**NETHER EDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUP**

**Minutes of the A.G.M. held online on Wednesday 24th February 2021**

Approximately 50 members were in attendance.

Apologies for absence: Maggie Gray, Karine Nohr.

The chairman, Ken Lambert, outlined the rules of conduct for the meeting.

**1. Minutes of the last A.G.M. held on 9th May 2019**

These were accepted as an accurate record. Proposer: Howard Fry. Seconder: Richard Taylor.

Matters Arising: none.

**2. Chair’s Report**:

Ken Lambert welcomed everyone to the meeting and said how pleased he was to see so many people, including two of our local councillors, Jim Steinke and Alison Teal. The AGM. scheduled for last year was missed following guidance from the Charities Commission. He said that the last year had been difficult for everyone and when the scheduled AGM couldn’t take place in May 2020 because of the situation regarding Covid 19, NENG was in a quandary as to how to help local people who might be in difficulty. There were various suggestions but, as NENG does not have any premises or staff it was felt that the focus should be on making donations to those organisations which were in a position to help those in need. A small group from the Committee established a set of criteria to suggest who should receive monies. Groups needed to be based in Nether Edge, be able to identify need and have a proven track record of providing help.

Family Voice received £500, Shipshape received £500 and the newly formed Nether Edge and Sharrow food bank £500. In addition, although the March 2020 Farmers Market was cancelled, we still gave money to the nominated charities who would ordinarily have received donations from the market. There is a balance of £11,500 in the bank and while it is necessary to retain some reserves, NENG is still able to offer financial support should the need arise.

Meetings of the NENG committee have continued through Zoom and this has worked well. Ken emphasised that NENG is not a closed club and anyone wishing to join the committee would be most welcome and should contact either him or Howard Fry (Secretary).

NENG is the core charity but has many sub-groups who follow the Memorandum of Understanding as set out by NENG and can also use the NENG bank account. The two newest sub-groups are the Art Group and Kenwood Community Growers.

NENG maintains wider links and Ken represents the group on the Sharrow and Abbeydale Stakeholders’ Forum. Last year there was a lot of concern regarding shootings and stabbings in the locale but fortunately the situation seems to have improved.

The NENG website had fallen into disrepute but Ken has ‘faffed about’ with it. (His words. Other people think he’s done sterling work and it is much improved.) Ken appealed for anybody who would like to help him with the website to get in touch. Among other items on the website are details of a number of walks, suggested by David Levine and these have proved very popular.

Ken went on to say that NENG is a collective effort and he thanked all those who have given their time and expertise. Particular thanks go to Howard Fry and to the Edge editorial board - Ruth Bernard, Nicky Erlen, Kevin Hickey and David Pierce.

We were sorry that our vice-chair, Mazhar Hussain had been ill over the past year but were delighted that he is now well.

Ken again thanked all the sub-groups and the distributors of Edge who had borne with us whether distributing paper copies or pdfs.

**3. Treasurer’s Report - Ken Lambert**

Although we do not have an appointed treasurer, the accounts are ably looked after by Howard Fry, Tayab Fayaz and David O’ Connell. NENG’s financial year ends in October and to align it with the financial year end in March as had been hoped, would require two sets of accounts and be too complicated at the moment. The 2020 accounts have not yet been finalised as they have first to be examined by Voluntary Action Sheffield (VAS) before they can be sent to the Charities Commission. As soon as they are available the approved accounts will be posted on the website.

Receipts from the Farmers Markets which are usually held four times a year were considerably less and initially subscriptions dried up as distributors were unable to collect them in the traditional way. However, most people have now sent in their subs.

Advertising revenue also dried up but this was mitigated by the fact that there were no printing costs.

Of the £11,500 in the bank, £2,000 has been earmarked for work on Chelsea Park.

**4. Sub group reports**

**a. Farmers Market - Howard Fry**

The Farmers Markets continue to be very popular and there is great demand for stalls. Unfortunately both the June market and the November Christmas market had to be cancelled last year but it is hoped that there will be a market on 13th June this year. The September 2020 market went ahead with a reduced number of stalls and lots of people commented favourably on this arrangement, so it is likely that this will stay in place. The charities earmarked to receive donations in 2021 are: Emmaus, SToRMs, Mencap, Ashiana and Sheffield Futures. If anyone has a suggestion for local charities which we might support in future years they are invited to contact Howard Fry.

**b. Nether Edge Festival - Mark Doel, co-chair with Richard Taylor**

Discussions for the 2020 festival began in March of that year but by July it was obvious that things could not go ahead as planned because of Covid restrictions. A pop up festival was planned with a number of online activities and some Covid-safe outdoor activities. Usually there are about 60 planned events but last year events took place over two weekends with one mid week event. In order to involve as many people as possible, especially those who were shielding, there was a scarecrow trail, which proved immensely popular. Overall there was a lot of very positive feedback and people were very appreciative.

The hope is that in 2021 there will be a full festival, with many of the activities taking place out of doors but the committee will respond to whatever is the current situation. It is hoped that the opening will take place at Common Ground and the closing be the Party in the Park as in previous years. The sub-group would really welcome new members, especially someone who would help with social media and the website.

Thanks were expressed to Leanne Mallander who has covered this role for several years.

**c. History Group - Kath Fry**

The group had planned a full programme for 2020 with mini presentations, talks by outside speakers and guided walks but much of it had to be postponed. The guided history trails led by John Austin and Richard Taylor became self-guided trails. Seventy five of these were printed and all were taken up and enjoyed by many families.

There was a new publication, “Nether Edge in World War 2”, written by John Austin and John Cornwell, which sold very well and the group has been able to repay NENG’s loan which covered the cost of publication..

