

## Minutes of SCEnSus held via Zoom on 8 December 7.30pm

### 1. Welcome.

Joy Tucker  
Marion Pratt  
Veronica Mathews  
Jill & Robin Bevis  
David Botting-Page

### 2. Apologies

Cllr Mike Davies  
Cllr Tony Leech  
Sadie Coventry

Sadie has with regret stepped down from the committee at present due to her other commitments. We would like to thank Sadie for all of her work and dedication she put into starting up the community garden initiative. We wish her well and hope that she will still want to be involved in the project in the future as and when she can.

### 3. Approval of the minutes and any matters not covered below.

i) Community Garden, Helen and Sadie including outcome of site visit meeting at the village hall regarding community planting.

Jill asked if the December challenges are on the website as she can only find Novembers, Marion said she will check on the site to see if it is there and make sure that it goes up.

David wishes to say that he apologises if at last month's meeting he came across as negative about footpaths but there are several people who do not know the rules regarding the use of paths. Joy said that the countryside code that Marion sent through to the group was very informative and being published.

Joy asked if members of the group and volunteers would be covered by SCPC insurance to do monthly litter clean ups. Marion does not think that it will cover ones other than the 2 organised during Spring and Autumn. Veronica asked if there is actually a limit with the insurance provider as to how many we could do a year. Marion said that there is no limit but they would be done at your own risk at present. However, she said that she will in the new year check this with the insurance company.

Jill said that in the last months minutes on AOB no: 9 she said that she will get something put together about the Moor Meadows and asked if it can be added to tonight's meeting. Anyone that wants to plant up a flower meadow in a garden, on a bit of waste land or piece of land like a farmer then this can be registered with wild meadows to go onto a map. Jill wondered if there were any suitable sites within the parish to plant wild flowers. Janet asked if we would need to get special permission from DCC to use areas such as the triangle at Red post cross and the fact that they cut the verges down would defeat the object if this happened. Robin said that there are council initiatives to do this sort of planting and have receptive environmental directives to assist with this. There are areas where signs are put up to stop the verges being cut back. Marion said that perhaps at the next public meeting it could be put to parishioners, and ask what they wish to see reference planting wild flowers

and if they have any ideas. Veronica said in terms of larger spaces the village green and church yard are areas that could be used. Reference the church yard it would be dependent on people that have relatives buried in the churchyard and if they were in agreement to let the graves grow wild. David said that this may raise an issue of other people thinking that the area is being neglected especially when the plants are dying off and not looking at their best, there needs to be education that when they are dying off they provide valuable seeds for birds and insect habitat. We will need to get in touch DCC reference verges and hedgerows.

Various initiatives - the community gardens had a constructive meeting at the village hall about the village green (in spite of dreadful weather). General view about planting apple trees in the village hall grounds and espaliers on the wall is that it is felt that there is no real suitable site for this as the wall fabric may not be strong enough to support it. There would only be room for 1 tree as there are drains running under the north side and not enough sun on the other. Also the area has many uses such as dog show ground. The village green would be a good spot as when maintenance work is being done on the plants anyone with children can have them playing in the area while they are working. Planting of wild flowers can grow between apple trees. A visit to the site would be good to establish the best use of the area. Helen is still on board but it would be good to see who else could help out with the project. Nicky Scott from Chagford is willing to come and offer advice to the group. Veronica asked What has been talked about so far, there are the trees, veg plot flowers and espaliers which don't have to go onto a wall but could go along the play area. Are there other ideas? Joy said a request for a skate board park and also someone had suggested chickens. David said composting could use the area behind the well. Marion said that it really needed to go somewhere that has vehicle access as the compost will need turning and cars can get in to pick up bags of compost. It was asked if we can put on the next agenda a date for a site visit to the green to take place in February. Also, could we invite Nicky Scott to the site meeting for his input.

ii) Peat free initiative, Jill said she has done some research with Dale site compost and they do a Herdwick sheep wool compost and they also do one that is a mixture with Bracken which is good for hanging baskets. They do a pallet of 50 bags at 40 litres which we could possibly share with Chagford which if we had 20 bags would be a cost of £150 approx £7.50 per bag. It can also be mixed with a cheaper peat free compost to make it go further and cheaper again. we could make up 50/50 bags to sell via the plant stall in smaller bags if needed. This will help raise the profile of peat free and maybe we could make it an entry category in the flower competition for plants grown in the peat free mix. Marion asked Jill if she can get prices of the other brands to compare with. Joy said in terms of funding could we put in a bid on locality and speak with Barry Radcliffe.

iii) Community hub, David has said that he does not have the expertise to take forward the website. He is focusing at the moment on getting people that are not on the web to be able to contact an enabler to put them in contact with the group or get the information they need. Also to others on the web make them aware of what is out there for them to gain knowledge. Robin said it would be a good idea to split it down as environmental issues and flora and fauna and soil so enablers have an area of a certain knowledge to impart. David said that the web should be simple and user friendly for those that do not know how to search for things. Marion said that perhaps

a notice board set aside for SCEnSus items could go on the plant stall where people can put adverts or information up to help others, and the monthly challenges could be advertised there to. Anyone that is willing to be an enabler would need to be willing to publish their contact details.

iv) Car/bike club/sharing, Robin. In view of the ongoing Covid restrictions and until the vaccine has been rolled out to everyone wanting it that this initiative can be taken off the agenda until further notice.

