

RGS Committee Meeting – Sunday 4th September 2016 at 9am

1. Jackie Savage (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were apologies for absence from Mike Cooper and Greg Willcox.

Present were: -

Liz Chrominska	Steve Clarke	Pat Dark	Helen Finch
Shirley Gillbe	Janis Humberstone	Sheila Konig	Ali Linton (minutes)
Carol Martinez	Georgina O'Reilly	Gill Tamsett	

2. To note the agreed minutes of the meeting on Sunday 10th July 2016

The minutes agreed ex-committee were signed as a true record.

3. Matters arising

i. St. John Ambulance First Aid Course – postponed to October

ii. Hedgehogs – postponed to October

iii. Best Plot Competition

JS reported that we had 34 entrants (11 site 2 + 13 Site 3) It was agreed to discuss whether we do this again at another meeting – perhaps when we see if Enable offer it again, as some ploholders complain and don't enter into the "spirit" of the competition.

4. Chair's report

i. Becoming a Charity

JS reported that a meeting has now been arranged between Anthony Fitzsimmons, JS, Jerry Birtles (Enable Chief Parks Officer (operations)) and Peter Tiernan (Principal Valuer for WBC) on 19th October. Delays have been due to everyones personal and work commitments.

Heads of Lease Draft 4.0 is tabled with 50 years and a break option of 35 years. JS quoted from Peter Tiernan "Council and Enable are earnestly seeking to assist RGS in realising its aspiration for a long lease to these allotments".

"Heads of Terms must be fully agreed and then put to Council for formal approval".

A peppercorn rent will also be discussed and Enable/WBC want an absolute assurance that the council will be protected from any disputes with tenants(!).

WBC only have 3 meetings per year and the next 2 are "full" so it is likely that there will be further delays and once we have an agreement we have to go back to Charity Commission. JS reminded the committee that WBC are rightly cautious as the sites are over 5 acres of "prime" land.

ii. Water tank leak site 3 (letter re water work circulated with the agenda).

JS thanked the many site 3 plot holders for their efforts and advice to stem the flow and to Paul Davis (PD our plumber) it only flooded for about a week. PD came very promptly once asked and the cost was £345.

iii. Thefts from site 3 (letter re thefts circulated with the agenda)

PD was asked to put an article in the Bulletin about thefts and outlining the rules.

Action: PD

iv. Fences and gates

The committee considered Enable's suggestion that we block all gates opening onto both sites where the resident is not a plot holder. It was agreed that stakes should be put on our land to prevent the gates opening and if the gate opens inwards 2 stakes will be put to remind the householder that they do not have a right of way. There are 20+ on site 3 and fewer on site 2.

Action: JS

v. Parking at entrance to site 2 (email re parking circulated with the agenda)

There have been no further reports of an obstruction. If the problem continues we will put up a notice saying that it is a public right of way required for the emergency services and deliveries.

vi. Liaison with St Margaret's Court

This is the local social sheltered housing (20 flats) by the The Pleasance. All residents are over 55 years old. A plot holder Avril Horsford (Dover House Road Residents Assoc) has suggested liaising with them and it was agreed to invite them to our Shows and activities. Tony Roberts Head of Housing at WBC has offered to help us with Lease but negotiations are too advanced for that to be necessary.

vii. Friday Late Programme at V&A "Grow your own" (RGS info flier circulated with the agenda)

This was last Friday 26 Aug – Avril Horsford gave out fliers as she is a volunteer there and has also given a lecture. The committee were asked if they would like more involvement next year, information can be found on the following web-site

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/friday-late>

viii. Website problems.

Our website hosts found serious problems with the website and threatened to take it down unless we sorted it out. JS did her best, led by one of their help line people but they can't delete files, which only we can do. JS sent an SOS email out to all members. A plot holder came to the rescue he has cleaned it and put it back up, it is not as it was before and we do need a new one. The site is 8 years old and hadn't been properly maintained.

Another plot holder has offered to re-design the web-site and maintain it every 6 months.

The committee agreed to accept this and it is offered free of charge. JS and CM will be involved with the design of the new site.

