

RGS Committee Meeting – Sunday 3rd May 2016 at 9am

1. Jackie Savage (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were apologies for absence from Liz Chrominska, Steve Clarke and Mike Cooper.

Present were: -

Pat Dark	Helen Finch	Shirley Gillbe	
Janis Humberstone	Sheila Konig	Ali Linton (minutes)	
Carol Martinez	Georgina O'Reilly	Gill Tamsett	Greg Willcox

2. To note the agreed minutes of the meeting on Sunday 6th March 2016

The minutes agreed ex-committee were signed as a true record. They are already posted on the website

3. Matters arising

i. Irrigation systems GO'R had contacted the other two volunteers for the trial but they were both too busy. We will continue the trial with our volunteer. (Anthony Fitzsimmons).

ii. Structures SG reported that we haven't had a reply from G. Kelly. There is a site manager's meeting on May 11th and she will ask her about it. We are currently following the policy which will be ratified at the AGM.

Action: SG

iii. Wandsworth Horticultural Society's visit on May 22nd

Refreshments and membership - Gill T

Site 2 gate - JS

Site 3 gate – HF and PD

GO'R is on store duty with Jo Eskdale if there are any queries

CM and AL are away

JS will ask SK, Raj, Bruce, GW and SC to "be around" their plots for queries.

iv. Store roof No further leaks have been reported and GT had been in the store during a very heavy rainstorm. It was thought that the original leaks had been caused by both heavy rain and strong wind.

v. Joining the National Allotments Society JS referred to the paper she sent out in mid March (attached to these minutes) giving the arguments for and against. There have been no objections and everyone agreed to go ahead and join for 1 year in the first instance. The cost will be £638 based on us having 230 plots and she will clarify the exact amount at the next meeting.

Action: JS

4. Chair's report

i. Becoming a charity JS reported that we have prepared a Lease that we hope will be acceptable to both the Charities Commission and the Council and that is now with Wandsworth for consideration. Hopefully we will hear quite soon and move forward with our objective to become a Charity with a long Lease for the allotment land with a peppercorn rent. We have heard that Ian Lewer met the officers on Mon 18 April and had a promising discussion – we have chased him for a written response (he suggested a meeting). Justine Greening is happy to be involved on our behalf and we will contact her if we don't get a response soon

Action: JS

ii. Locks JS has considered taking out a maintenance agreement for all 4 locks which will cost £358 per year. This would include servicing all the locks x 2 pa and include 2 call outs. (Each individual call out costs £95). The cost and necessity was queried but it was agreed to have a 1 year trial and ask for Pete to do the work, as he was more reliable than others who had attended.

iii. Letter to neighbours with houses backing onto the allotment sites In early April GO'R and JS delivered the attached letter to all the houses backing onto the allotment sites. She has had favourable feedback and 8 new members, 4 from each site.

iv. Site 2 water tank A plothead was thanked for replacing the non-return valve on the tank. These valves are increasingly difficult to find. Someone has now removed the tap head!

v. Young Offenders A YO has been helping a plothead on site 3 who had damaged her arm and it had been very beneficial to both parties.

vi. Member's discounts The system at Neals has changed, members now have to register with them and get their card for 7% discount. Details have been emailed to all members and put in May bulletin. We continue to have 10% discount on horticultural goods that you take away with you at Adrian Hall in East Sheen.

5. Allotment Secretaries' reports

Site 2.

GO'R reported: -

Plot lettings (there have been 5)

Plot 35B, 2.5 rods, has been let

Plot 10A, 1.5 rods, has been let (This is a smaller part of the previously named 10A as the plot holder wished to reduce the size of his plot.)

Plot 38A, 2.5 rods has been let

Plot 15, 2 rods, has been let

Plot 14C, was a small 2 rods, now 1.5 to allow for the insertion of a path between this and 14B. Now let

It is of interest to note that four of these five plots were given up by the previous tenants following at least two plot inspection letters.

March Plot Inspection

There was one termination letter due to lack of cultivation. This tenant had had 5 letters over a two year period.

Security/ gates

The locksmith fixed the lock at the lower, Huntingfield Road, gate week beginning 9 March. It has functioned properly since.

Security/ thefts

On April 17th the plot holder of 32A reported that a brand new, yellow hose had been stolen from her plot.

Security/ fence

Building work has started on 3 Huntingfield Road, to the rear of Plot 30A and adjacent to the lower gate. The removal of the side fence to the property along with the lack of a boundary fence between the site and the property meant that the site was openly visible from the street. Thanks to JS who promptly contacted the architect who, in turn, has had a fence erected to the rear of the property. He also requested that a temporary fence be erected along the path leading to our gate which will eventually be replaced with a wall. We have agreed to this and Site 2 plot holders have been notified that there will only be pedestrian access to the site through this gate while the work is carried out.

*As of today GO'R noticed that the brick wall has been started so the temporary fence may not be needed.