The group hopes to produce a ‘Green Spaces’ calendar for 2022 and would welcome images of green spaces in Nether Edge. Photographs with details of where it was taken, when, by whom and contact details, should be sent to nenghistory@gmail.com.

The group has a stall on the Nether Edge virtual fair. A new history website, linked to the NENG website is under construction by group member, Andy Beezer. Details of the group can be found at [netheredgehistory.org.uk](http://netheredgehistory.org.uk/). Although last year was difficult, the group are cheered by what they have managed to achieve and look forward to welcoming new members.

**d. Edge Editorial Board - Nicky Erlen.**

Other members of the board are Ruth Bernard, Kevin Hickey and David Pierce.

Once again adaptations had to be made in order to follow government guidelines. Apologies were given to those members who were unable to receive online copies when printed copies were not available. The board will publish paper copies as soon as they are able but although there is a suggested easing of restrictions on 29th March, this might be too late for the April edition. The board are very grateful to all the distributors. Most people prefer paper copies but virtual copies are much cheaper. The production of Edge is the main expense for NENG and although advertising contributes to costs, the aim is to limit this so that it does not overwhelm. (One comment was that there seems to be a good balance.) The aim is to keep Edge lively and interesting and the team are always happy to receive feed-back to inform them about what interests people and they very much welcome contributions and offers to help edit an edition. Someone with the skills to do desktop publishing would also be very welcome.

The board send thanks to all the subgroups who contribute to Edge. Lockdown has contributed to community cohesion and it is hoped that people will still want to engage with Edge.

**e. Friends of Brincliffe Edge Woods - Howard Trott.**

Chair, Ken Phillip.

Like everyone else the FoBEW have encountered many difficulties over the past year and from mid-April the planned programme of seasonal working in the woods came to an end. However, in October it was possible to hold a Covid-compliant volunteer session and Needham’s field was cut and raked, bulbs were planted and the beech hedge near Brincliffe Edge Road was pruned.

The working relationship with Parks and Countryside has been excellent and the Ranger’s assistance was particularly valuable when litter and fly tipping became a problem. Thanks go to sharp-eyed wood users who have advised the group about illegal tipping.

Although unable to meet physically, the FoBEW co-ordinating group continues its work by email and occasional Zoom meetings. Through membership of the Sheffield Green Spaces Forum they are staying in touch with the wider work of ‘Friends of’ groups across the city.

**f. Kenwood Community Growers - Alison Teal**

This March sees the first anniversary of the group but celebrations have been hampered by Covid restrictions. Details of arrangements for the celebration can be found on the Growers Facebook page. Throughout the year the group have been very successful and able to contribute fresh vegetables to the Sharrow Community Forum.

One of the volunteers, Sharon Watson, has managed to secure some funding from the Ecclesall Road Co-op and shoppers are asked to donate their ‘dividend’ points to the scheme. Funds were also raised through the Nether Edge Sale Trail.

Unfortunately, there is a planning application for building on land belonging to the Kenwood Hotel, which would affect the garden. There has been a strong community response with 100 objections being voiced, many of which include support for the garden. Nothing seems to be happening in this regard at the moment so the Growers will continue.

Thanks were expressed to everyone involved with the garden. The group would welcome new volunteers. They are also looking for new patches of land where they might grow vegetables. Alison is looking at the exciting possibility of land on the Landsdowne Estate.

**g. Friends of Chelsea Park - Howard Fry.**

The Parks and Countryside department of Sheffield City Council have been very supportive of the group and its aim to refurbish the children’s playground. It is hoped that work will soon begin to remove the swings, drain and clear the lower area, replace the surface and reinstate the swings. Chelsea Park has an endowment of £23,000 which should cover the cost of this work but the upper playground also needs attention. SCC does not have resources to cover this so local fundraising will be necessary. The group would be pleased to receive any suggestions for replacement equipment, suitable for children aged 10 and under, or offers of help on fundraising.

Howard is taking advice as to what would be a suitable surface beneath the swings.

**h. Open Gardens - Howard Fry.**

This event is scheduled for 20th June and a focus will be on front gardens. Howard would like to hear from anyone willing to join in and he welcomes new ideas for Open Gardens too.

**i. Nether Edge Art Group - Richard Taylor.**

The group has been meeting for 7 years and currently has 12-15 members. New members are welcome, though there is no space for painters at the moment. The group ask a £10 joining fee and hope to arrange sketching outings and possibly trips to galleries. Richard and local artist, Lynne Chapman are co-editing the May edition of Edge which focusses on art in Nether Edge. Richard pointed out that there are many artists both amateur and professional in our area.

Last year’s art trail, which was part of the Nether Edge festival, raised £150.

The group are exploring the possibility of placing an installation in Chelsea Park and also creating a memorial to World War 2.

Another suggestion put forward was that photographs should also be included.

Ken said that he hoped the reports from the sub-groups gave a flavour of the on-going activities and the adaptations being made in the light of Covid.

Many thanks were expressed to all members of the sub-groups.

**5. Election of Officers**

No new nominations had been received. Therefore Ken Lambert (Chair), Mazhar Hussain (Vice-chair) and Howard Fry (Secretary) were re-elected unanimously.

Although we have no appointed treasurer, Howard Fry, Tayab Fayaz and David

O’ Connell are keeping the finances in order. Each of the sub-groups is responsible for keeping records of its own funds, though all make use of the NENG bank account.

Each year the two longest standing of the six trustees of the organisation have to stand down. This year that applies to Howard Fry and Mazhar Hussain. The rules, however, permit people to be re-elected immediately. Mazhar and Howard were both happy to stand again and were duly re-elected.

Ken drew the meeting to a close, saying that Nether Edge really feels like a good community. He again thanked all the sub-groups and everyone who had attended the meeting.