**Minutes of LDGS Forum meeting 26 March 2025 at the Gregson Centre**

**Present:** Abi Mills, Alex Blomfield, Jenny Redden, Zoe Munby, Steve Bullen, Clio Graham, Erica Jones, Stephanie Peay, Gill Davies, Paul Wiggins, Martin Wain, Kathy Barton, Hilary Smith, Roger Franklin, Abbie Hampshire, Stef Gray, Helen Brister, Brian Jones, Tim Newton.

**Apologies:** Hamish Mills, Jean O’Neill, Scott

**Groups represented:** The Bay: A blueprint for recovery (The Bay), LDCVS, Bay Cottage, Greaves Park, LCC (Biodiversity), Miss Whalley’s Field, Butterfly Conservation, Claver Hill, Dorrington Woods, Williamson Park, The Storey Gardens, Carnforth Coke Ovens, Forest of Bowland National Landscape, LCC, De Vitre Gardens.

**1 Welcome and apologies**

Abi thanked Paul for a very interesting and enjoyable walk round Miss Whalley’s Field and for hosting the LDGS meeting.

**2 Biodiversity Officer for the City Council**

Stephanie Peay talked about her work as the new Biodiversity Officer for the City Council. Currently the local plan is being reviewed and the council is keen to hear about any local green spaces that may have been omitted from the earlier plan. Details of the review are on the LCC website: https://local-plan-review-lancaster.hub.arcgis.com

**3 Social Prescribing**

Jenny Redden from CVS and Alex Blomfield from The Bay Partnership talked about their work in social prescribing and how members of LDGS might be involved. They receive referrals from medical and social agencies, and from individuals and try to identify suitable places and/or support after meeting them. These individuals may feel anxious, lonely, isolated; mainly in the 55-65 age range; with a small majority beingfemale. The Bay can support through a max 12 week funded programme. Others may go direct to volunteer groups. It was stressed that groups would not be in a responsible position in relation to any individual in the context of social prescribing.

Many people find working outside beneficial so links with LDGS groups would be helpful. There was some discussion about needs and expectations and we were asked to contact Jenny if we could help, then a visit and more discussion can be arranged.

More details here: <https://lancastercvs.org.uk/a-guide-to-social-prescribing/> or in the attachment alongside these minutes.

4 In view of time pressures it was agreed to defer reports from LDGS groups. These may be reported in the newsletter.

**5 Equipment hire and volunteer sharing**

Tim outlined the resources available to borrow from LDGS. In addition, he has spare pairs of gloves that groups can get from him if needed. He suggested that the best way to share resources and volunteer time was an informal approach: people can use the newsletter, website, Facebook to ask for support or to offer help and resources (e.g. specific tools, requirements for help on big or demanding projects). There was some discussion of how to develop or support those groups that are not fully functioning (especially some Morecambe groups).

**6 LDGS website**

Zoe asked if all the active groups and their locations are represented. If not, send a photo and contact Zoe. Stephanie spoke about connectivity of green spaces. Hilary asked if she would provide a short piece for the newsletter.

**7 Venue and date for next meeting**

Abi asked for volunteers to host the next meeting in July. It was suggested that we might invite someone from the Lune Valley Beekeepers to talk about bees and how best to support them, or someone from Butterfly Conservation to talk about how to improve green spaces for butterflies and moths. More details to follow.

**8 AOB**

Tim: Animal & Plant Authority announced a visit to De Vitre to survey the orchard. They say there are 26 different diseases which are a possible threat to ecology. They did not respond to a request to meet them when they visit.

Martin Wain (Butterfly Conservation) reported that City Council may designate Lancaster a Butterfly City - looking at how to improve green spaces for butterflies & moths. More details in the next newsletter.