

## RGS Committee Meeting – Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at 9am

1. Jackie Savage (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were apologies for absence from Pat Dark, Shirley Gillbe and Carol Martinez. Due to the extremely cold weather the meeting was held at the Linton's home, they were thanked for their hospitality.

Present were: -

Elaine Barnwell	Liz Chrominska	Mike Cooper
Patrick Crawford	Vivien Fowler	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> March 2018

These minutes, agreed ex committee, were signed as a true record.

### 3. Matters arising

#### i. Shredder

A plot holder (JI) cleaned and oiled it, ran it for approx. half an hour including putting plenty of stuff through it, it ran well and without incident. He suggests that people should not switch between the green and brown settings without stopping the machine completely, changing the setting, a short pause, then restart and let it run for a minute before putting anything in. It should also have a "service" like the one he has done from time to time. It is currently in good working order.

The committee agreed to ask him to give a couple of training sessions and to only allow members who have been "trained" to use it. JS agreed to liaise with JI and send an email with the date of the session. The committee thanked JI for all his help with this matter. **Action: JS**

*Post committee: JI has agreed to demonstrate the shredder on Sunday 18 March 11.30 at the store. And to service it from time to time as needed. JS purchased a new combination padlock and those registered to use the shredder will be charged £1 and given the code. GO'R will organise a record of users. Action: GO'R*

#### ii. Water – new system on site 3

PC reported that he has sent to proposed schedule of works to 5 companies (all approved by Thames Water) and the estimates are due back by Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> March. When he has them all he will prepare a document outlining the proposed works and an analysis of costs for JS to take to her meeting with WBC on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March. Thames Water have now agreed (in line with some of the proposed contractors) that a 50mm pipe would be more appropriate.

#### iii. New letting agreement update (& Data Protection issues)

HF has done a lot of work and prepared a thorough Data Protection Policy and JS has some draft versions of a new Tenancy Agreement and Rules taking Jerry Birtles advice into account. HF and JS would like to continue to work on all this and report back at our next meeting on 6 May. (This will be after the meeting with Council so we can be clearer as to whether independence from the council is a realistic aim.)

We have already included reference to Data Protection on our website and application forms both for membership and waiting lists.

There was general discussion and the committee agreed that if members are not willing to sign the agreement they will forfeit their membership. It was also agreed that the RGS will not release any data to other parties without specific permission. The need for existing members to sign an up to date agreement was also considered. **Action: HF JS**

#### iv. AGM venue 2018

JS has arranged to visit the cricket pavilion which might be an alternative venue for the AGM on Saturday 28 April at 11am with EB, CM, GO'R and AL. **Action: JS, CM, EB, GO'R and AL**

**v. Store Structure**

PC reported:

- a. An Asbestos Survey has been carried out and a Survey Report provided by Crucial Environmental shows that there is asbestos in the roof sheeting. This is Chrysotile and it represents a "very low risk to health". If we do make alterations to the Store it would make sense to remove it and this should be done by an approved company. In the short term, an "Asbestos Register and Management Plan" should be adopted especially if no work on the building is undertaken within the next year or two.
- b. Budget costing's for the repairs upgrades and refurbishments (replacing the roof, improving the floor covering, insulating, drainage into a soak away and general renovations) are in the region of £36,500 inc. VAT.
- c. The Solar Energy firm Treadlighter have been consulted about the possibility of installing solar panels on the south roof slope. A quotation based on a 3.90kWp SPV System is £6,194 inc. VAT. The payback period would be 12.3 years and the installation would generate 3139kWh annually. The total benefit over 20 years would be £11,516. This would need to be done before March 2019 when the "feed in" tariff is being abolished.
- d. The other possibility is to demolish and rebuild the Store. PC has looked at "log cabin" structures and prefabricated buildings and these would incur costs over £50,000 to £120,000.

The committee queried the need to upgrade what is essentially a storeroom and AL wondered if money could be spent providing some similar facilities for site 3 which has  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the plots. It was agreed that in view of the fact that there is asbestos, no insulation and rust in the reinforcements repairing, upgrading and refurbishing should remain "on the agenda".

