

## RGS Committee Meeting – Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2017 at 9am

1. Carol Martinez (Vice-Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were apologies for absence from Jackie Savage, Shirley Gillbe and Brad Sanderson.

Present were: -

Liz Chrominska	Mike Cooper	Pat Dark	Helen Finch
Janis Humberstone	Ali Linton (minutes)	Georgina O'Reilly	Mariangela Renshaw
Gill Tamsett	Greg Willcox		

### 2. To note the agreed minutes of the meeting on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2016

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

### 3. Matters arising

i. St. John Ambulance First Aid Course – JS has been in touch with the Putney Society and they will get back to her when they have organised one and we will be invited to join.

ii. Fences and Gates There is nothing to report, work will continue when the weather improves.

**Action: JS GW**

iii. Site 2 Herb Bed and benches

GO'R reported that the communal herb bed has been re-instated as agreed. Following an email sent to all members requesting donations of perennial herbs for the bed there has been one response and she asked PD to re-run this in the March Bulletin. The bed has been manured.

GW said that the benches will be refurbished when the weather improves. **Action: PD GW**

iv. Apple tree on site 3

Permission was obtained from Enable (conservation area) and the work completed. It was not done on a Sunday as a community project due to bad weather. JS emailed all plot holders about the prunings and the large bits of wood have gone and some twiggy bits are left suitable for pea sticks.

v. Rubbish collection

This was carried out by Enable very smoothly during the agreed week. JS has thanked them, they removed a lot of rubbish particularly from site 3.

vi. Allotment Challenge

There was a good attendance including some of our members. Enable is now conducting a survey to see how they can improve this event for the future. JS hadn't attended nor any of the committee.

### 4. Chair's report

i. Lease / Charity update.

CM reported on behalf of JS. The plan to become a Charity and obtain a 50 year Lease on our land from the Council is still progressing slowly. We have reached the stage where we are now negotiating the rent with the Council, aiming to get peppercorn, using mainly the Barnet precedent. Once agreed the Council will have to give formal approval and carry out statutory advertisements in the local press for two weeks. Assuming all is in order we will then go back to the Charities Commission and, if they are agreement, back to committee and to members with our final proposal. Councillor Ian Lewer promised to put together a realistic timetable for all this for us.

There was some discussion about the Barnet precedent and it is understood that they are independent and not a Charity. It was also noted that Inner London Boroughs are not bound by statute to provide allotment space. WBC wants us to have a good outcome and use us as a model for other sites to follow. They do not want to manage their allotments, we are volunteers and on other sites they have to pay an administrator JH asked if we will be asked for a downpayment to the council for the lease?

ii. Rents and fees

a. Rents - Enable has raised rents by 3% (like last year). JS had circulated this to all committee in Jan. and it will be in Feb & March Bulletins. Standard rate: £22.20 Over 65: £18 Disabled: £17 **Action: PD**

## **b. Membership fee structure**

A proposal to change the way the membership fee is levied was proposed in writing by JS. After much discussion it was agreed: -

- i. All **plottolders** must be (full) **members** and other people would be **associate** members.
- ii. The **members** subscription will be **£5** and **associate** members subscription will be **£2.50**.

A vote was taken to approve a reduction in the fees for pensioners (over 65) and people with disabilities. The motion was not carried, 3 for 8 against. One committee member was against all fee increases and the introduction of Associate Members.

## **c. Website**

A member is voluntarily designing a new website for us. JS had a meeting with her in early January and there is the aim of getting this up and running by 2 April. A request was made for a writer for the Becoming Organic page, GO'R agreed to research an organic website we might recommend and write a short introduction to the link. JS and CM will be proof readers.

**Action: GO'R JS CM**

## **d. Frozen pipes**

On Sunday 22 Jan the pipes for the store and loo on site 2 were frozen. GW has lagged them and will use the maps to locate the pipes to site 3 toilet.

**Action: GW**

## **5. Allotment Secretaries' reports**

**Site 2** GO'R reported: -

**Plot lettings:** -

None

**Repair to dangerous paths**

The 2 dangerous paths alongside plots 16 and 31B that were identified at the November plot inspection were reconstructed in December.