Structures on plots update

There have been 3 changes to existing structures on the plots since these were originally listed by RL and these have now been updated on the database

Site 3. HF reported: -

Lettings: 4 plots had been given up after plot inspection contacts.

Plot 80B (5 rods): this plot has been given up. Since it is a large plot it has been let to an existing plot holder on the waiting list who moved from plot 97A.

Plot 97A (3 rods) has been let.

Plot 82C (1.5 rods) had been let as extra land to an existing plot holder who has decided to give up this extra plot. It has now been let to an existing plot holder on the waiting list as extra land.

Plot 109B (3.5 rods) has been relinquished. It has been re- let.

Plot 118 (rented at 4 rods measures 4.5 rods) This plot was rented as a whole plot but has been split at the tenant's request. He now has plot 118A (2 rods) and plot 118B (2.5 rods) has been let to a new plot holder.

Plot 81B (1.5 rods) this has been given up and let to an existing plot holder on the waiting list as extra land.

Plot 103B (2.5 rods) This has been relinquished and is available to let.

Plot 56A (2.5 rods) is available to let.

Post Plot inspection:

The plot inspections have shown that there are a few plots that need to be kept under review as the plot holders seem to be doing just enough to get through the plot inspections but then visit their plots very infrequently and produce very little in the way of crops.

Structures

Since photos of structures on site 3 had been taken and documented there had been 14 changes. These changes have now been documented on the database

JS thanked GO'R and HF for all their work at this very busy time of year.

There was discussion about changing the date for rent collection to October (in line with WBC) as this would be a good time for terminating agreements with ploholders who have not maintained their plots throughout the growing season. HF noted that the growing season hadn't started in March and so many plots looked more promising. Collecting rents at the end of the growing season would give a clearer idea of who neglects their plots.

AL commented that as committee members we have responsibilities to all members of the RGS including those on the waiting list. If plots are not cultivated it is unfair to other members and the final insult comes when we use their money to pay to have a plot cleared.

6. Trading Secretary's report

GWT reported that the store is pretty well stocked. We have run out of Country Natural on a couple of occasions in April. The Compost Centre which supplies us now needs 2 weeks' notice of an order during their very busy months. As we have not had a shed to store any on Site 3, we have been limited as to how many bags we can order at a time.

We now have a lovely new shed on Site 3 thanks to Greg Wilcox who gave up his own time to source and erect it. The Committee thanks Greg for his assistance on this.

We now have to ensure that the orders we put into Loach, our main supplier, are valued at over £300 as they have changed their pricing strategy. If we put in an order for less than £300, the prices will increase significantly (by c. 20 %). This means that we may run out of items if we have to wait until our order is big enough, although we will try to minimize this.

CM suggested ordering some topsoil.

The Trading Secretary presented a report on the use of Glyphosate following recent press coverage which is attached to these minutes. It was agreed that we will not buy any more products containing Glyphosate and GWT will research alternative products and methods for removing weeds and have them in stock. This will be covered by an article in the June Bulletin.

7. Show chair's report

June 11th and September 10th CM reported that the sub-committee will meet on May 3rd at 5pm. The schedule is completed and she is in the process of finalising the advertisements. It was agreed to email the society to ask for helpers at the Shows.

Action: CM

8. Treasurer's report

JH reported that most of the rents have been collected and she will compile a list of non-payers. It was agreed that it unnecessary to publish the contents of our bank accounts at every meeting. AL queried who signed off our accounts, they are not currently checked as we are answerable to WBC.

9. Bulletin Editor's Report

PD reported that we are going to have to pay more for the Bulletin to be printed. Quickprint at Wandsworth have finished but the Council is still going to facilitate printing, through outside printers. However, they took a long time to give her the contact details and now she finds that they need two weeks

notice and cannot confirm a price. The printing has cost £60 plus, depending on the number of pages and colour photos.

She has two other quotes, Mailbox and Putney Printers and is using Mailbox for May.

Mailbox: £133 for 70 copied, turn around in a day

Putney Printers: £215 for 70 copies, turn around 2-3 days

The committee considered reducing the number of bulletins printed but it was agreed that they improve communications with members and are often read by visitors to the Store.

It was agreed that PD and JS would meet to discuss the various options.

This month there will be a smaller bulletin than usual printed by WBC and the deadline for copy will be **Friday 13th May** for publication on 29th May.

10. Site Manager's report

SG reported that the standards were very high when the plots were inspected in early March. It was noted by HF that very little had grown then and this did not reflect the standard of cultivation. There has been difficulty getting a fence repaired as Enable no longer is responsible but she had contacted the housing manager who will ensure that the work is done. There is a Site Manager's meeting on 11th May.

11. Diary Dates for 2016

Wisley Booked for 14th September

12. AOB

None

The **next** meeting will be held on **Sunday 5th June at 9am** in the store.