

## **RGS Committee Distance Reports By Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

**Reports from:** Helen Finch (HF), Jackie Savage (JS), Elaine Barnwell (EB), Patrick Crawford (PC), Carol Martinez (CM), Gill Tamsett (GT), Catherine Maunsell-Bower (CMB), Alison Linton (AL), Vivien Fowler (VF), Charles Gillbe (CG). Report amalgamated by HF

**1. Sign off the amalgamated reports** (attached) of the meeting held on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020 agreed ex committee.

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

- i) **Covid-19 and allotments:** No cases of Covid-19 amongst plot holders have been reported. Need to prepare for opening the toilet huts and upgrading hygiene so HF will prepare a paper for discussion. It has been very heartening to see plot holders helping out on plots where the plot holder is unable to come to their own plot. A huge 'Thank you' to all who have helped out.
- ii) **Zoom meeting:** There will be issues that need some discussion. Is everyone up for a Zoom meeting?  
**Action All**
- iii) **Committee from AGM 2020:** Please would you let me know what your intentions are regarding staying on the committee or resigning from the committee as of the AGM date 15/10/20. Elaine has given notice of leaving the Committee October 2020 so we are looking for another Treasurer. Many thanks to Elaine for all she has done for the RGS.  
**Action All**
- iv) **Store opening:** Re-opened on 17<sup>th</sup> May. The card reader has been a great success - easy to use for both store keeper and customer. Takings have been very good and it looks like we are in profit (about £1,000) in spite of being closed for 7 weeks (see PDF of accounts).
- v) **RGS President:** No word from Justine Greening so we take it as a tacit resignation. Any ideas for a new RGS President?  
**Action All**

### **3. Projects:**

**Project 1: Communal shed site 3 (JS)** The base was completed and the cabin delivered by 29 May. Then on 4 June the cabin was erected. Water pipe and drainage are in position ready for connection and there is a conduit laid behind the cabin ready for electric connection if required. If you haven't seen it please try and go along, it is very attractive already even though it needs painting as does the fence behind. Next steps will be to fit it out and make connections. Also we will be fitting guttering and a downpipe to a water butt. We will also eventually change the lock to match the site key.  
MANY THANKS TO VIVIEN FOR HER CALM AND EFFICIENT ORGANISATION AS WELL AS FOR HER FLAIR.

EB has raised a safety concern about the head height clearance on the side of the new cabin (right side as you look towards it). Anyone over approx 5ft 8' (1.7m), would have to bend their head to get under and could easily hit their head on it. EB believes this is a safety issue for RGS members. RGS is acting on behalf of the council using council land. Unless it is enough to just put up height warning signs (needs checking), one easy way to make safe would be to have wooden bar across that side, preventing people from walking through that side. Not sure if already aware, but please note that according to the Tuin website, if electric is to be supplied to the cabin it will need to conform to building regs.

HF: JS The power will be installed by properly certificated electricians to ensure it is done safely and compliant with regulations. JS does not agree that the cabin structure needs to conform to building regs. CMB is looking into the building reg.

#### **Project 2: Solar Power on site 3 (PC)**

PC states that he will be in a position to provide a report on his findings and recommendations on the use of off grid power by the middle of June. He would then welcome comments from Committee members as to how this matter can best be progressed.

**Project 5: Social shed on site 2 (CM):** weeding done and ground needs to be levelled - by Graham Scott and Florence Terry. Many thanks to them for this hard work. Some different surfaces have been considered - a summary is attached. Please would you indicate which surface you think will be best.

**Action All**

### **4. Water on site 3 (PC)**

Following the recent spate of water leaks on Site 3, PC has written to Wandsworth Council urging them to provide him with an update as to when the renewal of the water supply on Site 3 will commence. He will write further once he has received a reply from Wandsworth.

PC has now heard further from Wandsworth Council. They state that the appointed contractor, Westminster building Services, are in a position to commence the renewal of the water supply on Site 3. However, the problem is still with Thames Water as they have yet, I understand, to provide a revised quotation. Wandsworth have promised to continue to chase this matter and will write again once they have further news. PC will continue to chase them.