**Collapsed fence to the rear plot 42**

The letting agents, Dover House Road Lettings, will be contacting this week to give a date for the start of the work.

**Huntingfield Gate Lock**

In mid January it was noted that the bolt at this gate was very stiff and at times impossible to close. On inspection it appeared that ongoing work to the boundary wall adjoining the gate at 3 Huntingfield Road had caused the gate to come out of alignment thus impairing the free movement of the bolt. The owner of the property took responsibility and agreed to pay the cost of the repair which was carried out by Securifix on 23 January. Within 5 days the bolt was stiff again. Securifix revisited and have suggested we leave it for a week and see how it goes as the work to the wall is incomplete. Once this is finished the post may need to be realigned at the owner's cost.

**Site 3** HF reported: -

**Lettings:**

**Plot 69B** (2.5 rods) this plot has been split into 1.5 rods for manure and wood chip deliveries. Regrettably the hawthorn bush had to be cut down to make the deliveries relatively easy. The remaining 1 rod has been joined to plot 69A to make a total of 3.5 rods. This plot will be re-named 69.

**Plot 104A** 3 rod has been re-let. The new tenant, who was at the top of the waiting list moved from plot 69B.

**Poorly cultivated Plots:**

There have been 3 under-cultivated plots on site 3 which have been monitored closely:

**Apple tree on plot 57A:**

It was agreed at the last meeting that the unproductive, diseased apple tree on plot 57A, which was not planted by the current tenant, should be cut down. Planning permission was sought and given so the tree has been cut down to ground level at the society's expense.

**Hazardous paths**

Two paths were identified as being a problem at the last inspection. In fact one has been rectified well enough by the tenants. The other will be done by Artan once he manages to acquire suitable paving slabs.

## **6. Trading Secretary's report**

GWT thanked the store sub-committee Jackie Savage, Greg Willcox, Helen Finch, Liz Chrominska and Sue MacDonald for helping with the Store tidy-up and clean in January in readiness for its re-opening. The shelving behind the counter was reorganised so there is now more room especially for a heater! There is now a Library by the entrance to the Store and members are encouraged to donate their unwanted allotment, gardening and cookery books for others to use and enjoy in return for a donation. There are also some books being kept for reference at the Store.

GWT reported that the Store was so cold on Sunday 22 January that the water pipes had frozen resulting in there being no water available. Thankfully, there were a couple of bottles of mineral water in the fridge that could be used to make teas and coffees. This means that it was warmer in the fridge than in the Store as even the water that had been left in the kettle had frozen!

There are now several bottles of filtered water in the fridge - just in case - and Greg Willcox has lagged the water pipe coming into the Store. We thank Greg for this.

We now have a variety of seed composts in the Store which members can buy either in a bag or loose. It will be interesting to see how these are received.

## **7. Treasurer's report**

### **i. Invoices**

Invoices will be sent by email and post (for those without email) on 20 March – this is because Robert Linton is going away and we need to get them emailed out before he goes. They will be due from 1 April and by 30 April.

**Action: GO'R SG JS HF and JH (RL)**

### **ii. Dates for store rent collection**

These will be agreed at the March meeting.

## **8. Bulletin Editor's Report**

PD reported that the difficulties with the new printers continue and she can't guarantee to have the printed version by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. The deadline for the March edition is 16<sup>th</sup> February.

## **9. Site Manager's report.**

There was nothing to report.

## **10. Diary Dates for 2016**

i. Chelsea Physic Garden A plotholder is a guide there and will lead the visit which has been agreed for 4<sup>th</sup> April. There are lunch facilities available.

ii. Snowdrop Walk PD had visited it (at the Physic Garden) and found it disappointing probably due to the weather so wouldn't recommend it. Post meeting AL thought the following website might produce inspiration for another year. <http://www.greatbritishgardens.co.uk/seasonal/snowdrops.html>

iii. Wisley PD kindly agreed to find a date in August so that children/grandchildren could be included.

**Action: PD**

## **11. AOB**

The next meeting will be held on **Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> March at 9am** in the store.