

Minutes from the Wrightson's Allotment Trust AGM 6th March 2014

Chaired by Derek Beer, meeting started at 7.05pm
Honorary treasurer and trustee David Wareham

Attendees

Hilary de Bie & Gary, Sue Adams-Lingwood, David Ridout, Valerie Baker, Larry Whitty, Elizabeth & Tom Staveley, Derek Beer, Susan Lacey, David Luck, Richard North

Apologies

Donald Houghton, Margaret Lewis, David Wareham, Mary

Derek opened the meeting with the apologies and then handed over to Tom Staveley to carry on through the agenda.

A hello to Larry Whitty who is becoming a trustee and goodbye to David Wareham who is stepping down from being an allotment holder and trustee. Many thanks to David for all his hard work.
Welcome to Hilary de Bie and her partner Gary.

A full discussion was held on the nature of current allotment holders having first opportunity to increase their share to a full allotment when space became available. Therefore, Hilary took the opportunity to accept her half allotment and request to make it up to a full after hearing that Frank Case would not be taking the other half of David Wareham's full allotment. There was no objection. There are now three names on the waiting list

Current balance is £2,096.40. David Wareham is owed £168.40 expenses, £27.10 is en route to Bristol Wessex for water. Richard North needs reimbursing £8 for fuel expenses for the lawn mower in 2013. Richard is happy to continue mowing the paths. He is waiting for a second hand mower to be available from Shaftesbury Garden Maintenance and expects it to be approx. £40-50.

The impending costs for boundary tree maintenance have been eased by two actions. Shaftesbury Charitable trust gave £300 in January 2014 to help with tree maintenance (kindly arranged by Derek). An arboriculturalist, Mark Hinsley, was enlisted to assess the health of the trees. He has recommended some dead-wooding of the trees on the north boundary but the Sycamore that overhangs St Johns Hill is declared healthy and in no need to be felled. This report gives us indemnity for the allotment insurance. A new report needs to be commissioned in two years time. This report cost £233.16, leaving us with £66.84 towards dead-

wooding. The boundary trees need to be visually checked every 3 months to check for any change and this might be done by John Parker (Boyne Mead) voluntarily. Derek will ask for John to contact Tom Staveley and they will work out a reporting system that will satisfy the insurance requirements.

2014's rent will remain at £8/half plot including NSALG membership. NSALG membership login details must be emailed to allotment holders to explore the online site. Benefits from NSALG membership are allotment insurance, bulk seed order discounts, legal and other allotment related advice, a quarterly magazine (in the shed with the login details) and other discounts. Margaret Lewis kindly ordered Marshalls catalogue which gives 50% discounts for group seed orders.

In order to cover the costs for the increased insurance premiums and the costs to prove health and safety objectives are being reached eg. Arboriculturalist reports every 2 years and tree surgeon's bills, the half plot rent should increase to £30. But this has been agreed by the Trustees to be gradually reached and 2015 the rate will increase to no more than £25/half plot plus NSALG fees of £2.25 per person working on the plots.

Sue Adams-Lingwood and Richard North both said they would not pay these prices.

A big debate was held over costs and funding sources. It was finally agreed that allotment holders should be informed that on present assessments of income and costs and contingencies the rate would need to rise to £25 per half allotment (plus NALSG membership). However efforts would be made to seek alternative funding that would reduce the need for such a drastic increase in charges. To that end, Sue Adams-Lingwood and Derek Beer would try to find funding such as a community grant from the town council to pay the insurance fees and the aboriculturalist's report. Sue will investigate lottery funding.

Town council run allotments rents were advised year to increase in 2014 to £35/ full allotment and £17.50/ half allotment. Cllr Mick Hicks said that he expected further increases to avoid having the allotments unintentionally subsidized by the Open Spaces budget.

The 6 water butts are currently uncovered and present a health and safety risk. Gary kindly offered to try to fix ply board lids to each and therefor save any expense in replacing these.

A working party for the first May bank holiday has been arranged for Saturday 3rd to Monday 5th May to try to put a pedestrian access gate in

beside the main gate. At the same time leveling the first bed on plot 1A to allow parking on the grass. No hard standing would be used and Derek will ask Ray Humphries about grass friendly mats to help prevent cars getting stuck in soft grassy soil. The shed will be painted; Sue and Larry both have suitable wood protecting paints we can use.

Gary and Hilary have erected a plastic shed on their plot which is just standing on wooden planks. No one objected and it is not a permanent structure or building.

Sue and Richard both had Allotment Agreements which none of the recent allotment holders had seen before. Susan Lacey took copies and will look into everyone signing these agreements.

Derek announced that Environmental Health had received a complaint about bonfires. A copy of the NSALG Guide to Bonfires will be look out and put into the shed. In the meantime please be sensitive to others when timing the lighting of bonfires.

Britain in Bloom judges will visit the allotments somewhere between 2nd and 14th July so please bear this in mind.

A discussion was made over whether trustees could also be allotment holders. Susan Lacey advised that so long as the trustee was paying the market rate for the plots and was not benefitting from their position as trustee by any discounted rates then there would be no conflict. It was agreed that this needed to be confirmed in writing from the Charity Commission. Current trustees, Tom Staveley, Derek Beer and Susan Lacey were voted to remain. Sue Adams-Lingwood and Larry Whitty were voted in as new trustees.

A further meeting to discuss winter jobs and any other business was arranged for Thursday 16th October at 7pm at Farnfields offices. Susan Lacey requested an up to date list of all allotment holders. Rents were paid (with only Susan Cuff's payment outstanding), which means a sum of £98.00 will be credited to the bank account (David Luck has already wired £8), and the meeting ended at 8.30pm