

COCA Core Group : December 18th 2014

present : Nathan Walton (NW), Stuart Johnson (SJ), Gill Lewis (GL), Antony Bullock (AB), David Hunter (DH), David Thomas (DT)

apologies : Gerald Miles,(GM) Caz Miles (CM), Anne Curran (AC), Rhiannon Tate (RT), Gabrielle Sloane (GS).

Minutes of November Core Group accepted.

Matters Arising / Action Points:

1. **irrigation** equipment not bought yet, nor shelter netting. (**Action GM and CM**)
2. **Share shed** re-organised, though posters and notices still need rationalising (**Action CM**)
3. **Volunteer registration** : has been circulated by NW, no adverse comments so accepted for use. Name of doctor optional for foreign vols. Document to be translated into French and other languages as and when fluent speakers are around. Regularize COCA's response to WOOFa applications, use a spreadsheet to layout the year's enquiries and bookings. **Action : NW** to liaise this with GM for 2015
4. **Accounting assistance** .. Pembrokeshire Business Initiative (PBI) will give COCA one day's free time to look over books and advise on best practise. Thereafter we would need to pay reduced rates. **Action NW** to book this in New Year.
Note, the accounting year has been adjusted by AB to end on March 31st as from 2015.
5. **Corporation Tax problem** : AB has downloaded form CT600 and is assessing work needed. AC has had info back from CSA UK that small agric enterprises such as csa's will be exempt from next year ... and that given that ruling that it should not be difficult for accounts to show that COCA is not making a profit even though selling surplus veg to cover costs. **Action AB** to continue and liaise with NW about PBI assistance.
6. **Shared Lunch** : unfortunately the Xmas/ mid winter solstice date picked turned out to be unsuitable for too many members so postponed until New Year. **Action AC** and others

AGENDA

1. **Members Survey Results**: with a 70% response (eventually) this has raised considerable interest in helping to run COCA's various aspects. SJ circulated the list of work groups and the names of people willing to actively participate and those offering help occasionally. All groups had more than 10 people offering some degree of help.. the least supported being Membership + Volunteers (NW as lead person) and Finance+Fund Raising (with SJ as lead person). Dave Livingston has done a huge amount in the past 4 years (and still continues though not on Core) to cover these functions and is still able to advise, though on a gradually decreasing basis. Also Events and Publicity Group may need help as both AC and RT may not be able to give it much time. DH offered to take this on when he is available. Discuss again in January.

Action SJ will contact each group lead with names of willing helpers, suggest they initiate groups before next Core. Work towards each group presenting an outline of their year's aims and budget needs for AGM in April.

Feedback Comments from Survey : although this was not asked directly there were a number of members felt that shares were not good value for money. Others wanted a more consistently good quality of produce and consistent supply of types of produce(eg salad throughout summer) Previous members who have complained of poor value have then soon resigned... so we must take these criticisms seriously. Action : Growers Group, Action : **DH** to produce comparison of Tesco veg prices with COCA value.

Action : SJ write summary for web site.

2. **Growers Report** : the past month has been consolidation for winter. Field shed almost complete, tools all stored properly. All potatoes lifted, by vols and during a sunny well-attended Members Workday; we have enough pots until June. All graded and stored inside. Stored red onions still good. White onions all finished now so buying in from now on. Field crops looking excellent, especially cabbages, kales and leeks. Brussels will be finished next week. Pollys all planted up with overwinter oriental greens and salads and carrots for spring. Arrangement of buying through C and M Organics seems to be working well with good quality and good prices, delivered to the farm. Alex the French long-term Woofa left on Dec 16th after 3 months great work. No more volunteers booked until March.

Soil Testing : SJ has used a US firm that takes soil samples from UK , tests for micronutrients and advises on additives to rectify any depletion. Cost for each sample \$25 plus \$10 per year for registration. No UK company offering similar service apparently. SJ offers to donate the nutrients he has already . Suggest polly and field soil is tested.