David asked how active is the village with the use of the Okehampton community transport and Marion said that there are around 50 people in the parish that make regular use of them. She also suggested that all going well in the new year we could as a group arrange a trip to somewhere like RHS Rosemoor gardens to possibly coincide with a demonstration day that they run for something like composting.

v) Litter. Janet & Joy including litter poster publicity. So far there has not been any uptake on a design for a poster and as the deadline was for 31st January 2021 it is felt that maybe this will need to be readvertised. Joy said that she had taken a phone call from a gentleman who said that he is very proud that in a year he has only put out 3 black bags for collection and that there is no hygiene issue as he recycles nearly everything.

Janet said that on this evenings One show there was an item on Green Christmas and asking people to be aware of what they use and throw away and to make better choices with things like wrapping paper ie not the shiny type that won't screw up and do you really need new decorations etc. I said that I had a cardboard box which I keep my decorations in which is now over 20 years old. This made Veronica remember what she did with cardboard boxes and had put them down on some really hard ground that was always hard to dig. She covered it with compost and then planted veg through the cardboard. This rotted down into the ground and has now become very easy to work it so a good use for your old boxes, tape and staples removed of course.

vi) Monthly challenges, Veronica. She said that she has had very good feedback on the new year's checklist challenge and said that many have said that it has given families plenty to talk about and debate over the table. She said that her family have also looked again at what they do in their own home.

5. Review of footpaths etc within the parish, David and Gaynor.

David contacted the ramblers association and they will be going for the next 5 years on the plans to reinstate lost paths in the UK and they will send him a new map of footpaths which he will forward to Joy. On an interesting note Marion emailed about a particular path and got a response of a map from 1884 and links to a website that has archived maps which can be downloaded which shows ancient rights of way paths and thoroughfares. John Friend contacted David and said he had found a large pack Parish council maps which show the lost paths. David has said that farmers and landowners need to be contacted about the possibility of reinstating old paths as this may raise concerns with them. He also said that he believes that there are incentives for landowners in regards to footpaths but this needs further investigation.

6. Countryside code. It is felt that consultation needs to be had with landowners in regards to footpaths and maybe invite as many to attend the open meeting in spring. Robin said it could be classed as soft recreation where no damaging footprint is left on the land. David said that he believes negotiations are the best way forward with clear ideas rather than people talking about the issues of footpaths then there being an influx of people getting on the bandwagon so to speak and highlighting negative points. This was the case when Covid lockdown first happened about having to sanitise all gates, styles etc touched by walkers and who should be responsible for it.

It was agreed that this area needs careful thought in our approach to avoid polarising views on the issue.

It was suggested that as there are several holiday lets in the parish it would be a very useful idea to have a copy of the countryside code in the holiday packs that are for guests information and also have it on the SCEnSus website.

7. Wildlife trail. Veronica said that she had thought that the past, present and future idea was what was being referred. Joy said that she thought that it was along the lines of the pumpkin and scarecrow trails. Veronica said she had seen that Morchard Bishop primary school had set up a trail in their village with various households choosing an endangered wild animal to give information about it from notices in the garden. She wondered if something like that would be of interest here but based more on our local species of animals and even plants. It may be an idea to keep in mind especially once restrictions are less or no longer in place. The household can choose their subject and find out as much as possible about it and the impact of climate change on it. David mentioned the Belstone dawn chorus trail that takes place and wondered if that would be something worth looking into here as well.

8. Hedging and trees. Robin said that there are so many programs and information imploring people to plant trees and yet there are so many trees that are cut back never getting chance to grow in our hedgerows. Maybe more tree planting should take place in hedgerows. Veronica said that they have looked into this on their farm and there is a new directive coming in 2021 called the Environmental land management scheme, or ELMS this will probably have rules and regulations for landowners to take on board for future land management. Also with large trees in small hedges there is the issue of roots and branches near the roads. Devon wildlife trust would be useful to contact and see if in the future there could be a meeting set up and see the best way forwards with tree and hedgerows. Janet asked if planning permission would be needed to plant a field full of trees and Veronica said she believed that change of use from agricultural to woodland may need to be approved. We all agreed that SCEnSus need to supporting farmers to help where we can when ELMS come into place and perhaps the young farmers would be interested in forming a link with the group.

9. Website and Facebook page including need to keep posting news to stay on the front page.

Marion asked that information is sent to her so that it does not have to go round the houses then any issues can be ironed out and got up onto the website asap to keep it current.

10. AOB. David said that he and Gaynor had contacted the Solar Devon website and wondered how many know about the site. He said that it involves getting several people interested in having solar panels put up. He said that the principal is a good idea but the amount of outlay cost for them far outweighed any cost saving benefits as it will take years to recoup the costs. Also at some point their roof will need renewing so unfortunately it is a non starter for them at this time. Robin said that there is more effort being put in by the government towards grants for the heating plans ie heat pumps than there are for solar panels. Marion said that the interim Devon carbon plan will go onto the website and urges people to take part in the survey they are conducting.

11. Date of next meeting. The next meeting will be January 26th 2021 at 7.30 currently via zoom.

It just remains for the SCEnsSus group to wish all our parishioners and their families a very Happy and safe Christmas and New Year.