Minutes of the Roehampton Garden Society Committee Meeting held on Sunday 1 March 2020 at 9.00am

1. **Present**: Helen Finch (Chair) welcomed Gill Tamsett, Ali Linton, Catherine Maunsell-Bower (Minutes), Jackie Savage, Patrick Crawford, Vivien Fowler, Elaine Barnwell, Elizabeth Smart, Carol Martinez, Brenna Lattimore and Greg Willcox.

   **Apologies**: Mike Cooper and Charles Gillibe

2. Minutes of meeting held on Sunday 2 February 2020 agreed ex committee and signed.

3. **Declaration of AOB** items: CM-B

4. **Matters arising** (not agenda items)
   (i) **Water on site 3 (PC)**

   PC reported that Wandsworth Council are awaiting a revised quotation from Thames Water for the new connection to the mains. Once this has been received, it will be sent to the Contractor, Wandsworth Building Services so they can accept the quotation and arrange for the work to commence. PC will continue to chase Wandsworth and will provide an update as soon as possible.

   VF asked on which side of the main path the tanks would be situated and PC confirmed that they would be positioned on the inner side. VF then asked if we could keep the old tanks to use as planters etc., and PC said that he would talk to the contractors nominated for their disposal and advised that it would be easiest to ask the contractors to put them all in a designated place and the tenants should be emailed to take them away as soon as possible.

   (ii) **Lease Renewal (PC)**

   PC confirmed that there had been no further action with regard to the renewal of the lease between the RGS and Wandsworth Council. As previously stated, once the renewal of the water supply on Site 3 was near completion, negotiations will **resume with Wandsworth Council**.

5. **Chair’s report (HF)**
   (i) **Progress on projects:**
   **Project 1: Social shed on site 3**: Location will be on plot 68 next to the toilet shed. VF has done a lot of work towards this project – many thanks. JS has agreed to be Project Manager. The committee agreed that JS would take the project forward.

   **Project 2: solar panels for site 3 social shed**: we need power to drive at least a kettle (2 to 3 KW) and maybe a shredder in future.

   PC informed the Committee that an allotment holder with considerable experience in the use of solar power had provided details of an off grid solar panel installation for the proposed shed on Site 3. The details were explained by PC who also stated that he had
been in contact with the manufacturer of the shed to confirm the practicality of installing solar panels on the roof. He has, similarly, been in touch with the solar panel manufacturer about the use of their panels. Once he has heard further from these companies he will provide an update.

PC stated that proposals included LED lighting for the shed as well as a 1.5kw kettle. Committee members were concerned that such a small kettle would be inadequate for users of the shed. Therefore, PC confirmed that he will consult further to see how a larger, more suitable kettle could be accommodated.

**Project 4**: Mains power on site 3: Have obtained an estimate from UK Power of £4,600 just to get a mains hub. There would also be additional costs guessed at £1000-1,500 to get a meter and power sockets installed. We will need to choose between solar or mains soon once we get more info about solar.

**Project 5**: **social shed on site 2**: The plan is to use space near the store so power can be accessed.

**Project 6**: **The store doors**: The majority of the committee (9 to 2) voted to replace the doors rather than ‘make do and mend’. This project will go ahead asap.

**Project 10**: **Drainage from store kitchen**: A soak away needs to be dug and the sink and water butts drained into it. This project will go ahead asap.

**Project 13**: **Gazebos for the summer show on site 2**. One gazebo has been bought and will be tested before buying 3 more plus guttering which will fill the hard standing area.

(ii) **Tree on site 2**
Lime tree has been pruned by Allium Gardeners for £120. Thank you to EB for arranging this.

(iii) **RGS calendar**
This has been updated and circulated with the agenda. HF proposes to send it out with the agenda before each committee meeting.

(iv) ** Wandsworth Heritage Festival**: DHERA are organizing a guided tour on 30th May 2020. Are we happy to participate? They want:
- information about the history of the allotments;
- someone to manage tours of the allotments on the day;
  - raise awareness of DHERA Heritage tour – they suggest in the Bulletin;
  - maybe an email also as plot holders would need to know it was happening.
JS kindly offered to liaise with Claire Leiper who is the DHRA contact.

(v) **President**: HF emailed Justine Greening on 5th February - no reply so far. **Action HF**

6. **Treasurer’s report (EB)**
   (i) **Bank Accounts**
Scottish Widows (SW) account closed and money moved to Lloyds main account (approx £8.5k).
10k now in a Lloyds 12 month Fixed term interest bearing account, with 1.05% interest (SW was interest bearing, but very low).
In 12 months that money will yield £105 (half a gazebo!).
There is approx £25k in the current account and that will increase over the next month or so as the rents get paid. It is possible to put money in a 32 day notice account with an interest rate of 0.75%. Therefore, considering doing so once all the rent money is in and then just have to give 32 days notice when it is needed.