Action : SJ to give GM and GL the link to site. GL to check its compliance with Soil Association Organic status, discuss with GM and CM

Action : DH offers to donate his charcoal waste for "biochar" to improve soil condition.

3. **Financial Report** : there are now 2 accounts set up: No 1 account for general funds with over £5k, and No 2 for the Cartref COCA funds with just less than £5K(see below). No 1 account at its peak for the year as from next month there will be expenses of seeds and other agric consumables. Also veg buying in will increase from now through to May or June. The £1K contingency fund is also held in No 1 Acc.
Easy Fund Raising ... as suggested by Adam Buick ... has been investigated by SJ and shows promise to be a very easy route to new funds. **Action : SJ** to put a note on website with step-by-step instructions if they want to participate.
4. **Cartref COCA** : Big Lottery Fund grant for approx £4900 **received** and saved in separate account. Will be made public after Dec 25th
Programme outline : January get working team together for design

February complete design and start material search and costing.
March : site clearance and marking out.

thereafter? bulk of work in-house rather than relying on
UNA volunteers, using the many experienced people around in COCA DT will check
buildings regs needs with a structural engineer.

Are we allowed to seek match funding? DT will check. Probably OK to get funding for
specific items such as solar panels. Volunteer time can be counted as match funding too.

Action: DT to send out press release in early January; check match funding rules; check
building regs needs; organise first meetings of CCWorking Group

AOB.

1. Fund raising events in first part of year , specifically for the UNA camp costs. 1st
weekend in April proposed ... a barn party like before. Check with Gerald whether that
is possible. **Action** : Events Group.
2. European Volunteer Service : takes on people for between 2 and 12 months to work on
community projects such as ours. EU pays all their food and keep. Michi from UNA
says COCA could get accreditation through British Council. Registration in early
January, then deadline of Feb 1st for grant funding for upkeep. UNA could do that
application for COCA. Accommodation would be really important for such people, not
sharing with other vols. Best case would be for a vol from May for 12 months... but that
is a very tight deadline. **Next** entry date would be September for 12 months.

Action: DT to go ahead with application asap.

3. Travel costs for people collecting/delivering shares for 4 shares or more agreed at 30p
per mile to a max of £10 per return trip. Agreed also that Lesley coming to work a day
at farm (salad sowing for example) can claim 30p per mile from her home.
4. Facebook: if someone uses the COCA Facebook page to communicate ... who
responds? No-one in meeting knew the answer. **Action:** Communications and
Publicity Gropup. Ask Rhiannon or Anne.

Date of next meeting : January 20th 7pm for 7.15pm start. at Caerhys

Action Points summary:

Stuart : 1. contact each group lead with names of willing helpers, suggest they
initiate groups before next Core. Work towards each group presenting an outline of
their year's aims and budget needs for AGM in April.

2. write survey summary for web site.

3. put a note on website with step-by-step instructions if members want to participate
in Easy Funding scheme.

4. to give GM and GL the link to soil testing site.

Nathan : 1. to liaise with GM for 2015 re volunteer bookings schedule

2. to book accounting assistance with PBI in New Year

Gerald and Caz: 1. reorganize Share Shed noticeboards

2. price up irrigation equipment and order shelter netting as agreed.

3. discuss soil testing and additives.

Anthony : to continue with corporation tax forms if possible and liaise with NW about PBI assistance

Dave Hunter : continue with Tesco price comparisons

Dave Thomas : **1.** send out press release re Cartref COCA funding in early January; check match funding rules; check building regs needs; organise first meetings of CCWorking Group
2. to go ahead with application to European Volunteer Programme asap.

Events Group : start planning Spring fund raising party.

Rhianon/ Communications Group : **resolve who responds to Facebook messages.**

Gill: check soil testing/ additives compliance with Soil Association Organic status, discuss with GM and CM