

## DEVELOPMENT OF DOG CLOSE

Zoom teleconference hosted by Anne Prior on 23<sup>rd</sup> March

Present: Anne Prior, Fizz Forbes-McGlen, Linda Dane, Judy Klinkenberg, Stephen England, John Hargis

The purpose of the meeting was to review the status of Dog Close and to discuss possible options and timing for development. Key points are summarised below:

- The Parish Council still does not have the lease for the land but it is expected within the next few weeks.
- The size of the SUDS was much greater than anticipated and there remains some dispute over ownership. The District and Parish Council, as a point of principle, never take ownership of such facilities. Walton Estate and the Medical Centre are near a resolution.
- Fencing will have to be placed around the SUDS due to the steep sides; this will be done by Walton Estate. Fencing will also be needed along the waterfront and the frontage onto Bridge Street. This will be repaired where possible and paid for by the Parish Council. A separate gate will be provided from Bridge Street into the area.
- The land at the far end of Dog Close which has recently been gifted to the Parish Council will be incorporated into the overall area. A possible option is to create a 'village orchard' in this extended area. [Post meeting note: *The participation of the community in planting and caring for the orchard might be worth considering.* Link to OSCARS/dementia groups?]
- The fencing along the river bank, which will extend through the coppice, will be wooden and allow the free movement of wildlife. A map is to be circulated by Anne that will be used as the basis for agreeing the location of the fence line along the river and through the coppice.
- The meadow area will be short cut to create pathways which will be varied after several years to enable wild flowers to become established. A wider area of low cut grass may be provided for picnics. Benches but not tables will be provided. Grasses and wild flowers will be spread throughout the rest of the area and cut rather than mown/strimmed at key times in order to leave larger sized cuttings in-situ for at least a few days to allow seeds to drop to the ground and re-germinate for the following year. [Post meeting note: *Not specifically mentioned at the meeting but RHS advise 3 cuts per year in April, a 'hay cut' in late summer and a final autumn cut.*]
- The coppice area is envisaged to be an location that can be opened up for people to walk through on designated pathways with the majority of the area preserved for wildlife and flora/fauna. Input from World Wildlife Trust and Woodland Trust is to be sought on the level of care/management of this area.
- The Parish Council currently does not envisage allowing periods where sheep will be able to graze the area. [Post meeting note: *Winter grazing by livestock breaks up any matted vegetation and mosses and pushes seeds into the soil helping them to germinate and secondly reduce grass growth before the winter weather sets in, allowing more light to get to the soil and further enhance seed germination. - This point will be taken up at our next meeting.*]
- The issue of whether to allow dogs under control into the area was left for later discussion.

End