**AGM meeting Friday 4th October 2019**

**Attendees**

**Committee:** Shaun Thomas, Helen Skipp, Simon Grinham

**Residents:** M Spindler, C Spindler, B Jennings, E Taylor, Brian Skipp, Judith Crenshaw, Simon Amstutz, Adrienne Lee, David Lee, Katy Vargas, Hazel Whitehead, Vickie Thomas, Ken Shepherd, Linda Adwik, Douglas Edwards, Jack Kennedy. Councillor Martin Goss, Councillor Sue Lissimore

**Apologies**: Will Emrich, Claire Law, Isobel Merry, Nick Cope, Theresa Higgin, Lorcan Whitehead

ST welcomed everyone to this year’s AGM in particular Councillors Sue Lissimore and Martin Goss. The past year has included two successful quiz evenings raising funds for the Orchard; the Christmas social event was disappointing compared with other years so agreed we should look for ideas to improve attendance this year. The highlight was the street sale especially the refreshment area which was well used and raised money for the Orchard project. ST reported that an agreement has now been signed for the lease on the Orchard, and a charity had been established to take on the lease. ST advised that he would like to change the date of the AGM next year and have it during the warmer, lighter evenings to attract more residents. The meeting agreed with the proposal.

**Action – committee to agree and fix date for 2020**

**Treasurer’s report.** July 18 to June 19. HS reported that we started the year with £1032.66 received £101.00 from subs, £1.22 interest with expenditure of £25.00 ending the year with £1109.88. In addition we are also holding on behalf of the Orchard £491.00, this is the money raised by the two quiz nights. This will be transferred to the Orchard bank account when it is set up.

An attendee asked which bank IRARA used and asked if we would consider changing to a bank with a more ethical ethos; the Committee agreed it would be happy to look at this.

**Action - look at other banks and consider changing**

**Election of committee**: All members were prepared to stand again, ST advised that as the Orchard required more time he may need to step back from his role in the future.

All current members were re-elected; those present were asked if they would like to join the committee as we were looking for new members. Following the street sale we found many new families had moved into the area and had expressed an interest in getting more involved. We agreed that we would include a request for new members for the committee in the next newsletter.

**Action - include in next newsletter**

**Social activities**. SG reported that there are currently in the region of 30-40 paid up households. As people join and pay in a casual timetable the formal membership is fluid and he had many more contact details for household that were interested in IRARA activities. SG has successfully set up mailchimp to email appropriate groups with news and information.

We discussed whether we should give the option of paying by direct debit/standing order, negating the need to ask for cash each year, we agreed we could email contacts with bank details to suggest this.

**Action - email residents to suggest this and include in newsletter.**

SG proposed advertising the Christmas event earlier and using email/social media. There was a discussion as how we could attract more families to attend a summer social event, ideas included, family games, BBQ, cricket match and a geocapture event.

**Action - Committee to develop programme for next year**

The idea of replacing the playground on the field was suggested and this idea was received positively and could be a project that would attract interest and involvement from families with young children. As an addition the idea of including benches or outdoor gym was discussed, we thought these could be an asset to the local community and would be well used.

Councillor Sue Lissimore advised us that there was funding available for this kind of project and play equipment. She commented that modern playground equipment is very robust and fairly vandal proof. We agreed that this would be included as a project for the IRARA to investigate and report on.

**Action – discuss at next committee meeting, contact local councillor for advice on how to proceed.**

**Footpath update.** Councillor Sue Lissimore was able to report that after a lengthy process, the three schools were no longer objecting to the footpath, ECC have agreed and it will become a permitted footpath (restricted bridle path) we are now in a 42 day consultation period. After this assuming there were no objections she will be looking at finding funding to drain and surface the footpath with the local highways panel. This could take 12-24 months.

**Action - add to next newsletter - details in local paper.**

**Road safety**: Following the decision last year to investigate restricting the road speed to a 20 mph zone a speed test was arranged. The outcome was that although some cars were speeding most did not and therefore a legal reduction in the speed was not required. Councillor Sue Lissimore reported that in other local roads the introduction of a lower speed limit had only made a very small reduction in the speed cars travelled. ST advised that there was no further action to be taken on this matter.

We had a discussion about the problem of coaches visiting the Grammar school, it was felt there had been progress made and that the school was doing more to advise visiting schools to use a more sensible route (down Irvine Road) to avoid the difficult turns from Athelstan or Capel. It seemed that within the school an old map was still being used - this to be raised with the school.

**Action - thank the school for the action they had taken so far but ask them to update paper map route.**

Councillor Martin Goss advised the meeting that he had noticed some of our road name signs were in very poor condition and he had requested that they were replaced.

**Orchard update:** ST advised that there was a fact sheet available to explain the history of the site. The building work had started but was proceeding more slowly than expected. The relationship with the builder and site owner continued to be good. The charity had now been created but we are now waiting for the appropriate stage to be reached before the site could be handed over to the charity. Support was needed it two main areas, in time volunteers would be needed to maintain the site and for fund raising. The charity would like to raise £45,000 over the next five years to enable it to buy the 999 year lease. The first open day was planned for Sunday 6th October with another in the spring. It was suggested that we should consider involving the local scout/beaver groups; these could help while working towards appropriate badges.

There was an interesting discussion about the wildlife seen in and around the area, these included stag beetles, deer, foxes, bats and badgers. ST advised that Colchester Natural History had visited the site and were continuing to be involved.

**AOB.** We asked for thoughts on proceeding with providing a community notice board at the start of the footpath past the allotment where it meets Irvine Road, there had been one in the past and we proposed replacing it. This idea was approved; again this is something that the councillor’s locality budget could help with.

**Action- investigate ownership of land and ask councillors to assist.**

Simon Amstutz asked about the street trees and the fact so many are now missing, there was agreement that the area would be improved by replacing where possible. HS had seen that this had been done very recently in the Castle/Roman Road area and understood this was the result of a local resident’s campaign. Councillor Sue Lissimore was able to advise that modern street trees have been specially bred to have a very small root stock so do not cause damage to pavements etc. The cost per tree is in the region of £350 but this includes all cost and care until established. Again it is possible to find funding for these kinds of projects.

**Action: SA agreed to do a survey of the local roads to see where trees remain and where they have been removed and report back to the committee.**

ST thanked everyone for attending.