

**ASHFORD ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2015 COMMITTEE ROOM 1**

Present:- Mrs P Winston-Chairman and Bybrook Cemetery
Mr T Fagg- Cryol Road Mr G Button -Bulk Buying Manager
Ms C Green-Henwood Mr M Chandler- Burton Field
Ms S Haste- Musgrove Mr S Heathfield- Gashouse Fields
Mr R Taylor- Orion Way Mr M Cooper- William Road
Ms V Lawson-Christchurch Mr C Leek-Beaver
Mr B Shrubsole- Repton Mr B Stamp- Treasurer
Mr A Fraser- Membership Secretary Carol Ridings- Secretary
Julie Rogers -Head of Environmental and Customer Service, ABC
Eileen Law-Allotment Officer ABC
Derek Mitchell, Mr & Mrs Pentcoste, Jill Fuggle

1. Apologies

Mrs B Raggett- Westrees

2. Chairman's Opening Remarks

'Welcome to this September meeting at a key time in the evolution of our Allotment Society.

We have been able to benefit from the new charging policy, with a period of grace from April to October, which will boost income in a fair and equitable way, and this has been launched after acceptance by the Cabinet Members, with invoices going out to all plot holders last week, ready for our annual payment in advance. A key deposit scheme for all new tenants has been brought in, and with a 25% reduction in the water bill to aim for over the next year to prevent no additional charges specifically for water.

These changes are welcomed and will allow a secure future for our allotments in the Ashford Borough.

Our next event is the pumpkin show at the trading store 10am on Saturday October 24th. Please help by encouraging as many as possible to enter (free) for the chance to win some great prizes.

The Committee Members and allotment tenants will together help to make our Society more relevant, efficient and representative in 2016 and beyond.'

3. Minutes

Agreed

4. Bulk Buying Manager's Report

The balance in the bank £2962.33. The value of stock on hand is £2867.11. Sales up to 22 August £5402.30

The Santander bank accounts have been closed due to problems and transferred to Lloyds.

The Chairman gave thanks to Mr Button for his hard work.

5. Treasures report

It took 6 months to transfer the 2 accounts from Santander to Lloyds. Mr Button holds both the paying in book and cheque book for the number 2 account.. Currently Mr Stamp is in the process of obtaining internet banking solely to be able to get copies of the latest statements on-line. There will be no facility for any transactions to be done on line. In total there is £4973.40 in the accounts.

6. Show Secretary's Report

Since Mr Fagg resigned, there has been no show secretary. The show schedule has already gone out with the allotment bill. The date for the show will be confirmed in due course, possibly at the January meeting. It will be held at Kennington Primary School again.

7. Publicity Officer's Report

Ms Puckett has resigned her post

8 Membership Secretary's Report

Please see attached.

The Chairman gave thanks to Mr Fraser for his hard work. The go ahead for the new card as shown on the attachment, was proposed by Mr Chandler and seconded by Ms Haste and the vote was in favour of Mr Fraser going ahead with this.

9. Report of the Allotment Officer

127 people are on the waiting list with 23 plots vacant. Jonathan Longley has resigned w/e 2.10.15 Kevin Basford has been brought in to help Julie out. The Chairman gave thanks to Mr Longley for his hard work

10. Site representatives report

William Road- The notice board has now been moved to the correct location. There are a number of vacant plots at present

Christchurch- Not many vacant plots

Henwood- Full occupancy. Where manure has been dumped over the years there is a dip in the land. There was a query as to whether the Council had any paving slabs that could be to put down in this area. Julie said that this is not a Council service any more but she will find out.

Musgrove- A few vacancies. A new lock is required for the main gate. Eileen has some new locks and stated that WD40 or grease should not be used on them as it seizes the locks up.

Beaver- Everything is fine

Cryol- All the plots are occupied. A small plot may be given up by Christmas.

Gashouse Fields- They are waiting the next round of evictions of tenants

Orion Way- 3 plots have had nothing done to them. Mr Taylor has put a sign on the gate telling tenants not to put oil in the lock. The hedge needs a cut.

Burton- All the plots are occupied

Repton- Mr Shrubsole is retiring and he brought along with him a prospective new site rep, Jill Fuggle. The Chairman accepted his resignation and thanked him for helping new tenants coming onto the site over the years.

Bybrook- There has been some fly tipping however the tenants recycled it on site so it was not a problem. 1 plot is vacant. Some of the new tenants have been very good.

11. Report of the Working Party

Julie- The working party has been very co- operative. The cabinet report has now been approved for the changes. Most invoices for the allotment plots have gone out except to those people who have not paid before, 167 people have not paid before. These invoices will go out shortly.

The budget is now looking much better. The payment upfront will ensure that people will tend their plots. The deposit for keys has commenced.

Work has started on a new tenants pack. There has also been work on the termination of tenancy letters.

At the cabinet meeting it was agreed that Landscape Services will be brought back in house in September 2016, therefore there will be more control over grass cutting etc.

Mr Heathfield wondered if it was the same work force.

Julie confirmed that it would be but she would have more control over them.

Julie has also been looking at a signage board for the trading store

12. AOB

The Chairman explained that with the agenda papers there had been a discussion document. It is timely to look at the rules and constitution of the Society. The original document was produced in 2002, this identified the roles of the officers and the committee members,

The type of document she would like to see would be similar to that produced by Hawkinge (Copies were circulated at the meeting and are available for viewing at the

trading store during opening hours). There are also 2 slightly different versions of the constitution and this needs updating. There also needs to be a digital strategy and there are issues concerning data protection.

A working party was proposed to look at the roles and responsibilities of officers and site reps. The election of site reps also needs to be considered, when the current reps were elected and when they are due for re-election.

Julie said that she would welcome the role of the working party. Many site reps put in lots of work. She said that she was happy to help on the working party. She re-iterated the need to be careful over data/ media. The Council has to be careful over social media and there needs to be some control over where data is stored. There are lots of processes that have not been changed.

Mr Cooper said that as a society and committee it has to be clear what the roles are. The allotment rules are very old.

Mr Fraser said that the bona fide document should be sent round to everyone

The Chairman said that before the end of October all the documents should be circulated, then by November/ December a small group could work together on this matter. She has had 2 emails from people who fully support the change.

Date of the next Open Meeting 27th January 2016 Committee Room 2, 6.30