

ASHFORD ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday 10 March 2025 TESCO COMMUNITY ROOM. CROOKSFOOT

Present Christine Harrison- Vice Chair
 Jo Perkin- Bulk Buying Manager Lisa Harrison- Press and Publicity
 Jonathan Goodwin- Web Manager Heather Ahern- Musgrove Farm
 Jill Fuggle- Treasurer and Repton Manor
 Annette Woodhouse- William Road
 Mark Cole- Henwood Carol Ridings- Secretary
 Claire Pitts- ABC

Also present- David Woodhouse

1. Apologies

None

A minutes silence took place to remember Brenda who passed away earlier this year.

2.

Christine- Brenda has left a large hole in the Society, which will be difficult to fill. Christine and Lisa both confirmed that they were unable to commit to becoming chairperson and there were no further volunteers.

Thanks to Claire for attending the meeting.

3. Report of the Allotment Officer

It has been a turbulent year with lots of absentees, and having to deal with the new waste management contract, as a result allotments have taken a back seat. They have tried to digitise payments of allotments but this has not gone too well. Claire apologised for providing a poor service.

There are Section 106 monies to be spent, and there will be compost delivered. There will be monies for maintenance and some for both the Westrees and Repton sites.

It was suggested that some of the monies could be used to repair the roof of the trading store together with the removal of the adjacent container. Claire will need a wish list of projects.

Kevin is trying to get all the vacant plots relet by the end of March. There will then be an email to all the people on the waiting list to see if they are still interested in having a plot. Currently there are 2000 people on the waiting list. People are being offered plots 'as seen', and there is a possibility of splitting plots especially the larger ones.

Jonathan remembered that the Council were thinking of not giving large plots to first time allotment holders as they were more prone to giving up once they realised the amount of work involved.

Claire made the point that if emails from site reps are not answered then place a call through to the call centre. Claire will then get a break down and be able to monitor the issues to see if there is a problem.

Jill explained that the tap at Repton was broken. The water will be turned on on 31 March. Claire is not clear about the rain water harvesting system that David the previous allotment officer had suggested, although there is grant funding for it.

Heather wondered if there could be flow controls put on the water tanks to reduce water loss.

Claire said that she will put up signs about water use. She also needs evidence if tenants are breaking the rules eg bonfires, use of hose pipes etc. As the waiting list is so large she will evict tenants breaking the rules. If Aspire do not cut the grass then again let Claire know.

Lisa asked if a tree could be planted in memory of Brenda. Claire will look to see if there is a suitable fruit tree.

Jonathan questioned the price of the allotments which went up this year. He asked about when the sites went to the community councils- Kennington and South Willesborough, the Council then did not have to carry out maintenance of these sites. Did the price that Ashford residents pay reflect the change-i.e did Aspire get paid less ? Claire will check.

There will be a big food waste incentive this year. Surplus food produced on sites could be donated. A number of members already donate excess produce to food banks.

Lisa said that there had been lots of theft on Westrees, pears, rhubarb plants removed. She asked if Claire could do an email to tenants. It was agreed that a joint newsletter would be produced giving details of the opening times of the trading store and price list, abuse of water, reminding about no open fires, no rubbish to be dumped and the need for a new chairman etc.

4. Minutes

Agreed

5. Bulk Buying Manager's Report

The trading store is well stocked. There is still a supply of potatoes, onions and shallots. If anyone wants a particular item then let Jo know. We are still using the old plastic membership cards punching holes in the opposite side.

The store has been opened twice this year with £300 taken the first week and £400 the second week. Jo will get quotes for a new roof.

Heather said that Jo does a cracking job.

6. Treasure's Report

The accounts have been completed to the end of December and verified. Please see the attachment.

Charges have been commenced from the bank.

7. Website Manager's Report

The site reps and trading store info has been updated . The price list also needs to be updated.

Lisa explained that a man on Westrees would like to help Jonathan.

Christine wondered if it would be possible to have a members only log in. Jonathan said it is possible or we could have everyone registering.

8. Membership Secretary's Report

So far there have been 25 renewers and 4 new members this year.

9. Site Representative's report

Musgrove- There are still bonfires and theft from the site. Water usage is an issue.

Repton- Lots of empty plots.

William Road.- OK There has been no more fly tipping, the car park is ok. Bark is still being delivered and the water leak repaired.

Christchurch/ Jemmett Road- OK apart from the large pile of rubbish by the gate that has been there for at least 2 years. Vacant plots now overgrown. The water has never been turned off.

Henwood- The hedges need cutting.

The Committee meeting then finished and the AGM commenced. 5 plot holders from Westrees and William Road were in attendance.

Christine explained that we are looking for a new chairman. Heather explained that an e mail will go out to all plot holders about this issue and various other matters.

There was a Q and A session

Charlotte Mbalive offered to be a representative to Westrees but she suggested that there be 2 people in post as it was a large site. (details of the duties have been sent to her)

Marina Kuzina expressed an interest in the chairman's post and details have been sent to her.

The locks at Westrees are causing problems. In addition the numbers on the locks should be changed. These are meant to be changed when a tenant has left a site to stop them gaining access.

Concern was raised over the amount of unused plots and the erosion of paths. Tenants are cutting into paths to increase the size of their plots. Paths apparently should be 600mm wide. Sites and plots need to be resurveyed to ensure they are the right size .

Discussion also took place over a Westrees tenant who was a helper to the plot holder who has been told that he cannot have the plot. Charlotte offered to help him.

Discussion took place over the loss of the concession for retired people and those on sick pay. It was suggested that the Council had broken their contract as they had not given 6 months notice of the change.

There was also a discussion of possible lectures during the winter by outside bodies. These could take place in th

The meeting ended and details for the next meeting will be arranged.

Issues for the next meeting:-

Tenants e mail address from the Council

Updating the constitution