## 5. Lease renewal (PC)

Given the situation with the renewal of the Water Supply on Site 3 and the present Covid outbreak, PC continues to report that there is no further progress with the lease renewal. Nonetheless, once he has received an update on the renewal of the water supply, he will write to Cllr. Steffi Sutters to try and progress matters.

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

ii) See *attached* PDF for the current listing of all accounts. This shows a breakdown by category, income, expense etc.

- i. **Outstanding Invoices** - The two outstanding from last report have now been paid, last one paid on 1st June. All of the Associate members that had not paid after being chased were removed from the database and gmail contacts.
- ii. **New Associate members** - A handful have signed up since start of the year – some were sent invoices from WAVE.
- iii. **Card Reader** - The SUMUP card reader has been purchased and set up and been used since the store reopened. Easy to use for volunteers and members. The payments to date have been circa £1800. SUMUP requires further verification to allow payments to go over £5000 – still “discussing” this with them.
- iv. **Special Projects** – total spent to date on the projects is **£9,169.88** – gazebos, store door, soakaway and approx. £5,600 for Sonia Sawyer tea cabin so far.
- v. **Water bill** – now switched to Direct Debit which they have set to £6/month, because RGS is in so much credit, due to their bonkers way of calculating bills! Having looked at the readings in May 2019 and recent May 2020 reading the usage calculation appears to come out at approx. £750/year. Hopefully, now DD is in place this will eventually even out correctly when the next water reading is submitted.
- vi. **Maintenance** – If base on the actual annual rent collected this year, after the 80% of rent collection is paid to Enable, RGS will have approx. £3360 for maintenance. As of 3rd June, RGS has spent £3,243.94 of which £1645 has been work on/clearing plots. Circa £116 left of the remainder (the 20%) to last until Sept 30<sup>th</sup> 2020. Anything over that will require use of RGS funds to cover. Key cutting/locks is separate at £243 – included in maintenance.
- vii. **Gate/Store Locks** – Two key cylinders recently purchased – one for gate on site 2 and a spare. As a result some investigation found the following:
  - a. The retail price for this type of cylinder is approx. £60, we paid £81.
  - b. The patent expired in 2011, this means that technically anyone could cut the key now, no longer illegal. Whether they could get the exact blanks is another matter. Some locksmiths have ways!
  - c. The key profile is with Sure Lock Homes (SLH) and registered with EVVA (manufacturer). Once SLH ceases to trade he cannot continue to have the registration. The profile registration is what forces RGS to stay with him, not the patent. SLH can charge whatever price they like. They do have to get the cylinders and blanks from EVVA and apparently as it is now old, the production run is very low and therefore costs a lot and will continue to rise.
  - d. If we wanted to change all the gate cylinders and keys – I was quoted £42/cylinder and £6/ key for the first 500 keys and then £9/key over 500 – plus VAT. This would be patented, but **not** be tied indefinitely to a specific locksmith, so would always be able to shop around to get good price. Therefore:
    - i. 4 cylinders and 500 keys would be £3168+VAT = £3,802
    - ii. 4 cylinders and 400 keys would be £2568+VAT = £3,082

viii.

- ix. **Church Hall for Autumn show** – need to decide by early July and let Church know whether RGS wants to cancel September booking.

**8. i) Trading Secretary's Report: (GT)**

The Store has been busy with social distancing being maintained. We are restocking as required although not all items ordered are readily available.

We have stopped selling the Clover Peat Compost. We have increased the amounts of New Horizon Peat Free Compost that we order. However we were unable to receive the 50 bags of New Horizon All Plant Compost ordered and instead received 15!

We have now received the 1.5 Kilo boxes of Bonemeal but not the boxes of Growmore. These are useful for the Click and Collect service on Site 3. The buckets of Pelleted Chicken Manure are proving popular.

Having been advised that Westfield had stopped producing their Growbags for this season and that none were in stock at both our suppliers, we received then 6 with our last order from our main supplier.

