**ASHFORD ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 18 September 2019 COMMITTEE ROOM 2 CIVIC CENTRE**

Present:- Penny Winston-Chairman and Bybrook Cemetery

 Tony Fagg- Cryol Road Sue Haste -Musgrove

 Jill Fuggle- Repton Manor Christine Green-Henwood

 Colin Barling- William Road Lesley Bonarius- Orion Way

 Greg White – Burton Farm Brian Stamp- Treasurer

 Lisa Harrison-**S**ocial Media and Membership Secretary

 Carol Ridings- Secretary Jonathan Goodwin- Website Manager

 Geraldine Gorringe and Sam James- ABC

**1. Chairman’s Opening Remarks**

'Welcome to this autumn's meeting and especially welcome to Greg White, who will be formally adopted onto the committee as a site rep in the main part of the meeting.

Since we last met we have had a busy summer with the plot judging (more about that later) and also a successful summer show and attendance at the Pilgrims Hospice Fête which raised £217, a record, and thank you to everyone who donated produce and jams.

There have been changes in organisation in the Council's roles with the allotments divided up between Sam and Geraldine and new notice boards have been installed on most sites.

The weather seems to have helped to promote a good growing season with good crops seen across the Borough.

Our next event is the pumpkin show on October 26th and it would be great to have as many people as possible to come and bring along pumpkins for judging in the various categories.'

Jonathan agreed to produce some posters for the pumpkin show.

 **2 Apologies**

 Brenda Raggett, Alison Tickle

**3. Minutes of the last Meeting**

Agreed

**4. Election of site rep for Burton Farm**

Election of Greg White to the above post. Proposed by Brian Stamp and Seconded by Tony Fagg.

Everyone agreed.

**5. Report of the Bulk Buying Officer**

The Chairman gave the following report. 'The store has been open between 10 – 12, 2 Saturdays per month, and had a steady trade most Saturdays. We are trialling not having individual potato orders this year and Brian will order the same amount and varieties where possible of potatoes, onions and shallots as last year and they will be available on the last three Saturdays in February on a first come first served basis and we hope this will eliminate waste and be more efficient.

We will need to put up the price of membership in January and will need to get new membership cards printed which I believe Jonathan can arrange. I propose the membership will increase from the current £4 which it has been for over 10years to either £4.50 or £5 a year still without a joining fee but perhaps with a 5 year fixed charge of £20, which would represent a good saving. Could I ask for your comments so I can propose formally the changes.'

Jonathan produced samples of different types of card that could be used for the membership card, the plastic ones were £150 for 200 and the paper ones £50 for 200. Various things can be printed on the card and once they have been registered in the trading store it should be possible to renew them on line in the following years.

The Chairman wanted to actually have the cards clipped, as they are at present, to show that the fee had been paid.

Tony felt the increase in membership was reasonable, and Brian proposed the rise to £4.50, seconded by Jonathan.

Penny will liaise with Jonathan over the design of the cards.

In the last minutes, mention was made of the ban on certain types of slug pellets. This was overturned, by the Government, however there are none left for sale in the trading store. A move towards peat free compost will be considered.

**6. Treasurer's report**

Account 1 bank balance £2911.42

Account 1 Till £121.75

Account 2 bank balance £4240.52

Account 2 Till £192.47

Grand Total £7466.43

Thanks were given to Brian for all his work.

**7. Show Secretary's Report**

'The show was held at Towers School and there were 121 entries from 11 entrants. In over 50 categories in show which was improved from last year and we would still like more people involved and entering. Our judge Janine was impressed with the standard and quality of the entries and congratulations to Mr & Mrs Rooker and Anna who won the cup for overall best in show kindly donated by Mr & Mrs Botting and best in show flowers for the cup donated by ABC.

We want to try hard and promote the show for next year and it is likely to be held on August 8th.

Thanks to Brian for organising this and to Brenda and Jo for the raffle prizes and help with teas and refreshments and Jonathan for the publicity and posters. We are lucky to have our show at Towers again next year.

To try and encourage more people to enter the show I have asked Janine to come and speak to all our members who attend the AGM about preparing for a show and what to do to get the best chances of scoring well with the entries. I hope this will be useful.'

Lesley asked whether there could be casual categories instead of the RHS rules.

The Chairman said that it would be difficult to have 2 sets of categories and Janine, the judge, is understanding that we are not up to RHS standards.

