

Committee Meeting 6.00 pm Wednesday 19th July 2023 - Minutes

- Present:** Liz Bennett (LB), Chris Hodgeson (CH), Lesley Greenwood (LG), Dorothy Robson (DR), Tony Robson (TR), Mark Fuller (MF).
- Apologies:** Ken Fawcitt (KF).
- Previous minutes:** The minutes of the previous meeting, Jun 2023, were agreed as being a true record.
- Chair's report:** Nothing to report (NTR).
- Membership update:** LG advised: **Waiting list** – 40 currently on the waiting list. **New** – plots continue to be re-let as they become available.
- Secretary's report:** CH advised: **Freemen** – attended an informal meeting with the Freemen on July 6th, they are requesting sign up to lease agreements. Freemen revealed that the Lease is between the Allotment Association and the City Council, acting for the Freemen. Discussed further under matters arising. **Break ins** – Moorside also targeted, emails sent to all plot holders advising action to take if affected.
- Website:** LB advised: Nothing to report, however they have initiated a tidy up of the website, removing some out of date material. Committee agreed this is a good idea.
- Financial report:** DR advised: **Account balances** – all healthy, however the association currently owes over 12 months back rent due to the move from Urban Green to the Freemen. There was mounting pressure within committee to pay all or at least some to ensure we do not default, so will try to determine how much to pay and to whom as soon as possible.
- Trading hut:** CH advised: **Sales** – ease of card transactions has ensured sales are up over previous year. Produce from the polytunnel will be due for sale shortly. **Surplus produce** - the issue of plot holder donations of surplus produce was raised and discussed by committee, it was suggested that in the first instance these should be sold to generate much needed funds for the association to carry out long term projects such as the much-needed overhaul of the inter-site water distribution system (baths), fences etc. Produce donations have also been used to support local charities and there are many requests currently being received. After much discussion it was agreed that any surplus produce donated to the Trading Hut on Sunday mornings would be offered for sale with monies going towards the association's maintenance funds. Any unsold produce would then be offered to a Café charity who are able to collect, this seems to offer the best balance and ensure produce does not go to waste. The committee recognises that there are plot holders who already collect and donate produce to charities and understand that they are supported by others, so request any donations to them are left at their plots, not at the Trading hut. **Found Hire machinery** – any plot holder who has lost an item of hire machinery should contact the secretary.
- Buildings/Structures:** MF advised: Still awaiting revised shed request application following notification that metal sheds are not permitted under Freemen and site rules. Application for a shed received from plot 46A and approved.
- Matters Arising:** **Freemen meeting** – following on from the Secretary's report above, the general opinion between the Wartime Allotment sites currently is not to sign the lease agreement as it has many clauses which are ambiguous and require clarification, however payment of back rent is seen as a priority to protect our standing. A further meeting has been requested to resolve the

lease dispute. One positive outcome from the meeting was that the Freemen are happy for the association to replace the unreliable wooden gates with metal gates and supports.

Association machinery – following enquiries from plot holders, there was a discussion about renting out equipment (rotavators etc) to plot holders. Committee agreed that, before renting out equipment, we would need a Disclaimer which the Plot Holder would have to sign. Also, we need remind plot holders that individual plots are not covered by the Allotment general Insurance and the individual Plot holder should have their own individual insurance.

Trading Hut staffing – more people are needed on Sunday mornings 10.00 -12.00 to help selling produce, particularly from May to September. As a first step, the Committee will ask people individually rather than send a general email out.

Allotment Open Day - due to lack of time, lack of availability and too many other priorities, we have decided to postpone the Allotment Open Day until 2024 to allow for proper planning.

Plot Tenancy Agreement – this needs updating but we will continue with the current one until CH has time to draft a new version.

Allotment Rules – to minimize potential issues, it's felt that these are in need of updating and revising. Each Committee member should review the Rules (available on the website) and suggest what is missing/ how they can be improved.

Allotment Policies & procedures – existing ones need reviewing (some, eg Grievance Procedure, as a matter of urgency). CH has received copies from other Allotment Associations and will circulate these for all Committee members to comment on.

Next meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for 23 August at 6pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.00 pm.