So these are still challenging times but hopefully we are meeting the majority of our members' needs.

ii) Online offering (JS) We offered our first Click and Collect (of 8 of our most popular lines) for site 3 only on 30 May. The main purpose was to keep the queue down on site 2 for the Store and to discourage cash changing hands, as well as making it easier for site 3 plot holders to buy heavy bags. 14 people ordered and over £250 was taken. We are also offering this on 7 June, but restricted purchases to a maximum of 3 of any product – so far 6 people have ordered.

**9. Allotment Secretaries' reports:**

i) **Site secretaries' meeting (AL)**

- a) **Plot inspections – current status.** Several plots are being kept under control by kind neighbours if the tenant unable to come to plot. Some real problem plots on both sites where the plot holder should be able to tend their plot.
- b) **July plot inspections** – Agreed to have formal inspections sooner rather than later to address problem plots. Agreed date: Thursday June 25<sup>th</sup>. The plot holders will be notified by email and notices on gates and notice boards at the end of May **Action HF** (done). Inspections carried out in pairs: site 3 Ali and Vivien. Site 2 Catherine and Helen. Staged letters will be sent if called for
- c) **Rubbish** – cost of clearances and how to deal with 'build up'. Agreed to add tick boxes to tenancy agreement the highlighted points from the tenancy agreement. **Action HF Done**
- d) **Paths, fences and gates:** VF suggested having a facilities manager. Something to bear in mind.
- e) **Use of Site Sec Gmail:** Not being used by VF, CMB and AL who has linked it to her personal email. Agreed to abandon them. No need to remove them though.
- f) **GDPR** - self audit using instructions on Privacy Policy. To send copy with the site Secretaries bits highlighted. **Action HF** (done)
- g) **AOB:** Agreed to have a real meeting at distance. Date 2<sup>nd</sup> July at 10am. Venue TBC.

ii) **Site 2 (C MB)**

**Lettings:** None

**PROBLEMS:** Many of the problems are concerned mainly with untidy paths. There are some legitimate problems with removing rubbish during the lockdown and difficulties with access to the tip.

The PH emailed his objection to the termination on 12.5.2020 to the Chair setting out his reasons for his objection. A hard copy of the appeals procedure was also served on the PH on 14.5.2020 by the Chair with a covering letter saying any appeal would need to be conducted in writing rather than in person. No subsequent communication has been received from Mr Harston.

iii) **Site 3:**

**outer area 50-100** (VF)

**Lettings:** No lettings in May

**Plot Inspections:** Generally, most plots are excellently maintained and well cultivated. Two plot holders have not responded to emails sent over a month ago concerning the state of their plots. Letters to be sent if no improvement after 25 June inspection.

Plot 81A and 82A have finally been cleared of rubbish.

**Neighbours:** The Council fences on the entrance path are still awaiting repair. RGS offered to repair them as the main gate is difficult to open fully, and to invoice the Council. However the Council stated approx. 4 weeks ago that they will repair them.

**Inner area 101-127** (AL)

**Lettings:** There have been no lettings in June

**Plot Inspections:** I have done a pre-inspection tour and most of the untended plot holders have been in touch with us.

We will be doing full plot inspections on 25<sup>th</sup> June.

**10. Bulletin Editor's report** (CM)

deadline 22nd June. Will have a focus on photos of produce instead of show.

**11. Show Chair's report** (CM)

Still no decision about what we will do in September.

**12. Site Manager's report** (CG) Mr Harston plot 41C has until 12<sup>th</sup> June to remove all belongings which is the deadline for his eviction. No appeal has been received.

**13. Events and Diary dates:**

- Gardeners' Question time (CG) : No progress.
- Research feedback re lead on allotments (ES)
- AGM 15/10/20
- Alternative event to Guy Fawkes bonfire night

**14. AOB** - JS - Can we have another plant sale? Perhaps on site 3 quite soon? On a Saturday? Comments from HF: Difficulties with the need to queue to see the plants for sale as people want to cluster around the table to browse and buy. Need someone to organise it.

**Action All**

Date of the next meeting **Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2020** 9am Zoom meeting or Distance reports