

**RGS Committee Distance Reports Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> October**  
**Zoom meeting: Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020 9am**

Text in blue records the zoom meeting.

**Present at the Zoom meeting:** Helen Finch (Chair), Elaine Barnwell, Liz Chrominska, Patrick Crawford, Dorcas Johnson (Treasurer-in-waiting), Alison Linton (host), Carol Martinez, Catherine Maunsel-Bower, Jackie Savage and Gill Tamsett.

**Apologies:** Mike Cooper, Vivien Fowler, Brenna Lattimore, Charles Gillbe and Greg Willcox

Helen welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1. Sign off the record** (attached) of the distance meeting reports from Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**2. Matters arising not on the agenda:** None

**2. Chair's report: (HF)**

- i) **AGM format and election of committee:** All those agreeing to continue to serve on the committee have been nominated and seconded. This information has been circulated to the membership by email and notices on both sites with an appeal for more to join us. I am very pleased to say that Emma Blackwell will be joining the committee nominated by Jackie and seconded by Penny Baker.
- ii) **Members only area on website:** This idea has been under discussion but put on hold for now. The idea was to keep committee minutes in this area and maybe some other items would be good to keep for members only. As we have spent a lot of money this year I feel it is better not to do anything in any way cryptic so prefer to keep our publishing of committee minutes the same as last year so all is transparent.
- iii) **RGS tea towel:** It has been suggested by a plot holder to have some RGS tea towels printed to be sold as a fund raiser. The idea is to have the Google Earth print of both sites on it with reference to RGS. She has found a company called 'Magic Textiles' who can do between 100 and 500 for £2.89 + VAT = about £3.50 so we could sell them for £4.50. They claim that the print is good quality. Do you think it is a good idea having RGS tea towels for sale? How would we market them? Any other comments about this?

It was agreed that in principle we should encourage suggestions from members. GT felt the Store is for garden equipment and not merchandising. Another plot holder Nicole Pound who made PPE has offered reversible masks, as we ask people to wear them it was agreed to have some. AL agreed to co-ordinate this and pack them in individual bags. The idea of tea towels and aprons was 'put on hold' until the pandemic is behind us. **Action: HF report to Marianna and AL Nicole**

- iv) **Council rubbish collection:** I have been in touch with Valerie Selby at Enable. She intends for us to have a collection but don't know when yet.
- v) **Notices on site:** Putting notices on the back of the gates is not eco - lots of plastic and the heat in the summer destroys the adhesive and it is not possible to get it to stick if the gate is wet. HF recommends we just use the existing notice boards on each site and investigate similar boards near the back gates on each site. What do the committee think about this idea? VF has offered to look into a more satisfactory way of displaying notices and her offer was gratefully accepted.
- vi) **RGS constitution:** (this issue has been brought up by EB) Our current constitution needs updating but now is not the time as it would need to be ratified by the membership usually at the AGM. Once we are able to meet it may be sensible to take a revised constitution to the membership at an EGM. *post meeting from JS: The constitution was rewritten as part of our application to become a Charity. It was accepted by the charity commission.*

### 3. Projects:

**Project 1: Communal cabin site 3 (JS)** The internal work on the cabin is on hold until we have power to site 3. However externally work continues. The C Natural shed was moved by a team of volunteers on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> Oct and this has opened up the entrance to the cabin. The trench is ready for the cable which will run up to the point where we will have an external socket next to the proposed shredder shed. GW has re-started to landscape the area between Bob's plot and the communal area. Once the fence has been erected the area behind the cabin will be clear for painting.

**Project 2: Power on site 3 (JS)** Dave Moss (electrician) and HF and JS met with UKPN surveyor on 13<sup>th</sup> October. We were advised that everything looked in place and which GRP cabinet (the box where all the connections are made and where the meter is installed) the electrician should buy. This is now on order and due in early November. However, as it is coming from Wales DM has advised us not to book a firm date with UKPN to dig their trench and make their connection until we have it on site. We think we are looking at having power to site at end of November.

**Project 5: Social area on site 2 (CM)** The paving is finished and the shed has been moved. The gravel area is still to be finished and this will be done by Graham. Lee will be building the raised flower beds from pallets. The shed (tea hut) is being painted but needs a panel replacing which Greg is looking at. A new shed has been purchased to put the shredder in which will be moved once it has been checked by an electrician and we are sure the sockets are in good order.

**4. Water on site 3 (PC)** All works for the new water supply have been completed by the Contractor with the exception of a few holes to expose a section of pipework which was requested by Thames Water. This will be completed this week.

The Contractor and Wandsworth Council are also liaising with Thames Water for them to complete their work. PC will continue to chase the Contractor and Wandsworth Council and report back to the Chairman when he has further information.

**5. Lease renewal (PC)** Again, Cllr Sutters has written to the Officers at Wandsworth Council asking for an update about the renewal of the lease. To date, PC has not heard further from her but will continue to chase this matter and report to the Committee when he has received a reply.

### 7. i) Treasurer's report: (EB)

**AGM Fin reports** - These will be produced for the last financial year – i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 to 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2020, nothing beyond.

**Special Projects** – Total spend on Special Projects in last Fin year was **£15,426.01** – gazebos, store door, soakaway and approx £7,205.26 for Sonia Sawyer tea cabin so far. (Sonia Sawyer had left RGS approx. £8,400 in her will which was in the Scottish Widows account) In current financial year, currently spent £2,796.99- site2 tea area.

**UKPN Electric on Site3** - The initial quote was for £4,618.80 and has been paid. Waiting for the cabinet to arrive in order to set the UKPN installation date. Once the installation date is known, will then contact EDF. EDF now taking orders again and will take 6-8 weeks from when ordered received. Expect approx. another **£5k** for electric to be completed.

