

Tudorville Allotments Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 26th August, 7.30 pm

At Tudorville Community Centre

MINUTES

1. Apologies: Bryan Bunting, Rev Glyn Jenkins, Phil Wheeldon, Colin Cannon, Tom Courtney, Peter Hewitt, Lyn Howells, Karl Ebert, Sharn Fitzroy- John

Attending: (Members): John Taylor, Avril Fuller, Phil Jenkinson, Martin Barr, Paul Bailey, Jenny Clarke, Julie Tyler, John Walters, Mike Ebert, Bernard Staite, Fred Ellis, Mike Hepden. Pauline Hemmingway (representing Maurice Thompson).

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting: The minutes had been displayed on the notice board since last year.

3. Approval of the Minutes: It was proposed by John Walters and seconded by Avril Fuller and unanimously accepted by all members attending that the minutes be adopted as a true record.

4. Matters Arising: There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5. Chairman Report:

I am glad to report that the Tudorville Allotment Association has had a productive year and is in a good situation with no vacant plots and a waiting list. This is in no small measure to the efforts of the committee especially John and Phil, and as you will hear from them the projects that were undertaken this past year have been very successful and again thanks go to all the members who assisted there especially with the installation of the anti Badger fencing.

Finally I would just like to remind members that if there is any issue they want given consideration too by all means discuss it with any of the committee but for transparency if it requires further action it should be submitted in writing to the secretary for consideration by the committee.

6. Secretary's Report 2015

The committee have met three times this year on the 9th February, 1st June and the 17th August.

This year has been a very busy year for the Committee and can best be described as a year of action.

We have installed badger fencing along the east and park homes boundaries, completed the new allotments including additional top soil and paling fencing. These projects could not have been carried out without the grant funding kindly provided by the Ross Town Council. I would also like to thank all the members who turned out to help with the Badger fencing which enabled the works to be completed 2 days quicker than our estimate of 4 days with a consequential cost saving. I would also like to express my special thanks to one of our members who without being asked always lends a hand whatever the weather – Fred Ellis. It goes without saying the other stalwart members are our Chairman Martin Barr and Treasurer and Liaison Officer Phil Jenkinson.

To complete the new allotments we have also purchased and erected a communal shed and an additional water trough. The installation of the additional water trough was delayed by a combination of events. The resurfacing of Walford Avenue resulted in the stop cocks being tarmaced over and when that was rectified the stop cock was found to be broken. It felt like that old Flanders and Swan song – It was on a Monday morning that the gas man came to call. Matters I am please to say are now back to normal. We have some additional water works to do in the autumn. Our water supplies are metered with separate meters feeding the existing and new plots. As such each meter has a standing charge. If we connect the new plots to the existing supply we can save ourselves around £65 per year.

To facilitate the badger fencing it was necessary to relocate Neil Barker (Plot 28) and a decision was then made once the works were finished to grass over plot 28 as a communal area. The grass is now growing well and will be available for members to use next year. Whilst mentioning Neil Barker it is with great sadness to report that Neil Barker died suddenly during the year and our sympathies go to his wife and family.

We thought that with our new badger fencing that badger problems were a thing of the past. However about 4 weeks ago I arrived at the allotments to deliver some compost to find a badger trying to dig his way out in the corner of the communal area plot 28. I chased the badger off the site with the help of Tony Hearne and the badger made his escape under the fence into an alleyway of the social housing estate. On inspection it was found that the paving of the alleyway was about 6 inches short of the fence allowing the badger to dig himself under the fence. This has now been filled with concrete and hopefully we should not be seeing the badgers again. My thanks to Martin Barr, Phil Jenkinson and of course Fred Ellis who seeing the work going on immediately pitched in to help.

You will be aware that there has been a merger between Ross Rural Parish and Ross Town Council and a new Ross Town Council formed. It therefore follows that we should amend our constitution to reflect the new Ross Town Council. You will see later in the agenda that a motion has been put forward to permit all residents within the new Council to be eligible to be

members of the TAA which I hope you will all support. The Ross Town Council has been a good friend to the TAA and long may it continue.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to all members of the Committee for all their hard work over the year which has enabled all these major projects to be completed for the benefit of all members of our Association.

7. Treasurer's Report:

Chairman, Secretary, Committee Members, Ladies and Gentlemen, Welcome to this year's Annual General Meeting, I hope everyone has a copy of this year's balance sheet. I shall read through it explaining various points. If any member wishes to raise any questions I shall be happy to answer them at the end of my report.

Reading down the income list we had £1485.46 brought forward from last year's balance sheet. Rents, plus all new members paying a one off payment of £25.00 for machinery upkeep brought the total figure of £1554.94. King Seeds made a small profit of £41.19. Our thanks go to John Walters who kindly took over from Adrian Ruck as the seeds Rep. Obviously the more members buying King Seeds automatically increases our profit.

