

Committee Meeting 6.00 pm Wednesday 23rd August 2023 - Minutes

- Present:** Ken Fawcitt (KF), Liz Bennett (LB), Chris Hodgeson (CH), Lesley Greenwood (LG), Dorothy Robson (DR), Tony Robson (TR).
- Apologies:** Mark Fuller (MF).
- Previous minutes:** The minutes of the previous meeting, July 2023, were approved.
- Chair's report:** The wild flower meadow will be strimmed.
- Membership update:** LG advised: **Waiting list** – 45 currently on the waiting list. 3 plots currently empty and being offered. There are several plots requiring attention and the plot holders will be notified.
- Secretary's report:** CH advised: **Freemen Lease** – attended a meeting with representatives from the Freemen and other Allotments. Questions were raised as to why the Lease hadn't been signed and all 4 Allotments said that it was because of the "liability" clause and were nervous about the requirement to put back the allotments to their original state if the lease is ever revoked. The Freemen are not going to move on this and have said that we have until the 15/10 to sign. So, the issue is now about what options we have. There are 3 alternatives:
- Sign the Lease as it is
 - Seek a Limited Liability provision (either as a "cooperative" or as a "charity" or as "limited by guarantee" - each of these 3 is the preferred option of at least one of the other Allotment Associations, though "limited by guarantee" is the one recommended by the Northern Counties Allotment Association)
 - Seek independent professional advice
- Action - Chris to seek advice from the Northern Counties, Ken to look at the Constitution to see what involvement we need from Members, Lesley to look into support from the National Allotment Association Legal department)
- Urban Green Competition** - 1st Prize for a Half Plot was awarded to Helen on Plot E and The Presentation is at the Allotment Show on 16/9. Urban Green asked if the winner could give a talk at the Allotment Show and Helen has agreed.
- Action - Chris to email members / Liz or Lesley to get a photo of Helen on her plot
- Trees** - agreed that we would add to the Allotment Rules that trees should not be allowed to grow beyond a reasonable size as that has an adverse effect on neighbouring allotments.
- Action - we will do a review & rewrite of Rules as a November task
- Metal Gates** - Chris has emailed the Freemen to find out who installed the Town Moor gates and to get the go ahead from them for us to pursue this.
- Communications:** LB Advised: The website has been tidied up and a lot of documents archived
- Action - Liz to find out what the cost implications are and the process for making out website a "secure" site

Treasurers report: DR advised: we have a balance of approx £38k across both accounts. However, we still haven't had an Invoice from the Freemen re the outstanding rents. Our Water Rates have reduced from a monthly £122 to £76, presumably reflecting the wet summer we've had and therefore the reduced need to water plots.

Trading hut: CH advised: Sales have slowed down recently as its coming to the end of the season. However, before that, sales of produce and flowers have gone very well.

Buildings/Structures: In Mark's absence, nothing was noted

Matters Arising: Tony will return the 'Lord Hire' strimmer to them

Oil Tank - Tony recommended that we clean it up and sell it on. He will get a team together to help do that and we'll advertise it for £500 on Market Place / EBay sites

Wood chips delivery - as there is still a fair amount left, we should remind members that it can be used on compost heaps and on beds as it will rot down.

Procedures –

- The Grievance procedure and others that we are yet to review will be presented as a package to members at the AG
- Committee Roles & Responsibilities - Lesley had previously forwarded a document - "The Oxford Allotment Rules & Responsibilities" for the Committee to review. It's obvious from that document that , in view of the number of members and plots we have, we are under represented on the Committee.

One of the recommendations was that Allotments have a Site Manager. The role would be the contact point for members, deliveries and contractors, would advise the Committee on general tidiness and clean ups required. It was agreed that Tony will talk to suitable people to see if they are interested in this role.

Next meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday 16th September at 10.00am.