

**ASHFORD ALLOTMENT AGM followed by COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY 24 JANUARY 2018 COMMITTEE ROOM 2 CIVIC CENTRE**

Present:- Penny Winston-Chairman and Bybrook Cemetery
Tony Fagg- Cryol Road Geoff Button -Bulk Buying Manager
Brenda Raggett- Westrees, Christine Green-Henwood,
Jill Fuggle- Repton Carol Ridings- Secretary
Jonathan Goodwin -Website Manager
Emma Dew – Press and Publicity Manager
Ms Alison Tickle- Environmental Contracts

Also present:- Alan Burbridge, Bert Pentecost, Melanie Pentecost, Pam Davies, Lesley Bonarius, David Botting, Jenny Botting, Colin Barling, Rajendra Mahat.

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

'Firstly welcome to you all and thank you for coming to our AGM and committee meeting This gives us a chance to introduce ourselves to you and answer any questions you may have. We are fortunate to have new site reps about to be formally nominated to join the committee.

Mr Colin Barling William Road

Mr Mahat Beaver Field and

Lesley Bonarius who will take over from Roy .

All our committee members except Emma and Jonathan need to be re elected and are willing to stand so we will carry out the necessary formalities in the committee meeting to follow this AGM. We have had a wet start to the year and hope conditions improve so that we can all begin important and necessary work on our plots.

We are still conscious of limiting our water usage and ask all of you to respect the signs regarding water .

We are still trying to improve the quality of notice boards.

Since our last meeting the Society continues with the help and time freely given of all our committee members and we thank past reps for their work over the recent years especially Mark Cooper, Roy Taylor and Mark Chandler.'

Members of the public present were asked if they had any questions of the committee or ABC.

Q. Mr Barling asked about on site security

A. The Council is aware that sheds have been broken into and all these incidents need to be reported to the police. The council are looking at providing new fencing at Gas House Fields and maybe using the old fence from thereat William Road. There also have been 2 brake -in on the new fence at Westrees , there has been a quote for repairs but this is not mended yet.

Q. Mr Mahat- There is only 1 water tank at Beaver Fields, this is not enough especially for old people having to walk back and forwards. Also the water pressure is low. There is a problem with rubbish and broken fences. There was also a question about obtaining horse manure, bonfires and provision of toilets.

A. The Council is trying to cut down water usage in order to save money and hose pipes are no longer allowed on sites unless they are to fill up water butts. Alison and Geraldine are looking at each site in depth, looking at fences, rubbish and non cultivation of plots. They are currently inspecting Gas House Fields.

The provision of toilets has been discussed in the past at meetings and is not possible at present to

provide them but it could be looked at again.

Alison explained that there was only a small Council budget for allotments and they want to keep costs down so there is only so much that the council can provide for sites.

Jonathan said that horse owners will provide manure if a site is accessible as they want to get rid of it. He suggested searching Gumtree or Facebook pages.

Mrs Pentecost said that people needed more water butts.

Q- Mrs Pentecost was concerned over the state of the carpark at Henwood, and the rubbish dumped there. This matter was brought up at a previous meeting and nothing has been done since last year.

A. Alison said that the land belonged to a developer and she would talk to the CAT team about it.

Q Mrs Bonarius -The hedge at Orion Way has only been trimmed on the outside as the contractors said that they did not have a key to get into the site. There is a similar problem at William Road.

A- This will be looked at.

No further questions, so business moved onto the Committee Meeting

1. Apologies

Mr B Stamp- Treasurer ,Geraldine Gorringe

2. All Officers of the Committee needed to be re-elected at the meeting except Emma Dew and Jonathan Goodwin. Everyone was prepared to stand again and so this motion was proposed by Brenda Raggett and Seconded by Emma Dew.

This was carried. See Appendix 1

3. Minutes of the last Meeting

Agreed

4. Bulk Buying Manager's Report

Since the last meeting the shed has not been open very much. The potatoes should have arrived that day and the seeds are now in.

£67 has been received from Kings Seeds in commission.

More help is required in the seed shed. The times of opening have been amended, in the winter it is 10 – 12 and a motion to delete the opening in December, as there were no customers, was proposed by Tony and Seconded by Christine and was carried.

There were thanks to everyone who had helped in the seed shed.