5. Show chair's report

CM reported that everything was going to plan. She requested help on

Thursday evening at 6pm

Friday evening at 5pm

If you are able to help please email her. R. Linton is doing the photos. All contributions to the stalls and cakes for tea are very welcome.

6. Allotment Secretaries' reports

Site 2. GO'R reported: -

Plot lettings None.

Plot 34A A rebate for 9 months rent was returned to the former tenant on the return of the key.

July plot inspection letters

Three letters have been sent and all three plot holders have responded and follow-up actions will be monitored.

Security/ thefts

No thefts have been reported.

Strimmer

A further 4 plot holders have hired the strimmer.

GO'R requested that a reminder of the availability of the strimmer at a charge of £2 per 15-20 minutes be included in the monthly Bulletin. A spare battery has been purchased which would enable a strimming time of 30 minutes+ **Action: PD**

Site 3. HF reported: -

Lettings: 2 of the following lettings have happened as a result of plot holders being invited to give up their plots.

Plot 55B (3 rods) This was given up and re-let.

Plot 52C (3 rods) This has been let

Plot 54B (2.5 rods) This plot has been given up and re-let.

Plot 111A (2.5 rods) This plot has been given up and re-let.

Plots under review:

Plot 85A: This plot is rented by Paddock school. It has not been cultivated adequately so JS met with the Head of School to see how the situation could be improved. The teacher who was in charge of the plot has been replaced so the expectation is that the plot will be cultivated better.

Plot inspection:

This was done on the 28th July. 18 plot holders were contacted about their plots and the eviction process has been started for one tenant as the plot has been neglected. Two other tenants gave up their plots voluntarily resulting from being contacted after the plot inspection. Other tenants who had been contacted have made improvements by the deadline.

On 22nd August JS, SG, GO'R and HF met to discuss and review the plot inspection process. We have had a number of plots that have become very overgrown during the growing season this year so we did an *ad hoc* mini inspection to deal with these bad plots. It was useful and resulted in several neglected plots being given up therefore we have planned to do inspections more frequently during the growing season. It is apparent that a lot of plot holders improve their plots just before an inspection so having inspections more frequently may help to improve standards of cultivation. HF has drafted a paper for the committee to review today and to discuss whether this paper should be taken to the membership at the AGM in November as this is quite a big change. It was decided that it is not necessary to take this change to the membership.

7. Trading Secretary's report

GWT reported: -

We have green manures and seeds for Autumn planting in stock.

Wondermesh is on order but has been out of stock. A delivery is expected this week. It is also available in 10 metre packs which we will trial. It is slightly more expensive but should be of interest to our members.

The price of Wondermesh has increased due to the rising cost of raw materials and the fall of the pound after Brexit. It will now have to be charged at £4 per meter (currently £3.50). A plot holder saw us struggling with the dilapidated green trolley and thought a new one was needed for deliveries and offered to pay £100 towards it. Greg Willcox has sourced one at a cost of £224.40. The committee agreed that we purchase this for the Store. The plot holder's offer is for not for a manual, only a motorised trolley. **Action: GWT JS**

8. Treasurer's report

JH reported that she was checking the VAT on the Bulletin and Store goods. She will provide a separate account for the committee listing the Show expenses/profit at the end of September, and a separate account of the expenses currently paid out of the management fee from Enable. Individual breakdowns for any other separate accounts could be provided.

10. Bulletin Editor's Report

Please could all reports etc be with her by **22nd September** for the October edition of the Bulletin.

11. Site Manager's report

SG reported that there will be a meeting of the “London allotment officer’s forum” at Battersea Park on 10th November and she will circulate the time when it is confirmed. A Channel 4 U-Tube clip will be put in the next Bulletin.

Moving the rent collection date was discussed, several members of the committee were anxious to change it as people vacating (their sometimes uncultivated plots) in October would give the new tenant several months to put their plot in order before the growing season. It was agreed to discuss this fully at the October meeting, JS and JH will prepare a proposal.

Action: JS JH

11. Diary Dates for 2016

Wisley Booked for 14th September, PD expressed regret that this trip is so poorly attended and it was agreed not to do it next year.

12. AOB - None

The next meeting will be held on **Sunday 2nd October at 9am** in the store.