

Jubilee Meadow and Orchard

Proposal

To investigate and report back on the option of creating a small charity for the day to day management of the Jubilee Meadow and Orchard.

Problem Statement

A Parish Council committee is responsible for the day to day management of the BJMO. As such standard local government rules apply – for example all meetings should be open to the public and publicised in advance, Strict Local Government Financial Governance rules must be applied and there are rules around fund raising events. These rules do not work well with the practicalities of looking after the meadow and orchard and are often seen as a hinderance.

Potential Solution

Create a small charity to manage the day to day running of the Meadow and Orchard. The Parish Council would continue to own the land, existing assets and be responsible for maintenance.

Benefits

- BJMO would only require one meeting a year to be open to the general public (although they can choose to hold more).
- Donations can be treated as donations
- As a charity the BJMO has greater freedom to apply for grants
- BJMO can determine own finance rules around authorisation of expenditure. Would have direct control over the bank account.
- BJMO can focus on the day to day running of the meadow and orchard.

Issues / Disadvantages

- Finding 5 trustees
- Completing and adhering to the Charities Commission rules on running a charity (although, for a small charity these are relatively lightweight)
- No longer able to recover VAT on major purchases (although not an issue if CIL funded).
- Volunteer Insurance

Approach

- Parish Council to agree to the proposal to investigate a small charity as a possible solution (this paper).
- Discuss with the BJMO Committee (and any other interested parties).
- Draft process and paperwork to support such a move based on best practice.
- Report back to the Parish Council

Detail / Scope

The following initial framework to act as the basis for the investigation:

- **Minimise Change**
Creation of the charity should have little or no impact on the work being carried out (i.e. this is to reduce admin and red tape, not the actual activities).
- **Charity**
Government guidance on setting up a charity to be followed – which should be straightforward as income will be less than £5,000.
- **Trustees**
Charity to have 5 trustees one of which must be a Parish Councillor (probably the existing BJMO committee?)
- **Bank Account**
The bank account and funds to be transferred to the new Charity (change signatures, check process with SALC and so on)
- **Assets**
Existing assets to be retained by the Parish Council (usage by BJMO to continue). Any new assets purchased by the BJMO would be owned by the charity.
- **Maintenance**
Continues to be the responsibility of the Parish Council
- **Council Best Practice**
Ensure that we align with SALC guidance and best practice for creation of the charity.
- **Wildlife Friendly Village Website**
Discuss with Stewart if he'd like this to be included as part of the Charity