The insurance quote has risen to £376 by the NALSG. Geoff has looked at another insurer – The Allotment and Garden Council UK, based in Nottingham, they charge £1 per member together with 3 options of insurance depending on value of the assets , £67, £179 or £279

It is recommended that there is a change in insurers but it was suggested that the Brian take a look at the policy prior to changing. This company also has a seed scheme with Dobies with a 50% discount on seeds and 15% discount on plants, this would be instead of Kings Seeds.

Jonathan reported 2 problems with the seeds from Kings where packets have been missing. The customer should go back to Kings on this issue.

Penny said that she was in favour of changing the insures subject to Brian first having a look. Everyone voted in favour.

5. Treasure's report

Account 1 bank balance	£2513.62
Account 2 bank balance	£2699.92

6. Show Secretary's Report

There is still a vacancy for this post.

The Chairman said that we would be unable to use Kennington School this year so a new premise has to be found and a new date which maybe later in the year.

Ms Green suggested Repton Connect adjacent to Waitrose.

The Environment Centre had been looked at but was too expensive.

It will be discussed further at the next meeting.

7. Website Manager's Report

The number of users/visitors of the site is 2,500 which is an increase of 31%. There have been 8000 page views. Most people are visiting from their mobiles.

A 2018 price list is required to update the web.

Mr Goodwin had a number of new ideas:-

Quick start guide for new allotment holders. He would like ideas/images for when people start a new allotment.

Section for reporting issues/problems on sites. At present e mails get sent to the allotment officer and this section could log problems. Emma thought that this could cause issues as it would be open to the public.

The Council has a Report It system if there is a problem, however this issue can be brought up at the next working party meeting.

Since the last AGM there have been more mobile contacts on the list. 445, of which 375 are active contacts. There is a 42% average interaction rate which is high.

There are new data regulations coming in in May, which may impact on how personal data is stored on the list. This also should be looked at by the working party.

8 Publicity Officer's Report

There still has not been an Article in the Kentish Express on the positive benefits of allotment gardening on mental health. Emma is awaiting for the KE to come back to her. Alison said that The Council are starting a new magazine, the first issue will be out on 1st April and will need articles such as this.

Emma has been contacted by Ashford Radio who wish to do an interview. Penny will do this.

Tony said that he had done an interview with Radio Kent 16 years ago.

Facebook and Twitter have 229 users. Facebook is a locked group and is not open to everyone. Emma can authorise users, previously there were a lot of users from outside the Borough. Participation has increased year by year.

Tony wondered if it was used by other gardening bodies. Emma has not encountered this yet.

She wondered about speaking/ involving local schools but there is a problem with CRB checks. Brenda said that at Westrees there have been parties of school children planting strawberries and Christine has done talks to schools.

Emma does not feel there is much community outreach to schools. Brenda will have a word with St Theresa school.

Colin said that he had done gardening at Wyvern school.

9. Report of the Allotment Officer

After the invoices were sent out, many people said that they did not wish to continue to have an allotment.

Since 1st October there had been 37 terminations, 19 plots let and 18 vacancies.

Burton Fields 2 vacancies

Gas House Fields 4

Musgrove Farm 4

Musgrove New 1

Orion Way 1

William Road 6

Waiting list 113.

10. Site representatives report

Beaver Field- The notice board is collapsing, and he would like a planting schedule to put on the notice board.

Alison is looking at new notice boards, the quotations are £800 each for new wooden ones.

Penny suggested that a schedule for planting could be put on the web site. Also tenants could come to the seed shed and talk to other members.

Henwood- 3 new plot holders, issues with the main gate and key difficulties

William Road -Queried whether reps had email contacts with plot holders. This is not possible. Jonathan has limited e mail data.

Westrees- There is a problem with language with a few Nepalese. Alison will look at translating some of the allotment documentation. Rajendra also offered to help with translation.

Bybrook- All plots are now occupied, issues of cutting of the grass and hedges. It is looking a bit better.

Cryol- All the plots are occupied. Concern over one site, 6A which hasn't been worked for sometime. The grass is not cut in front of the gate as regularly as it should be.

Orion Way- Problems of hedge trimming and under worked plots. The worst is the first plot which has not been worked for years.

Repton- still possibly 1 vacant plot. Grass cutting problems.

No AOB

Date of the next Meeting -Wednesday 25 April 2018 Committee Room 2 Civic Centre 6.30pm