The Council gave us £700.00 to help towards the badger fence work which was gratefully received. Whilst on the subject of the Badger fence I would like to thank all those members old and new who helped installing the fence, a great job well done. Hopefully this year we will be enjoying strawberries and sweet corn, not keeping the wild life fully feed. However only a couple of weeks ago, our Secretary and a couple of members found a badger inside the allotments trying to get back out, if you look around the perimeter you will see where it's been scrapping the ground to get under the new fence, which it failed, it finally escaped under the fence which was installed around the new council homes, so next day bright and early, the Chairman, Secretary, Fred Ellis and myself spent the next couple of hours concreting using wire to reinforce under the fence on both sides. Let's hope that's the end of it.

And finally the Award of a cheque from Ross In Bloom Committee of £28.51.

However the total cost we spent on plants and seeds for Ross In Bloom outweighed the £28.51 we received and I think we should consider not entering this competition next year. I know a lot of other parties are dropping out. Anyway the total income came to £4036.26.

Expenditure.

Fuel we spent a total of £132.07. Still under my budget of £200.00 which is acceptable.

One of our biggest outlays this season was of course the badger fence, helped with the Council Grant we still had to spend over £500.00. But I'm sure you will agree with me it was a job well worth doing.

Our other expense was completing the new plots. A shed to hold equipment, an additional water tank, pipework and fittings, security locks etc. costing approximately £568.00. Even though our total income from all nine plots in rents will only be around £100.00 per year. However we had to show the Council that we were pleased to accept the piece of land and convert it into allotments.

To date I have still not received a bill from the Council for our water usage for the main plots, so I am holding back £250.00 to cover this for when I receive the bill. As you will see we had a bill of £26.80 for the new plots. This was mainly for the cost of the water meter at a charge of 19 pence per day. The water used was just over £6.00. We therefore intend to do away with this meter and link the new plots into the meter covering the old plots, so only being charged for one meter, instead of two. This will make a saving of approximately £65.00 per annum.

This leaves a balance in the bank of approximately £1100.00. .

We have scrapped the oldest of the Honda mowers as the castings has totally broken, the other Honda mower has been put into the new equipment shed on the new plots, they should hopefully be cutting pathways by next year. So we the Committee decided to purchase two new self propelled lawn mowers, making a total of four running units.

Once this year's rents are banked we will be purchasing two new petrol strimmers, as the manual shears which we bought have been damaged, beyond repair.

I only hope all members in future will treat all the equipment with full care and attention.

Whilst on this subject, members are still returning mowers to the shed uncleared, and some cases with the box still full of grass cuttings.

The manure will again this year be split into two deliveries, one on the car park for the lower plots, and the other on our newly grassed area top left hand side for members who have plots on the upper half. Hopefully delivery will be late October, early November, again five barrow loads per member.

That Mr Chairman completes my report, unless there are any questions for the floor.

Questions Arising: Bernard Staite asked why the annual membership to the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners had gone up by around 25% compared to last year?

Phil Jenkinson explained that there had been the usual inflationary increase but that as the annual fee was based on the number of members of the Association which had increased with the new plots, this was the main reason for the increase. The Committee would consider TAA's future membership of N.S.A.L.G at the next committee meeting.

Bernard Staite asked why the opening balance did not coincide with the figure shown on last year's balance sheet?

Phil Jenkinson explained that he had made an error in last year's accounts regarding the profit from the sale of Kings Seeds which he had shown as a debit and not a credit. This was fully discussed at last year's AGM and subsequently amended.

Bernard Staite also questioned how a complete balance sheet could be produced before the year end?

Phil Jenkinson stated that the accounting year was from the 1st October to the 30th September and that any financial commitments could be included as reserves within the accounts. An example being the water charges. The Water Company does not send invoices that coincide with our financial year. Furthermore the Constitution requires that the AGM is held on the last Wednesday in September or at such other time as the Committee or ordinary meeting shall decide on giving members at least 7 days notice.

8. Approval of Annual Accounts: There being no further questions Paul Bailey proposed that the Annual Accounts be approved. This was seconded by Mike Hepden it was unanimously accepted by the members present on a show of hands.

9. Election of Committee members / officers – Secretary and Treasurer and Liaison Officer

The Chairman asked if there were nominations for the above posts? No members wished to be considered for either post.

As John Taylor and Phil Jenkinson were willing to stand again it was unanimously agreed that John Taylor Secretary and Phil Jenkinson Treasurer and Liaison Officer be elected for a further term of 2 years.

