

**WALMLEY ASH ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION
COMMITTEE MEETING
SITE HUT – SATURDAY 15th FEBRUARY AT 11:00AM**

Present: AS (Chair & Fundraising), PH (Treasurer), BC (Secretary), LB (Notes), LC, GC and JH

Apologies: SP

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 9th November 2019

The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 9th November 2019 were agreed and approved by the Chair.

2. Matters arising not covered on the Agenda

Matters to be discussed were all covered on the agenda.

3. Updates

i. Security cameras

Discussion took place regarding the siting of the two security cameras. Ideally, one should be located overlooking the boundary fence line and the other by the car park (**Action: BC, GC**). It was noted that the fence panels that were taken down by a resident whilst renovations were taking place on an adjacent property had been re-erected restoring security to the WAAA site.

ii. National Citizen Service

BC reported that the National Citizen Service (NCS) was currently undergoing organisational change with new partners for 2020. Representatives had not yet been in touch regarding future activities at WAAA.

iii. Flo Pickering Fund

AS reported that an application to the Flo Pickering Fund for further funding had been made for:

- a) Laying hard core to prevent flooding around the site hut.
- b) Extending the fence line to the sub-station, approximately 30 metres, to complete the security fencing.

iv. Proposed visit to Malvern Show on 7th May

GC reported that, so far, 12 people had confirmed attendance for the proposed visit to Malvern Show on 7th May. It was understood a minimum of 15 people were needed for the mini bus to be viable. There was the possibility of a 30 seater coach if the numbers increased sufficiently. Discussion took place regarding discretionary funding for the slight shortfall in the event of not achieving the minimum 15 especially as plot holders from other sites had confirmed their wish to join.

v. Spring/Summer social event

Discussion took place regarding holding a Spring/Summer social event on site. An event to coincide with the official opening of the new gazebo would be useful since the press and charities involved in the funding were likely to be in attendance. This is to be discussed again after the next progress report and once the anticipated completion date is known.

vi. Plot vacancies

BC reported there were no vacant plots. There was one person on the waiting list and another enquiry had been made recently.

vii. Plot cultivation

Attention was drawn to plots 10A, 27A and 36B which were not actively being cultivated. Given the time of year and the Committee being made aware there may be personal circumstances affecting plot holders' ability to tend their plots, it was decided to review the matter again in April. Further action may need to be taken at that stage in the absence of any attempt to cultivate the plots.

4. Future projects and funding

(Project 1 – Sutton Town Council funding - 2019)

Schools Community Project (gazebo and raised beds)

AS reported that the sum awarded towards the cost of the gazebo and raised beds continued to be held on deposit pending further considerations to this development. Since initial enquiries were made, the gazebo had been subjected to a price increase of c £x. It was hoped the gazebo could be secured with the original pricing if a reduction could be negotiated (**Action: BC, GC to monitor**). The Committee was informed that planning permission would be needed for the installation of the gazebo on site. Permission decisions appeared to take approximately 8 weeks from submission with fees of c £x. Application forms were complex with a requirement for detailed diagrams. As BC and GC had previously drafted some diagrams, they suggested these could be updated for the application (**Action: AS, BC, GC**). Preparation for the raised beds would commence around mid March depending on weather.

**(Project 2 – Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust (SCCT) funding - 2020)
(Extension to the car park and refurbishment of the toilets)**

AS confirmed a sum was awarded by SCCT for the extension to the car park and refurbishment of the toilet block including roof renovation. SCCT would settle invoices directly with contractors. AS advised he was to meet Ian, from RMF Landscaping, to discuss requirements. Work was likely to commence around mid to late March, depending on weather and availability of the contractor. The water supply would need to be turned off to enable the work in the toilets to be carried out. During this time, plot holders would not be able to access the toilets **(Action: AS to meet Ian)**. Plot holders would be advised well in advance once dates and timescales were clearer **(Action: BC once dates are confirmed)**.

