. This did not happen due to lack of time/volunteer resources to put a meeting together. It was agreed that the upcoming NESTA meeting about London food-growing would fulfil a similar purpose.

**ACTION: Richard to attend meeting on Friday 22nd May** **COMPLETED**

-The plan to collaborate with TCV on a composting project in Finsbury Park. This fell through as the directors felt that we don't currently have the volunteer resources to manage another, large satellite project at the moment as volunteer numbers at our own site are low.

-Promoting the Permaculture agenda in our signage

**ACTION: Directors/volunteer session leaders to appoint a volunteer to make "12 principles" signs and place them around the site**

-Becoming part of a stakeholder's group for the park. This group has disbanded and it was agreed that all the necessary networking could be carried out in the Friends of Finsbury Park meetings, as this group already has an established member base.

**ACTION: Richard to begin attending Friends of Finsbury Park meetings on Mondays. Jo to advertise upcoming meeting dates on ELL Google Group.**

## Annual accounts

Directors passed the accounts for the year ending 30th August 2014

It was agreed that to lend us professional credibility it would be appropriate to have our accounts audited. It has been discovered that most small organisations have their accounts independently examined by a trained accountant, rather than paying for a full audit. This would cost in the region of £600 but it was decided to see if we could find a volunteer or friend to the project to do it for less.

**ACTION: Jane and Richard to investigate contacts for potential volunteer auditors – potentially advertise on the website Do-it.com? Jo to ask Sue Louise – existing accountant friend of Jane's – if she could do it. Kevin Duffy, Friends of Finsbury Park to be asked by Poppy.**

The need was raised for consultants (i.e. people hired to carry out training at ELL) of Transition Finsbury Park to provide a Unique Tax Reference to ensure they are paying tax. It was clarified that there is no legal obligation to do this but that it would be best practice

**ACTION: Jo to confirm with Manor House Development Trust if acquiring consultant UTR is necessary/where to store and how to process this information. Jo to ensure new consultants give their UTR number upon recruitment.**

It was agreed that it would be preferable to review the 2014-2015 accounts sooner after the year-end than May 2016 (the existing date of the next AGM) and that it would be more appropriate to make the November quarterly meeting an AGM.

**ACTION: Jo to publicise meeting on Fri 13th Nov as AGM**

## **Appointment of Directors**

The importance of making known to volunteers the opportunity for applying to become a director was raised, as well as the need to clarify the role of a director to those who might be interested.

Hannah Roberson (not present) agreed via e-mail prior to the meeting to step down as director.

**ACTION: Jo to de-register Hannah as a director with Companies House**

Gilly Birch was appointed as new director

**ACTION: Jo to register Gilly as a director with Companies House**

## **Director's report**

Directors were updated on the progress of several on-site developments since the last meeting, including:

-The pond

**ACTION: Use upcoming volunteer session to turn clay-lined portion into bog garden**

-The compost heap

-The rainwater harvester

**ACTION: Use upcoming Lloyds volunteer session to replace broken tarpaulin**

-The tool shed (structure is slowly degrading but will be left as it is whilst site tenancy is still uncertain)

-The treadle pump

**ACTION: Volunteer session leader to make signage and encourage use during watering**

-The redesigned showcase bed

-The plant emporium shelves

Directors were also updated on less tangible recent developments to do with the site, including:

-The uncertain relationship with the Council. It was agreed that the best approach is to continue “business as usual” as the Council have yet to clarify their intentions, and the site has operated under uncertainty and threats to tenancy in the past.

**ACTION: Jo to publicise upcoming course dates to Stuart and mention ELL's achievements.**

-The Creating a Forest Garden (CAFG) courses which ran in Summer 2014 and Nov 14/April 15. Completion rates were good (only 2/12 students failed to finish the qualification for CAFG #3) and an online network of past CAFG students has formed, centred around the ELL Facebook group.

-The lack of rise in volunteer numbers/retention within recent months. Numbers on Monday/Friday are sessions are usually only around 3 (Jo/Richard/Alex and a few others). Renewed volunteer adverts on university web pages and on websites such as do-it.org have not seen significant rises in volunteer numbers.

## **Other business**

The current volunteering structure was discussed, including the need for a stronger sense of direction/purpose from session leaders on volunteer days. The possibility of a to-do list was raised but dismissed as it had not proved effective in the past.

**ACTION: Volunteer session leaders (Jo/Richard/Alex) to create a means of communication before each volunteer day to clarify priorities/decide loose structure.**

The need to give more plants to other community gardens was raised, to avoid the problem of propagated plants remaining on the site for long periods of time and becoming a burden of care.

Jo confirmed upcoming training dates for CAFG #4 (13-17th July & October 12th-16th 2015)

It was agreed that the wording of our mission statement should be changed from promoting “low-maintenance gardening” to “forest gardening”

**ACTION: Jo to edit wording of mission statement and to create an on-site sign clarifying out 3 main objectives**

## **Date of the next meeting**

The date of the next quarterly meeting was set as Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2015.