(ii) Amazon purchases
There is now a RGS Amazon account with the RGS DD card loaded in it, for use by those who need it, Gill, Helen, Jackie.

(iii) Invoices
All the invoices were sent out (by Robert) on 17th Feb. They were then transferred to WAVE (the accounting software) and ready to be checked off as the payments occur. The money will be categorised into rent, water, insurance, membership this year, as WAVE is better able to handle those categories than excel.
As of today’s committee meeting approx 80 have been paid, expect most will come in at the end of March.

(iv) Reserve Fund if RGS is a Charity
CM-B reported that the decision to hold a reserve fund lies entirely in the hands of the trustees. The key factor is that, in the event it is decided to hold a reserve fund, then it must be declared in the governance policy.

EB had also conducted some research into this subject and CM-B concurred with her that there is no mandatory requirement that a reserve fund must be held by a charity. Charities’ income is derived from various sources and the trustees must decide the best way to utilise that income for the objects of the charity.

If there are no liabilities, then there would be no need to have a reserve fund. However, if there is a likelihood that there will be running costs and income is infrequent such as every six months from the shows etc., then it would be prudent to have a reserve fund to tide us over throughout the year.

Further, in the event there are extraordinary expenses that arise from time to time such as a new roof or door for the store, then it would be sensible to hold a certain amount of the income back until there is enough to pay for such an item. It is always possible to raise money specifically for an extraordinary item or this expenditure could be covered from additional administrative charges specifically for the objects of the charity. Solar panels would be considered an extraordinary item as would the social hut/sheds.

7. Trading secretary’s report (GWT)
GWT reported that she had received the 2020 catalogue from Loach, our main supplier, with new prices as of 1st February. There is a slight increase in prices, often no more than a few pence. Prices will be checked as we reorder items but it is expected that few prices will need to be increased.

JS and GWT visited the Allotment Event at Provender Nurseries in Swanley, Kent to source items for the Store. Although discounts were on offer, prices were not as competitive as in
previous years. However, Secateurs and hand tools were well priced and 2 thyme plants for the communal herb bed on Site 2 were purchased.

8. Allotment secretaries’ reports:

Site 3: Site Secretary Report – Outer Area (VF)

Lettings
Six plots have become available. Two have been let, one will be let in March after the plot has been cleared. Three yet to be viewed.

Plot Inspections
Plot 58A – tenancy terminated
Plots 81A and 82B require clearance

Problems with Neighbours
Estate managers contacted re condition of fences abutting entrance path to Site 3.
Confirmation still awaited as to who owns the fence to 164 Dover House Road – council, owner or RGS? Fence needs repair after damage by strong winds. VF to contact owner of 150 DH Road re ivy spreading over sub-station.

Other matters
Manure payments better in late February

(i) Site 3: (plots 101 to 127) Site Secretary’s report (AL)

Lettings:
Plot 120B has been re-let
Plot 105A will be re-let
Plot 109C will be re-let

9. Site 2: Site Secretary’s Report

Lettings
Four plots have become available.

- Plot 18A – 1.5 rods
- Plot 38A – 2 rods
- Plot 40 - 5 rods The plot will be divided
- Plot 40F – 2 rods

No lettings have taken place but viewings are underway.

Problems: there are 5 plots that as of concern and are being monitored/investigated.


CM reported that Ray Clements has died. His death will be mentioned in the next Bulletin. The next bulletin will be published on April 2020.

10. Show Secretaries’ Report (CM)

CM mentioned that the next show meeting is to take place on Saturday the 7th March in the store. With luck, she is hoping that we will know more about the gazeboes by then. She will be testing the gazebo she has purchased next Sunday the 8th March and would like members of the committee to attend at the store at 9.30 am.
11. **Site Manager’s Report (CG)** Nothing to report.

12. **PR: Enable Allotment Update & Gardeners’ World allotment visit & Stratham Close Community Garden (JS)**

   JS has declined an offer from a teacher to come with her pupils to weed and water our plots. She was concerned that a group of young pupils might do more harm than good and would need monitoring.

13. **Events and Diary dates:**
   - Gardeners’ Question Time (JS, CG): HF to investigate St Mary’s Church as a venue and start the application process
   - Gardening Quiz: HF will look into the possibility of doing this at the AGM in October.
   - AGM: This will take place on the 15th October 2020.
   - Alternative event to Guy Fawkes bonfire night
   - Sharpening event: To take place on 3 May 2020.

14. **AOB:** Not discussed due to lack of time.

   **Date of the next meeting Sunday 5 April 2020 at 9am at the store.**