**vi. "Better plot Competition"**

EC reported that she has reported fully in this month's edition of the Bulletin. In essence the competition is very similar but has a different name! It was agreed to put the score sheet on the web site as a means of encouraging members to become involved. Nominations will be asked for in May/June.

**Action: EC & Jean Crawford**

**vii. Granard School class project**

JS reported that small groups (6) will be visiting one afternoon every fortnight after Easter.

**4. Chair's report**

**i. Lease / Charity update**

JS reported that she and A. Fitzsimmons are meeting with Justine Greening MP and representatives from WBC on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March.

**ii. Hedgehogs**

JS quoted Brenna Lattimore's report that there have been several hedgehog sightings in the allotments and surrounding areas, and a number of RGS Members and plot holders have expressed interest in providing habitat for these increasingly rare little creatures on their plots and in their gardens. She has been in touch with Emma Pooley at the London Wildlife Trust and she has agreed to come to the Site 2 store on April 22nd to give a talk on hedgehog ecology, protection, and how to encourage hedgehogs. She will also be teaching us how to conduct hedgehog surveys on our sites, to find out just how many hedgehogs are around and feed this important data back to the London Wildlife Trust. A poster with more details on this talk will be put up on the noticeboard outside the shop and on the gates of both sites week beginning 26 March (just before Easter). **Action: JS & Brenna Lattimore**

Meanwhile, if you have seen a hedgehog please report this information to the London Wildlife Trust on their website, <http://www.wildlondon.org.uk/hedgehog>. "

**iii. RHS visit Friday Evening 22<sup>nd</sup> June 7.30 – 9.30pm**

RHS have confirmed that a team of members (usually 4) from the RHS Fruit, Vegetable and Herb Committees will come and discuss all aspects of crop production such as ground preparation, cultural techniques, varietal choice, and pest and disease control. (Please see attached profiles)

The event can be a Q&A session, a Walkabout or combination of both. JS has assured them that we will have at least 40 attendees.

They need to know what format we want and how many people will attend. The committee felt that they would like a Q & A session rather than a "walkabout".

EB agreed to co-ordinate this event and JS suggested sending a "save the date" to see how many people respond. When we have an idea of numbers we can find a suitable venue. It was agreed that questions would have to be sent in advance.

**Action: EB**

**5. Treasurer's report**

i. JH reported that the invoices were sent on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February and thanked Robert Linton for doing this. Payments are being made at a steady rate.

ii. She has seen a "contactless" machine for Debit Cards which can be used for payments under £20 for no extra fee and agreed to research this further. EB offered to help.

**Action: JH EB**

**6. Allotment Secretaries' reports**

**Site 2** MR reported: -

**Plot Lettings/changes:**

- Plot 26A (2.5 rods) has now been let the Tenancy Agreement signed on 18 February. He pays full rent and does not have a PHP.
- Plot 41 (4 rods) the current plot holders wish to downsize as a result of increased work commitments.
- Plot 17 (5 rods). The current plot holder has expressed an interest in downsizing by reducing the size of his plot. I am due to meet with him (together with GO'R) to measure the plot and agree a new boundary. This will then release a section of his plot to offer to someone on the waiting list once the new boundaries have been agreed. He has been asked not to pay his invoice until this is agreed.

**Situations which are being monitored:**

- Plot 31A (4.5 rods). The current plot holder wishes to downsize by reducing the size of his current plot. GO'R has been monitoring this situation for some time and we met with the tenant on 24 February to try and agree a solution. This did not prove straightforward, as the tenant has requested that he retain all but a small area measuring between 1.44 and 1.2 rods depending on the location of the boundary. His house backs on to his plot and he wishes to retain the gate from his garden on the smaller plot. My suggestion is that we should accept the tenant's request and offer the remaining portion of the original plot to someone on site 2 who has requested more land. I will discuss this with SG on her return. If she agrees to this solution, the next people on the waiting list for extra land will be offered the smaller portion of the plot as an add-on to their current plot.
- Plot 44A (3 rods). The current plot holder was issued with a Termination of Tenancy Notice against which she appealed to Wandsworth. Her Appeal was overturned by Jerry Birtles of Enable and so on 10 January I wrote to the tenant re-issuing the Termination of Tenancy Notice and advising the tenant that the plot must be vacated by 7 February. At the tenant's request we extended the end-

date to 25 February but this date has not been honoured. We are now waiting to see when her items will finally be removed. Shirley Gillbe (Site Manage) has suggested that she writes to the plot holder giving her one week to clear her possessions or relinquish them. **Action: SG**

