

**WALMLEY ASH ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION
COMMITTEE MEETING
SITE HUT – SATURDAY 24th November 2018 AT 10:30am**

1. **Present:** - SP (Chair), BC (Secretary), CC (Treasurer), AS (Fundraising), LB and GC.

In attendance: - RT and JG.

Apologies: - There were no apologies.

2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 18th August 2018**

The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 18th August 2018 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. **Matters arising not covered on the Agenda**

There were no matters arising not covered by the Agenda.

4. **Updates**

i. **Response to letters of concern, next steps and recovery of keys**

Five keys had not been returned after plots were vacated. Plot holders had been contacted but, to date, no replies received. Discussion took place regarding a 'drop off' box for depositing keys but it was agreed to continue with the current system so a record of keys returned could be maintained and key deposits refunded. It was agreed, with effect from 1st January 2019, that the deposit for allotment keys would be increased to £25.00 per key to improve the return rate.

ii. **Vacant plots**

Plots 8 has been taken out of use and 38B should be viable in the new year due to plot holders clearing the plot. There was 1 quarter plot and 5 half plots vacant, all requiring attention to improve the appearance and making them more attractive to prospective plot holders.

iii. **Area of brambles by the spinney gate**

Following the installation of the perimeter fencing, the area of brambles by the spinney gate needs to be cut down. Volunteers to assist with this would be appreciated.

iv. **Progress made on the Volunteer Days in November 2018**

Thanks were conveyed for the few plot holders who devoted time for site tidying and maintenance on the Volunteer Days. It was noted that it was the same people who turned up every time. Another Volunteer Day would be organised around Easter 2019 when vacant plots will need to be cut back and covered to prevent further weed growth.

v. **Memorial for Albert Benbow**

A lot of clearing and planting had been carried out in the beds surrounding the site hut with the area looking very attractive.

5. **Future projects and funding**

i. **Tree survey**

There were 3 dead trees in the spinney to be removed but no date has been given by the contractor to carry out this work. A follow up was required as branches were leaning on the new fence. **(Action: SP)**

ii. **Purchase of a petrol shredder**

If funding could be secured, a petrol shredder would enable prunings to be utilised for paths etc rather than being deposited in the spinney. Likewise, a petrol strimmer and rotavator would be useful equipment to have available on site. To be discussed further at the next Committee meeting.

iii. **Purchase of a poly tunnel**

Discussion took place regarding acquiring a communal poly tunnel for the site. To be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

iv. **Beehives**

JG reported that local bee keepers were not looking for new sites to locate beehives this year. To be followed up next year if plot holders are still interested.

v. **Schools Community Project**

vi. **Create a small garden and pond**

Possible sources of funding were discussed for future projects including applying again to Sutton Coldfield Municipal Charities for developing an enhanced social/meeting facility and seeking access to funds from the Flo Pickering Fund (handled by Birmingham City Council) for renovation of the toilet building. Further research and pricing was being carried out with a view to making applications. To be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

Investigation on making a claim to Veolia found that the postcode area of WAAA was not within their funding zone for this year but there was a possibility this could change in the future depending on their grant availability.

Improved signage for WAAA was being developed. No funding from BCC was available for this. It was agreed that the signs should be paid for from the devolved budget to enhance the possibility to attracting tenants for vacant plots.

Allied to this, the possibility of having small posters on display in the doctor's surgery was discussed. These would advertise the health benefits of allotment activity with contact information for vacant plots at WAAA. JG advised that the plot holder on 9b may be able to offer guidance on how to approach this.

6. Any other business

i. Disappearance of tools and produce

Following reports of tools and produce being removed from plots, it was agreed that a number of hidden CCTV cameras would be located around the site to try to establish the nature of such disappearances.

ii. Rat boxes

There were no increases in the rat population on site so it was agreed the rat boxes would be refilled after Christmas when new supplies would be available.

iii. Damaged fence behind plot 42

Discussion took place regarding repairs to the broken fence behind plot 42. It was necessary to establish who was responsible for the fence and whether the tenant of the relevant property should be approached or whether WAAA should arrange the repairs to ensure it is done promptly to limit direct access to the site. To be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

iv. Water off

In future, there would be standard dates for turning off the water supply and locking toilets during the winter to avoid frost damage – these would be turned off in the first week of November and turned back on again in the first week of March. As before, this would depend on weather conditions.

v. Chippings and straw

Plot holders were to be emailed to ask if anyone would be available for the delivery of chippings and straw and whether anyone knew of a regular supplier. They would also be reminded about making contributions for chippings and straw taken for their plots **(Action: BC)**

vi. Plot numbers

Plot holders should ensure that they have a clearly visible plot number on display on their plots – this is a requirement in the Allotment Rules.

vii. Document regarding running a Committee

BC to circulate copies of the document to Committee members **(Action: BC)**

viii. No winter access to the spinney area

It was agreed that access to the spinney area would not be possible during the winter months. The gate would be locked on 1st December 2018 until 1st February 2019.

ix. Water meters

Readings for both water meters need to be taken. There were no updates on meterage charges to date. **(Action: SP)**

x. Finances (not for public viewing).

xi. Electronic banking

Discussion took place regarding setting up electronic banking arrangements with further enquiries on costs etc to be made. **(Action: BC)**

7. Date, time and venue of next Committee meeting

The Committee agreed to meet on Saturday 16th March 2019 at 11:30am in the site hut.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12:00