The rest of the Committee consisted of: Martin Barr Chairman, John Walters Seed Rep, Avril Fuller and Lynn Howells H&S reps and Tom Courtney.

10 . Presentation to Members – Prizes and Awards given by Ross Town Council.

1st Prize and cup – Colin Cannon (absent)

2nd Prize – John Taylor

Certificate "Best Newcomer" Debbie Edwards

Certificate "Special Achievement Award" Fred Ellis

11. A motion to allow all residents of the new Ross Town Council to be members of the Tudorville Allotments Association:

"That membership of the Tudorville Allotments Association should be open to all residents of the newly formed Ross Town Council and the Association's constitution amended accordingly."

The Secretary reiterated the point as stated under his report above.

Mike Ebert asked if there was any land available in the former Ross Rural area that could be used for allotments?

Julie Tyler as a former member of the Ross Rural Parish Council stated that this had been fully looked into. Land near the fire station had been considered. It was owned by Herefordshire Council and had now been developed. A further piece of land adjacent to Model Farm had also been considered but again this was refused by Herefordshire County Council as this was being retained as an environmental strip.

There being no other points raised Julie Tyler proposed that the motion be accepted which was seconded by Avril Fuller. The members present unanimously accepted the motion.

12. Any Other Business

Mike Ebert proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee for all their hard work over the year.

Mowers: Phil Jenkinson stated that mowers had again been damaged over the year requiring blades to be straightened using heat as well as being sharpened which he had carried out. As a consequence he recommended that 2 new self propelled mowers be purchased for the main site. The best old mower had been transferred for use on the new plots.

Julie Tyler asked whether self propelled mowers were more likely to be damaged than push mowers?

Phil Jenkinson thought it would make no difference. If members misused equipment by driving them over stones, using them on the plots then damage would be done. Paul Bailey also commented that he had found mowers returned uncleaned. Julie Tyler asked whether we should purchase one self propelled and one push mower? Martin Barr said that purchasing 2 similar mowers would make purchase of spares and maintenance easier.

Whilst discussing mowers it was mentioned that the compost bins on the concrete base had been filled to overflowing with grass cuttings. Phil Jenkinson proposed that the concrete base be removed and new compost bays constructed. The committee needed a composting champion to give advice on the best way to compost grass cuttings. Julie Tyler stated that

mixing straw in the ratio 50:50 with the grass the cutting would assist the composting process. Jenny Clarke also mentioned you could buy chemical accelerators for the purpose. Paul Bailey thought that members should provide their own compost bins for use on their plots as well as grass cuttings. John Taylor said he used a flymo type of mower which obviously did not pick up the grass. Bernard Staite said there is a good option at the council tip. A member commented that you couldn't expect everyone to take waste to the tip. Bernard in response said I didn't expect everyone to do so but it's an option. John Walters was concerned that if there were communal compost bins that were going to be used for general garden waste then any disease such as club root would be spread more easily. Mike Ebert asked that the compost bins be retained as his plot was bounded on 2 sides with communal grass areas which were beyond his composting capacity.

The Chairman asked for a firm proposal.

John Walters proposed that 2 new self propelled mowers be purchased and the existing compost bins be moved on to soil allowing the concrete base to be used for an unspecified purpose in future.

This was seconded by Mike Ebert and unanimously carried.

Date of AGM and payment of Rents:

There was general concern at the low turn out to the AGM. Some members considered that the date of the AGM should be set a year in advance. Others thought leaving the AGM until October would result in a better turn out as it would avoid the busy holiday period. The Secretary stated that the Constitution was specific about the date of the AGM – the last Wednesday in September or as such other time as may be agreed by the Committee or an ordinary meeting. The reason for bringing the meeting forward was to allow invoices to be given to members that must be paid by 1st October or within 28 days of the AGM. There was a general consensus that the date of the AGM could not be set 12 months in advance.

To ensure rents are paid on time Julie Tyler made the following proposal:

Rents are due on the 1st October each year. Any rents not paid by the 1st November would be subject to a £25 penalty. This was seconded by Mike Hepden and unanimously carried.

Moles:

Mike Hepden mentioned for information that he was suffering with moles on his plot.

Security:

Bernard Staite was concerned that when he had visited the allotments recently he had found the entrance gate open and no one was on the allotments.

Through the minutes all members are reminded that they should ensure that they close the gate after they leave the allotments.

Wild Flowers along the Allotment Boundary

Jenny Clarke offered to sow wild flower seeds along the boundaries where the badger fencing had been installed. Now that the stinging nettles had been strimmed off was the ideal time for sowing. Jenny said she would also sow again in the spring. The members present thought this would improve the attractiveness of the allotments.

There being no other business the meeting the Chairman thanked the members present for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting at 8:40 pm.