- Plot 40: GO'R has been in weekly contact with the homeowner whose fence fell into plot 40. He is a very elderly man and is waiting to discuss it with his sister who has had an accident. GO'R will call again when the weather has improved. In the meantime, the fence has been pushed into his garden, at his suggestion.

**Site 3** HF reported:

**Lettings:**

- **Plot 110C:** (3 rods) This plot seemed to be abandoned and it has been re-let
- **Plot 115B:** (2 rods) The plot holder has moved away so the plot has been re-let
- **Plot 95** The current plot holder wants to give up half his plot so I am currently negotiating the split then will let the newly created plot. This is consistent with objective 1.3 in the **Objectives and Procedure on Offering Plots to Let:**

- *"To enable more people to enjoy cultivating a plot, large plots may be split. Consideration will be given to the long-term manageability and integrity of the whole site."*

It was agreed that HF should use her discretion when dealing with this matter but will act in accordance with objective 1.3 in the 'Objectives and Procedure on Offering Plots to Let' policy.

**Evictions:**

- **Plot 84B**

**Problem plots:**

- **Plot 80A** plot holder aware
- **Plot 118B** plot holder aware
- **Vivien Fowler** has agreed to manage the peripheral plots, numbers 50 to 99 inclusive and is in the process of being eased into the role. Her contribution is very welcomed as I am sure it will be very valuable and will make managing site 3 more enjoyable and robust.
- **Toilet shed repairs:**

Some wooden panels near the ground on the outside of the toilet shed need replacing. It will need re-painting and the brambles behind the shed need to be eradicated. Artan has been asked to quote for this work. JS agreed to ask him for a quotation. **Action: JS**

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

Loach, our main Supplier, have published their price list for 2018. They have kept their prices the same except where their suppliers have increased theirs. Nitrogen has increased in price and Scott Chemicals, whose brands include Bug Clear, Evergreen and Miracle-Gro, have increased their prices for the first time in 7 years. As a consequence, some prices may have to increase.

Some committee members felt that selling Enviromesh by the metre on a large roll was difficult to manage and the remaining stock has been cut up into a variety of lengths.

GWT reported that Loach sell enviromesh by Agralan in packs in a variety of lengths. No details are available regarding the size/ weight of mesh. We will purchase a few packs to see how this sells. It will be more expensive than the Wondermesh we have sold in the past. This sells at £4 per metre @ 3.60 metres wide. Agralan Enviromesh will sell at £11.00 for size 1.83 X 3m, £14.50 for 2.1 X 4.5m and £20.00 for 2.6x 5 m. GW agreed to try to source a roller that Enviromesh could be stored on as this would make cutting from a large roll much simpler. **Action: GW**

**8. Bulletin Editor's Report**

The committee agreed that the new printers had done a good job with this month's Bulletin. The deadline for the April bulletin is **26<sup>th</sup> March.**

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

It was agreed to fix the date for the early plot inspection by email.

**Action: SG, MR, HF and VF**

**10. AOB**

Due to the rapid thaw on Saturday 3rd March in the morning, there was a burst pipe in the store. Luckily it happened when the store was open and quick action was taken by JH, VF and Sue McDonald. The mess was cleared up and the pipe was fixed that afternoon. The pipes in the toilets on both sites were frozen but luckily did not burst. It was agreed that the cold spell had been exceptional.

The next meeting will be held on **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> May at 9am** in the store.

There will be no meeting on April 1<sup>st</sup>, which is Easter Sunday