

ASHFORD ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2016 COMMITTEE ROOM 1

Present:- Mrs P Winston-Chairman and Bybrook Cemetery
Mr T Fagg- Cryol Road Mrs B Raggett- Westrees
Mr M Chandler- Burton Field Ms S Haste- Musgrove

Mr R Taylor- Orion Way Mr M Cooper- William Road
Mr B Stamp- Treasurer Mr J Goodwin – Website Manager
Carol Ridings- Secretary Ms E Dew
Eileen Law-Allotment Officer ABC

1. Apologies

Mr G Button -Bulk Buying Manager, Ms C Green-Henwood, Mr S Heathfield- Gashouse Fields Mr C Leek-Beaver, Mrs T Butler, Ms A Tickle

2. Chairman's Opening Remarks

'Prior to my remarks I need to formally report the sudden resignation of Alex Fraser from his roles as Show Secretary and Membership Secretary, back in April/May. In the meantime, until suitable volunteers can be found membership is currently being looked after by Jonathan Goodwin. However I am pleased to say that I have had a most suitable candidate apply for another vacant post, that of press/publicity officer.

I would now like to ask for a proposer that Emma Dew (Westrees newcomer and All Ashford Winner) be duly elected tonight.

Proposed Sue Haste
Seconded Brian Stamp

Unanimous vote in favour.

' Another year with a mild winter, wet spring, late summer, above average rain and a very hot August.

A reminder that there is a no hose policy on all sites in an effort to conserve water, and many of us have really tried this year not to use any other water than that at transplanting.

Water will be on all sites until 1st October.

Uncultivated plots still cause problems – see later on the agenda.

We had an excellent visit to the Willesborough Windmill and our summer show was held on a hot, sunny July day. Thanks to all for help and assistance. Plot judging took place over 3 days in late June and despite the weather many plots looked very impressive.

We raised £209.40 at the Hospice Fête, our best total yet, so again many thanks to all who supported the event.

There should be an annual newsletter going out with the invoices, giving further details about the society since last September.

3. Minutes

Agreed

4. Bulk Buying Manager's Report and 5. Treasurer's report

No 1 Account has £2900 and the seed shed has £2500 worth of goods. Mr Button is doing the potato orders at the moment. The order form has gone out with the Invoices, and there is a copy on the web page and hard copies are available at the seed shed.

6. Show Secretary's Report

The show was very successful, lots of entries. £210 was made after expenses this included the sale of teas and cakes. The school hall was free.

Ms Haste suggested that the show should be later in the year, in order for example that brassicas could be shown.

Mr Fagg explained that it was swings and roundabouts, it is dependant on the weather and what is available when the show takes place.

The Chairman said that the main problem is so many people are on holiday in August, and the school hall may not be available when the school is closed during the holidays. A few Committee Members will look at a venue and date and maybe there will be a website vote. Possibility of using Towers School. A decision will be made at the January meeting.

7. Publicity Officer's Report

A Twitter account has been set up for plot holders and the wider public. There is a need for more people to use the Facebook page for buying/selling and swapping goods. There will be improving relationship with the local media so that more people are aware of what is happening and more content for the web site. Some sections will be re-written.

There may be sections about plot holders who have had their plots for a considerable time.

Ms Dew will be promoting the pumpkin show.

Mr Fagg felt that the Annual Show needed promoting on Radio Kent next year.

8 Membership Secretary's Report

135 members of the Trading Store with the Membership fee of £4 required in January.

Mr Fagg clarified that any individual can become a member of the seed shed, they do not need to have an allotment.

Mr Godwin explained that the list of email addresses needs updating. There will be a page on the website so that people can update their web address. This information can be shared with Eileen.

9. Report of the Allotment Officer

Julie Rogers will be leaving the Council for a new post.

The Chairman expressed her thanks for her support and hard work over the years.

Since the end of April 56 plots have been let, and there have been 64 terminations, which is quite high, though only 1 key has been returned so therefore it is the older tenants leaving at the end of the 6 month 'free' period.

Beaver Fields -1 vacant plot

Bybrook- 2

Gas House Fields -5

Henwood -2

Musgrove Farm- 1

Westrees -1

William Road -6- Difficult to let these

Wye -2

Most people who want plots live in Kennington and the vacant plots are in South Ashford. 62 people are on the waiting list, mostly long term, people who can't be contacted, or have refused a plot. Eileen is going to allow them 3 offers, if they do not accept then they will be removed from the list. She gives them 2 weeks to decide once an offer has been made for a plot. If the plot is overgrown, there is discretion over rent at the beginning of the tenancy.

Eileen asked if it was possible for the site reps to do a site inspection once a month in order to assess non cultivation. Then they can make a phone call to Eileen or information and photos can be sent to the Council in a prepaid envelope. Eileen will then be able to send a letter to the tenant to terminate the contract and repossess the plot.

Ms Raggett was concerned that there maybe come back on the site reps.

Eileen said that photos would provide the evidence. She suggests doing a site visit with the each rep so that they can assess plots and identify 'bad' plots. She will also draft a proforma tick list.

The Chairman felt that a site visit was unnecessary as site reps can recognise a bad plot.

Every site rep will get a stack of pre paid envelopes and proformas.

Mr Cooper suggested putting photographs on the web site to show uncultivated plots.

Eileen will forward some photos to Ms Dew

A gentleman with 3 plots in Beaver Fields which he has had since 1983 is giving up. On one plot is a very large fig tree which will cost £800 to remove. There is therefore a need to clarify that trees should not be planted. The rules say that dwarf root stock only can be planted. This needs to be re-emphasised on the web site.

There has been a break in in William Road.

Some of the sites need new fences however there is limited budget for this.

Currently Eileen is revising the agreement which hopefully will be ready for the next meeting.

10. Report of the Working Party

There had been a discussion on site reps checking the cultivation of plots.
Water usage policy - have banned hose pipes unless it is for filling up water butts.. The non watering of crops was discussed and brassicas seem to have done very well, photographs will be put on the web site.
No new 1000 litre tanks will be allowed on plots unless they are filled with rainwater from roofs. Eileen has asked for isolation valves for the water taps in order to isolate them if there is a leak.
The next meeting is in November.

11. Site representatives report

Musgrove- A few messy plots

William Road- Looking forward to phase 2 of the fencing. Problems with non cultivation of plots.

Burton Farm – A few weeks ago a 3 piece suite was dumped on the drive to the site. Eileen sorted this out. 1 plot not cultivated. There is a possibility of aerial photos of sites using a drone.

Orion Way- Fencing has been replaced. 2/3 plots not cultivated and 1 plot given up. Some plot holders who have small plots want larger plots. The hedge needs cutting.

Cryol- There has been a dispute between a tenant and a surrounding house owner. A fence has been erected which has cured the problem. 1 tenant maybe giving up. There is a problem with maintenance of the pathways, and there has only been 2 cuts of grass this year.

Eileen explained that from 1st October, Landscape Services are coming back into house, being called 'Aspire'. They will cut approx every 2 months. Eileen will provide plans over which areas they are meant to maintain.

Westrees- There has been 1 break in since the new fence was erected. 7 plots are not being cultivated. The hedge along the drive is overgrown.

Bybrook- 2 vacant plots.

12. AOB

Date of the next Meeting including Open Meeting 25th January 2017 Committee Room 2, 6.30