

Present: Rita Gerard (Poulton the Sands & Morecambe Cemeteries), Simon Gershon (Lancaster Green Spaces), Mick Short (Fairfield Association), Steve Wearden (Ryelands Park), Joy Warren (Claver Hill)

Theme for this meeting was 'Paying for ongoing costs'

Maintenance and other ongoing costs are harder to finance because most available grants are for new items and activities. How can these essential costs be funded without excessive effort?

Exchanges

Fairfield Association has a wildflower meadow as part of the FAUNA land. It came to a working arrangement with Lancashire Wildlife Trust (LWT) who have a mower tractor and trailer. They cut it, FA volunteers turned it, and LWT returned to bale it for the cattle to eat over winter. LWT did the work at minimal cost because this was a project they wanted to support.

- Your group may have something it could barter or sell e.g. trees for firewood?

Fundraising events

Running events can raise funds and also publicizes the group to attract new volunteers and potential donors. The consensus was that such events have to be fun for those attending. Fully important, they have to be enjoyable and non-stressful for the volunteers organising and running the event.

- Events also build community by bringing people together
- Asking for volunteers to do specific tasks usually gets a better response than asking generally for volunteers.
- But some events are too ordinary/raise too little money for the effort e.g. car boot sales and jumble sales.
- Events with food and drink usually do well – especially those with cakes as it is easy to find enough people to bake and donate a cake.
- The Fairfield Assoc had to work hard initially to get volunteers but now has a good pool of people willing to organise and help on the day.
- But not many people willing to run big events – this is best done by a small group, or stick to more easily organised small events.
- The organising group needs to be supportive and run in a sociable way.
- It gets easier to run repeat events
- Doing things unconventionally attracts publicity e.g. on Claver Hill they sowed seeds in period costume with a fiddle drill – good coverage in the paper.
- You can ask people for suggestions on events they would like to see, then ask them to run it with their friends.
- You might want to ask people who have organised events for ideas and suggestions: Rita organised the Poulton Heritage festival; Simon has organised Apple day events and Mick has been involved in many Fairfield initiatives.

For events you need to make sure your insurance covers what you plan to do, and hygiene is appropriate for food served.

Publicity

Publicity is of course essential, suggestions offered included:

- Put up notices on trees and in the greenspace
- Get listed on email circulation lists: Freegle, Swapshop and Virtual Lancaster

will publicize it, but there are other lists such as CVS, hobby groups, religious groups, school bulletins that may all be willing to mention your event.

- If you want to attract young people it's got to be electronic
- There are also paper bulletins that will reach people that don't use email or social media.
- Flyers through letter boxes are relatively cheap. If attractive and not commercial looking, are likely to be read.

Pledges

Another route to cover maintenance costs is to ask people to pledge and set up a standing order for a small monthly amount. The Fairfield Assoc now has £1500 p.a. coming by this route although it is only since they have become larger and better established that their appeals have become successful – previous appeals never resulted in much.

Grants

There are not many funders willing to cover ongoing costs, but there are a few – CVS can give advice.

- Some local groups will also make donations on a case-by-case basis e.g. Lancaster & Morecambe Lions (www.lancastermorecambelions.org.uk), Soroptimists (<http://silancaster.co.uk>)
- City and County Councillors each have a fund to support local projects at their discretion
- Awards for All (part of the Big Lottery) is relatively easy money £300 to £10K
- You can always contact a funder and ask them for guidance

Equipment

- If you need tools or other equipment you may find it easier to ask for it directly rather than trying to get the money to buy it. Someone may have what you need or be willing to buy it for you. Swapshop and Freegle would be a good place to ask.
- Or you might be able to borrow it from another group N.B., Lancaster Green Spaces has a bunch of equipment for loan.

Sponsorship

You can get people to get themselves sponsored for doing something e.g the cross-bay walk. This has the advantage that they do all the work! Something more unusual may get a better response though.

Consultation

People like to be asked what they think! public consultations will get people along but the timing needs to be convenient: a meedweek evening and a weekend day are essential. Fairfield Assoc. has settled on Fri 2-7 and Sat 10-4.

Next Meeting

Monday 7th July – at Ryelands Park Lancaster Meeting time 7-9pm but come for 6 and bring a picnic. Steve Wearden (Chair of the Friends group) will show us the latest developments, which include a wildflower meadow. Meet at the Old Man's rest which up the stairs at the back of the Coach House (the building next to the Children's Centre). The room has a microwave and tea facilities.

Theme for this next meeting is 'Dealing with Anti-social Behaviour'.