Tony stated that apart from whipping onions etc. and the length of stalks on produce we do not follow the RHS categories.

**8. Website Manager's Report**

There have been a few requests to update the page of committee members and site reps. There is no report of the summer show but Penny will send through some photographs.

There were new entrants to the show after the email reminder was sent out. Jonathan also said that he had had a number of emails asking where the trading store was and the hours of opening.

It was confirmed that when people sign up for an allotment they are provided with this information along with terms and conditions.

**9. Publicity Officer's Report**

Membership is currently 60.

Thanks were given to Lisa for updating the list. It was thought that perhaps the Twitter account could be updated. Jonathan will set up Lisa on Facebook.

**10. Report of the Allotment Officers.**

**Sam-** Thanks to all her site reps. There have been 5 non cultivation sites on her patch.

The trial of the new lock at Bybrook appears to be going ok, and the new notice boards are going up.

A site clean up at Westrees is programmed in October, they will be the guinea pigs for the other sites. Piles of waste will be put on a certain spot for Biffa, to collect,as there will be no skip.

New plot numbers will be provided. Currently Sam is getting prices and samples and these will be discussed at the working party. Discussions are being had with Aspire for tree cutting especially at Bybrook and Westrees.

Grass cutting appears to be going ok.

The change in circumstance forms from tenants are coming back and files have been cleansed.

**Geraldine**- There will be no inspections in October as invoices are going out. There is now a stronger relationship with Aspire.

There are 8 vacant plots at Gas House Fields and Aspire have strimmed these back together with one at Christchurch.

Jonathan asked what happens after the big clean up with people still leaving rubbish. Sam said that if there is rubbish when they leave a plot the ex tenants will be charged for its removal.

A break down of water usage was given by Geraldine. There are currently 176 people on the waiting list, 7 notices and 5 new offers.

Colin said that Aspire were very slow to cut the grass at William Road.

All new sign boards are up apart from at Christchurch, Beaver and Jemmett as brambles need to be cut back here.

The Chairman explained that the plot judging was carried out with Brenda this year. Alison has said that everyone now needs to give written authority to have their information shared and publicised due to GDRP legislation, if they want there plot judged. It was felt by all members that this would make it impossible to judge plots.

Jonathan would like to ask Alison about this further as he feels that personal details need not be given, it could just be plot numbers. In addition it could also be added to terms and conditions that your plot will be judged and only identified by number.

This will be discussed further at the next working group.

**11. Site representatives report**

Little Burton:- 4 plots appear not to be cultivated. Water pressure has been a problem in the past.

William Road- Colin wanted to know how many warning letters you got before you relinquished your plot. Geraldine explained that after the first letter the plot was repossessed after 3 weeks if no work was done. There was a question about how many of these letters someone could have a year.

What % of a plot can be covered by matting. Penny said that 75% had to be cultivated in the summer. Sam has been sending out emails where this is a problem. People should not cover their plots in carpet. There was a question about bonfire rules. (This was clarified in the ABC newsletter 2018/2019 by Geraldine- all open fires between 1st April and 1 November must be in an incinerator and attended at all time, there are no set rules on times to light a fire but ideally only allowed to burn from sunset to 10pm and not to create a smoke nuisance)

An update on the project at William Road was requested. There is a huge raised bed, and they are waiting RHS approval. Geraldine said that the initial training on this site will be for Aspire staff next year.

Henwood- Need work from Aspire, Christine will meet up with Sam.

Musgrove- Walnut tree problem which affects at least 6 plots. ABC are looking to crown it.

Westrees- The trees need cutting down along the road to the Trading store. There has been 1 break in. The free compost went down well, thanks to Sam.

Bybrook- Trailing of padlocks with codes instead of keys is going ok, the new padlocks however will be stronger. Plot 6a- problem of non cultivation.

Cryol Road- Holly bush problem and ivy on the water tank. The entrance and gateway is not level and maybe a trip hazard.

Orion Way- Can the notice board be moved as when the gate is open it cannot be read. It was felt that wherever it was the view maybe partially obstructed.

Repton- There has been a final cutback on the unusable plot which still floods so still unusable.

**12. AOB**

Lesley asked if the minutes of the working group could be seen at the allotment meeting. This will be put on the next agenda

**Date of the next Meeting -Wednesday 15th January 2020 Committee Room 1 Civic Centre 6.30pm. This will be the open AGM meeting followed by the Committee meeting.**