

ASHFORD ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday 27th November 2024 TESCO COMMUNITY ROOM. CROOKSFOOT

Present Brenda Raggett- Chairman and Westrees 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 Carol Ridings- Secretary

Also present- David Woodhouse

1. Apologies

Mark Cole- Henwood, Claire Pitt- A.B.C.

2.

Heather explained that she had heard from the Council and there was a delay in sending out invoices this year because the process is being streamlined. They are however starting to relet plots, there are 10 vacant plots at Musgrove.

Brenda read out an e mail from Claire Pitts in response to Brenda's e mail wondering what was happening to the sites.

Claire again reiterated that there is a transition to new software which has not been as smooth as they had hoped. However she was confident that it would be up and running in the next few weeks. She said that the water is being turned off in a week or so and the water leak (William Road) was being investigated by the property team. Due to the problems this year her team has not been as proactive or responsive as she would have hoped.

Claire has also said that she will be able to obtain free compost next year around April time, it can come in a load to be delivered to Westrees or bulk bags to each site. Whilst those present initially thought that a bulk bag to each site would be acceptable, at least 2 sites- Christchurch/Jemmett and Repton have no vehicular access. It was suggested that Christchurch's goes to Musgrove and Repton goes to Westrees.

Annette said that some of her overgrown sites had been strimmed but she doesn't know which plots have been let.

Jonathan asked for a clarification from Claire with a clear timeline over when the plots would be relet.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

Agreed.

4. Bulk Buying Manager's Report

The trading store has been doing well, with new members and old members rejoining. On the day of the last opening £288 was taken. The sale of garlic was a success but no autumn onions or potatoes arrived. In the spring it will be on a first come first serve basis for onions and potatoes in order to prevent so much wastage.

The next opening date is 15 February.

Jo has researched the possibility of bulk seed purchase. King Seeds will deliver either to the seed shed or to an address but will charge. Discounts on seeds depends on how many seeds are ordered which could be difficult to assess. It is too late this year to organise but Jo will look to do an order next year.

Jonathan said that it would be possible to put an order form on the web site. Payments could be taken on line but if we did not reach the threshold of £200 to get a discount then it may be difficult to organise.

The public liability insurance is due and members were happy for Jo to renew this.

5. Treasure's report

Bank Account 1	£2911.42
Float	transferred to account 2
Account 1 Total	£2911.42

Bank Account 2	£6290.52
Float	£256.02
Account 2 Total	£6546.54

Trading store 1.05.2024 to 30.09.2024	
Income	£1716.30
Trading store expenditure	
Sum Up	£15.07
Petty Cash	£99.89
Replacement Stock	£587.08
Total Expenditure	£702.04

Income includes 20 renewal and/ or new membership fees

Bank account 1 can now be closed and transferred into no 2.

Jill has had a battle with the bank to sort out correspondence and making sure that statements do not go to Brian.

Jill has had a letter from the bank to say that from 14 January there will be a £4.25 monthly charge for the community account. There will also be a charge of 42p per £100 for paying monies in through the machine and 75p per £100 for paying in in person. Cheques will be 50p each. It is estimated that this would cost approximately £7.50 per month on current income levels. There was a discussion over different scenarios but it was agreed to leave things as they are at the moment. The bank is not interested that we are a non profit organisation. Heather and Jo will ask other allotment associations and the Allotment society for alternative banks that provide free banking.

Jonathan wondered about the Co-op bank.

Lloyd's have yet to give us a new card machine

6. Web manager's report

Jonathan has been updating the web site. He could do on line membership cards. The money transactions would go to Pay pal or Stripe which is connected to the bank account . They take a cut of 24p per person so this would be around £15 per year. There could be a place on the web site to see if people are members when they purchase goods from the trading store. Though this might be difficult for Jo to access quickly. The membership could auto renew each year unless membership was cancelled.

Most people who use the seed shed are members but there could be a campaign for more members. The seed shed made a profit last year.

Lisa explained that there were still lots of membership cards that could be used . These maybe could be punched in a different location.

7. Publicity Officer's Report

A lady visiting the seed shed asked whether there were any lectures being held on nature conservation as part of the associations functions.

Lisa wondered if the seed shed could have a post box as people often ask questions and these could be put on the web site.

8. Membership Secretary's report

There are 62 members, this has gone up by 22. Even though membership fees have gone down the amount of money coming in has increased.

Lisa wondered if something could go on the web site that explains about the insurance and what it covers. Jo will look into this.

9. Site Representative's report

Musgrove- 10 vacant plots and at least another 2 . The water is still to be turned off. Chippings have been delivered.

Repton- 7 vacant plots, 8 cultivated. The water is still on and the gate is sticking.

William Road.- The car park is now finished and the hedge trimmed. A water leak was reported on 10 October and the water was turned off. Annette was told that someone had interfered with the stop cock but it was a leak. Apparently maintenance is now in charge of Stephen Watts.

Fly tipping stopped 2 months ago but has now returned. Some was removed but some left. It is now being investigated by the enforcement officer.

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

Westrees- Lots of vacant plots/non cultivation now overgrown.

AOB- The bonfire sign on some allotments is misleading. The allotment rules say that fires in incinerators are acceptable, subject to certain conditions.

Date of next meeting to be confirmed.