**(Possible Project 3 – Severn Trent Community Fund funding – 2020)
(Water drainage, storage and utilisation)**

AS drew attention to the possibility of making a funding application to the Severn Trent Community Fund. Applications for consideration could be made at any time and without restriction on the value of the application. Water-related projects were discussed, such as, establishing a well on site and the provision of water butts for location behind the new gazebo to maximise water collection and conservation. Severn Trent could also be asked for their suggestions on projects, for example, the possibility of laying land pipes to help drainage in areas where plots are particularly prone to flooding and how any surplus water might be captured and utilised. To be discussed further.

Any other business

i. Chairman

- a) The water supply would be turned back on again, weather permitting, on 1st March 2020 **(Action: AS)**.
- b) Plot holders should be reminded not to hang the padlock on the middle hole when locking the Walmley Ash Road gate but use the end hole (where the gate opens/closes) to ensure proper security of the gate.
- c) For security and safety of people on site, plot holders should be reminded that the allotment gates on Walmley Ash Road and Ashurst Road entrances should be kept locked at all times.

ii. Secretary

- d) Schedule 7 forms for the yearly budget funding from Birmingham City Council (BCC) were due to be completed **(Action: PH)**.
- e) The maintenance schedule was passed to AS for verification **(Action: AS)**.
- f) Committee members were required to sign the Committee member listing for BCC **(Action: All)**.
- g) A BDAC Area 6 meeting was taking place at Boulevard Allotments at 14:00 on Saturday 29th February 2020.
- h) BC tabled sample booklets for forthcoming competition/show entry for consideration. Discussion took place regarding the possibility of entries for 2020. GC stated that the notice period was quite short last year so earlier preparation was recommended. AS suggested that entry to Class 1B first appeared to be more appropriate with progression to Class 1A at a future date. For planning, the prime timing for producing 5 types of vegetables, 3 types of fruit and 12 bunches of flowers was deemed to be 28th August 2020. A trial run with whatever crops were available was suggested to coincide with the opening of the gazebo. Official entry forms and further entry information were available on the BDAC website. A meeting in April could be scheduled to generate enthusiasm followed by a progress meeting in May prior to a display for the gazebo opening.
- i) Discussion took place regarding preparation for and the date of the next Annual General Meeting (AGM) as room hire can sometimes be problematic. Discussion took place about linking the AGM to a social event and the convenience of rent collection by holding the meeting around the time when the allotment payment lists had been issued by BCC. It was proposed and agreed to hold the AGM either on Tuesday 29th or Wednesday 30th September 2020 assuming a suitable venue was available for booking **(Action: BC to check venue/dates)**.
- j) The padlock code on the spinney gate would be re-activated on 1st March 2020 for the spring/summer period **(Action: BC, GC)**.
- k) It was noted that planning permission for the newly-built bungalow adjacent to the WAAA site had been rejected.

iii. Treasurer

- l) PH reported that grants retained in the bank were earning c £1 interest per month. Since the AGM, £x had accrued. At the time of the meeting, expenditure was £x more than income partly due to timing of payment for room hire for the AGM and website fees.
- m) Eighteen plot holders had subscribed for manure and chippings bringing income to £x.x, which was considerably more than under previous arrangements. This had the potential to go up in March/April when plot holders were actively tending their plots.
- n) The current surplus was £x and anticipated income from BCC was c£x- £x. In light of earlier comments, additional costs for the gazebo planning permission of c £x and the price increase of the gazebo itself of c £x would have to be taken into consideration. AS commented that it may be possible to negotiate a 10% discount

with the contractor (RMF Landscaping) if help from plot holders could be arranged for clearing and preparing the base and raised beds. RMF Landscaping may also be approached to help with the installation of the gazebo **(Action: AS to check)**.

5. Date, time and venue of next Committee meeting

The Committee agreed to meet at 11:00 am in the site hut on Saturday 21st March 2020.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 11:55.