

**ASHFORD ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY 25 APRIL 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,
Sue Haste- Musgrove Farm Colin Barling- William Road
Brian Stamp- Treasurer Stefan Heathfield- Gas House Fields
Jonathan Goodwin -Website Manager
Carol Ridings- Secretary Lesley Bonarius- Orion Way
Geraldine Gorringe- Environmental Contracts

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

'Welcome to this meeting. We have all experienced a long and at times exceptionally cold Spring that in early April made any attempts to get on to the allotment very difficult with some soil so wet it was impossible to dig. However we have now enjoyed two weeks of warmer weather with above average temperatures so at last we can get on with all those Spring jobs and prepare for a good growing season.

Potatoes should be in and seeds can be planted directly once the soil is sufficiently warm.

Beware however of those late frosts which can affect early sowings and plants in any greenhouses.

Please enjoy the warmer weather and plan to grow suitable crops to enter our summer show which is to be held later this year due to the late start. Plot judging will be similarly later possibly the second week of July with precise dates to follow and weather permitting.

2. Apologies

Emma Dew

3. Minutes of the last Meeting

It was confirmed that there has been a change in in Insurance Company to the Allotment and Gardens Council (UK), which is part of Nottingham Council, from the NALSG.

Minutes Agreed

4. Bulk Buying Manager's Report

Trading in the store has been very low. Virtually all the potato orders have gone, though there are still a few potatoes and onion sets and shallots left.

5. Treasure's report

Account 1 bank balance	£2251.
Account 2 bank balance	£2940

The trading store has £147.58 and the float £26.73.

All the bills have been paid.

6. Show Secretary's Report

There is still a vacancy for this post.

The Chairman said that the show will be at Towers school, Kennington on 11th August. The schedule will be on the web site and paper copies in the trading store.

7. Website Manager's Report

The 2017 price list is on the web, and this needs updating. All the site rep information needs updating so please send your details to Jonathan.

On Facebook that evening there had been an extensive thread from a new plot holder about rubbish being left on a plot.

Colin said that the Council was not enforcing the clearing of sites when a holder left.

This matter has been discussed at the working party. There are issues of health and safety when items such as builders rubble are dumped.

The Chairman asked about issues relating to the new privacy laws, which are coming into force on May 25. The Allotment Society may fall into a grey area. Every identifiable individual has to give permission to be on the list held by the Society. Many businesses are doing a readopting campaign. Jonathan explained that everyone 'opted in' to the allotment society prior to the new regulations. We could ask everyone to re-adopt or leave things as they are. Penny felt that things should be left as they are, as the information is not used by anyone else, though there may be a discussion on this later.

Jonathan said that there should probably be a data officer. Data can not be hoarded on someone.

8 Publicity Officer's Report

'Facebook and Twitter engagement continues to be good but not growing very rapidly.

There are 238 FB users for our group page – 20 new members since our January meeting.

I am really pleased however with the engagement, which has increased significantly since our January meeting with 184 posts, comments and reactions – a 400% increase.

Twitter users are far fewer at 59 so it is my intention is to try and use twitter more over the year as an additional means of communication and to up the number of users.

Summer Show Poster

Now drafted and will be sent to the chairwomen for approval this week.

48 people have renewed there membership out of a potential of 150. It would be good if there were around 80- 100 members. The site representatives could encourage more people to join.'

9. Report of the Allotment Officer

There had been 32 termination notices, 9 offers and 3 vacant plots.

Gas House Fields 2
William Road 1

Waiting list 100

Some of the sites have been surveyed e.g. Gas House Fields.
Aspire should be starting work on grass cutting w/ b 30 April.
There have been problems with water pipes, especially William Road.
Due to litter / rubbish issues when a plot becomes vacant and the key returned, photographs of the plot are now taken. If there is a problem the tenant will have a week to clear the plot otherwise there will be a clearance charge levied on the tenant.

10. Site representatives report

Henwood-The mowing was carried out today. On a handful of plots there has been no activity, if nothing has been done by the early May Bank Holiday, Geraldine will be informed with photos.

Westrees- There is still a problem with communication of the rules with a few Nepalese. Could the rules be translated.?

Geraldine will sort this out.

The notice boards needs renewing. There has been another break in, through the fence from the school, though nothing has been taken.

A discussion then took place on bonfires and BBQ s

Bonfires/BBQ s:- The rules states:-

6.5 Bonfires are permitted for the burning of un-treated or un-painted woody waste only. The burning of any other materials – such as plastics, tyres, carpet, MDF, laminated wood – is strictly prohibited and will lead to immediate termination and referral for prosecution.

6.6 All open fires between 1st April and 1st November must be contained within an incinerator barrel.

6.7 Barbeques are not permitted on any allotment site. Anyone witnessed using a barbeque will be issued with a warning notice.

Geraldine has since confirmed that according to the Bonfire Code of Practice there are no set rules on times you can light a bonfire, it does say that 'ideally bonfires should only be allowed to burn between sunset and 10pm'

Site BBQ's are currently not permitted but the Council will be considering a one off during the period of the clear up of the sites, this will not be until next year though as they will need managing and planning correctly with regards to health and safety and hygiene issues.

Musgrove:- A survey has been carried out and lots of non cultivation letters sent out. 1 tenant has already gone. The lock is broken. The site is open as many properties backing onto the site do not have rear fences.

Geraldine confirmed that 18 non cultivation letters had been sent out. The 2 oak trees in the site are being examined next week.

William Road -The brambles have been cleared, though the hedge still needs doing. The notice board is broken. There is a long privet hedge along the footpath that needs cutting, however it is on private property. Queried whether the entrance to Musgrove is going to be fenced. Geraldine is waiting for a quote from Aspire. She also said that she was looking to make a parking area in a small sheltered area.

There was a query on the allotment waiting list and peoples preferences for a site. There will be a

look at allotment promotion., this will be considered at the next meeting and an article placed in the new council magazine.

Cryol- 1 vacant plot. When the water was turned on there was a leak. The grass has not been cut yet. 1 plot either 15 a or b has not been cultivated yet. There has been a problem with a pathway as one tenant used weed killer and damaged the grass. There is a problem with someone who lives adjacent to the site.

Gas House Fields:- The contractors have made a second visit to clear the site of rubbish. There is a potential problem with a past tenant and a non returnable key. As yet no grass cutting has taken place, after the Bank Holiday Stefan will produce a list of non cultivated plots.

Orion Way- Problems with the notice board and no grass cutting. The hedge has been trimmed in places but the cuttings were thrown on the plots.

Geraldine confirmed that Aspire have not cut the hedge and there should be 8 cuts of the grass per year.

Bybrook- All plots are now occupied, 2 non cultivation letters have been sent out. 2 tyres have been left on the site. Problems with notice boards, hedging and grass cutting.

AOB

Working Party- Markers for each plot are being rolled out.

There is a vacancy for a show secretary, if anyone is interested please contact Penny with a brief supporting statement. They need to have good organisation skills and an interest in showing produce.

4th August – Pilgrims Hospice Fete-any produce gratefully received.

Colin wondered if an overgrown site in Kennington could be reopened as an allotment site. Geraldine will look at this matter.

Date of the next Meeting -Wednesday 26 September 2018 Committee Room 2 Civic Centre 6.30pm