**EDF accounts** – when site3 eventually gets electric, EDF will create a new account for that site. Therefore, RGS will have two EDF accounts (2 meters), but can still have one login account to the website.

**Water** – When site3 water setup is completed, it should be set up with Castlewater, as that is the supplier for site2.

**Maintenance Costs** – For last financial year (Oct 2019-Sep2020) the total maintenance costs were **£3,841.40**. So far this year £380 has been spent on maintenance (rubbish removal site2).

**Treasurer Tasks** - Have created a document of all the Treasurer related activities, it's been reviewed by Helen and sent to Dorcas and also stored on Google Drive. Continued to spend time with Dorcas going through WAVE and some of the RGS processes.

**8. i) Trading Secretary's Report:** (GWT) The garlic is selling well as are bean seeds. More deliveries of Country Natural have been arranged as has one from our main supplier to ensure that we have items in stock to support seed sowing and winter tasks.

The new catalogues from Dobies are due any day and will be placed in the Store. We are members of the Allotment and Garden Council (AGC (UK)) which provides a 50% discount on seeds and 15% on other items such as plants. Members have to complete a form available at the Store to order.

(JS) The onions and most of the shallots sold out very quickly. We tried to order more but could only get shallots. We have ordered potatoes, onions and garlic for planting in the Spring. Should be in stock in Jan. The Kings seeds racks have been replenished with old favourites and new varieties. Last day of trading in the store is Sunday 6 Dec and we will re-open on Sunday January 10<sup>th</sup> 2021.

ii) **Site 3 store sheds** (HF): The shed housing the Country Natural has been moved to make space for an outdoor power socket for a shredder. The Country Natural shed has suffered in the move but ok for now but the sheds for the site 3 mini store will need to be rationalised probably in the new year.

## **9. Allotment Secretaries' reports:**

### **i) Site 2 (C MB)**

*Lettings:*

Plot 29A – 3.5 rods: A prospective plot holder has viewed the plot but is now concerned that it might be a little too big as a starter plot. He will be away until the 31<sup>st</sup> October but will let me know on his return if he has decided to keep the plot or wait for a smaller plot to become available. Should he decide to wait for a smaller plot, he has offered to assist in the meantime.

Plot 41C – 3.5 rods: A current plot holder at the top of the waiting list has been given until the 31<sup>st</sup> October to decide if she wishes to move to this plot. Quite a lot of work has been done to the plot to clear it of weeds. Awaiting confirmation.

### **ii) Site 3: outer area 50-100 (VF)**

*Lettings:* No lettings in October

*Site Inspections:* Plot 82D – irregular cultivation method on-going. Being monitored.

*Neighbours:* Plot 61A - decision made to insert barrier between plot and neighbour at rear to stop spread of bamboo.

*Other matters:* Manure deliveries – G O'Reilly to take over and to use Clapham Stables for supply.

**Inner area 101-127 (AL)** No plots have changed hands. Plots are generally well maintained.

**10. Bulletin Editor's report (CM)** The deadline for the next bulletin is Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November. This will feature any questions and answers from the AGM. If we receive from members any articles about how much their allotment meant to them during lockdown, these will be published too. It will be the last bulletin of the year and the next one will be January 4<sup>th</sup> when hopefully we will have received the potatoes.

**11. Show Chair's report (CM)** Nothing to report

**12. Site Manager's report** (CG) Nothing to report

**13. PR:** (JS) Nothing to report

**14. Events and Diary dates:**

- Gardeners' Question Time (CG) :
- AGM 12/11/20

**15. AOB - The toilets: (JS)** There is a significant demand from plot holders to re-open the toilets. If you live a bus ride away (and most do) then it is very difficult to manage to attend your plot for any length of time. To do this we would need to have a strict cleaning regime, as well as provide hand sanitiser, kitchen roll etc. Firstly we need to see how many people would volunteer on each site and who would take the lead. The lead would need to draw up the rota, check it is done, buy the loo rolls and cleaners etc.

There is an alternative that I would like to propose: we pay a plot holder to clean the toilets 3 times a week – one person on each site. And that to do this we raise a Toilet Levy of £5 per year. We have 250 plot holders so we would raise £1,250. £625 per site per year. Which is £12 per week per site. Or £4 per clean.

Or we could raise our membership fees (for full members) from £5 to £10 per year to achieve the same result.

**(HF)** If we think it is a good idea to pay for toilet cleaning we will need to take it to the membership at the AGM. We would need to have someone to manage the cleaner and ensure the toilets were cleaned when away. With Covid on the increase my feeling is it's not the right time to open the toilets but it may be worth having a plan for when we think it is the right time. I certainly would not be happy about opening the toilets before the R value is below 1. Please have your thoughts ready for our Zoom meeting.

There was a great deal of discussion. The following were agreed:

- I. It was acknowledged that the toilets are necessary especially for members, sometimes elderly and particularly those dependent on public transport.
- II. EB's suggestion (that we provide cleaning materials to enable members to clean the loo before and after use) was considered the safest option as the toilets would be cleaned after each use.
- III. Masks must be worn and a notice with instructions for use will be provided.
- IV. The idea of paying some one to clean was dismissed as that person would need to be managed.
- V. A rota system would be reinstated and the role would be to remove rubbish (weekly) and check that there are plenty of cleaning materials.
- VI. It was agreed that they would re-open after lockdown and the installation of the extractor fans, probably sometime next year.

**Thank you Liz and Elaine!** HF noted that this is the last meeting for Liz who has been on the committee for 11 years, and Elaine who has done 3 years. They were both thanked for their contribution. DJ added that she was indebted to Elaine for handing over the details regarding the Treasurers job and she is especially grateful to her.

Date of the next meeting **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020**