

STREATLEY ALLOTMENT SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday 27th April 2021a at 7.30pm

In attendance: The serving Committee : Karen Morton (Chair), Imogen Smart (treasurer) Harry Beresford (Site Manager) Joan Holt (Social Secretary) , Diana Wheatley (Membership Secretary)Linda Palmer (Committee Secretary) Colin Smith (SPC Representative)

Plot holders: John Ashton, Pete Barefield, Colin and Anita Coughlan, Heather Dunthorne, Jeremy Gittins, Jane Howard, George Lovering, Jo Nicolson, Tom Worthington.

Apologies received from Sally Wicks.

- 1) The Chairman thanked everyone for attending, introduced the current committee members, and welcomed Colin Smith , the newly appointed representative on the Streatley Parish Council.
- 2) The minutes of the 2020 AGM were approved subject to the addition of Joan Holt as an attendee, and the correction of the names Worthington and Nicolson. These minutes will now be posted on the SPC website
- 3) **Membership:** Diana spoke to her report which had previously been circulated to all plot holders . Only one plot has changed hands in the past year. There are now 17 names on the waiting list.
- 4) **Site Management:** Harry spoke to his report , already circulated. He gave thanks to those who had spread chippings on the communal paths. Harry spoke about the problem of rabbits on site and how this was resolved. He expressed concern about the neglected paths and fences around certain plots.
In answer to a question from Linda about likely future problems on the site, Harry listed the replacement of one of the water troughs, the repair or replacement of the wooden edging boards on the western pathway, and the ongoing need to monitor plots generally.
- 5) **Social Secretary :** Joan had nothing to report as no events had taken place during the pandemic
- 6) **Finance:** Imogen went through her reports which had been circulated beforehand. There has been little expenditure during the year hence little change in the financial situation. However, the next financial year will include 2 payments for hedge trimming, probable expenditure on the water trough and path repairs, giving a projected loss over the year. Despite that the Committee is not proposing an increase in fees for 21/22
John Ashton asked about the costs of repairs. The water trough will be c£200, the paths and estimated £300. John suggested that some of the boards could be repaired with the support of new pegs, rather than complete replacement.

Harry had explored employing someone outside the society to repair the paths during the lockdown. It was agreed that a working party should be possible in the not too distant future and this would save labour costs.

Linda highlighted another possible expense over the coming year ie raising the fence northern boundary to stop people climbing over to retrieve ball. This causes damage to the rabbit proof fencing.

Joan and Dave Holt said that they, and maybe other plot holders, would be willing to pay a higher fee for their plot to relieve the financial pressure on others who feel unable to make additional contributions.

The accounts have been audited and approved.

- 7) **Chair's Report:** Karen explained that she had left her report until last as many of the points had already been covered in other reports.

In view of the increasing waiting list she advised the meeting that both Parish Councils had been approached to consider further provision. In Goring, unfortunately, the need for allotments had not been included in the Village Plan. Tom Worthington suggested using some of the 'spare' land between plots 32 and 35, and in the north eastern corner of the site next to 24 and 38. The later site would need a couple of years to clear and prepare for planting. The Committee will review and consider Tom's proposal.

Karen spoke of the need for a volunteer to act as Site Manager as this is such an important role. The tasks can be shared by more than one person, supported by other Committee Members.

Colin has been assisting the Committee in looking at options to improve the boundary between the Site and the Recreation Ground. Saplings had been planted and these need to be protected from being trampled. The SPC is unable to fund any improvements but the cost of materials to increase the height of the fence in the area required is about £400, and there would be no further costs if ploholders can provide the labour. As an alternative Colin suggested the erection of a stile for the use of youngsters retrieving their balls. This suggestion was not acceptable to members because of the need for the whole site to be secure.

Colin advised that he will continue to keep in mind the need for extra plots.

Karen thanked Colin for his support and his liaison with Goring PC.

- 8) **Nominations:** Prior to the meeting there had been no nominations for the committee. All those currently serving have agreed to continue apart from Harry who is stepping down after this meeting. Karen proposed thanks to Harry for his work as both Membership Secretary and Site Manager.

The lack of a replacement Site Manager presents considerable problems. The Committee may need to approach specific individuals to take on some of the functions.

Jane Howard offered to join the Committee without a specific role initially. This offer was gratefully accepted.

9) Any Other Business.

- a) Members had been asked to consider how long it is reasonable for a plot to be managed by paid help. Tom W expressed the view that it is preferable for a plot holder to employ help if illness or work commitments prevent them from tending their land. It was agreed that this is preferable to the site becoming over run. It should not be a long term arrangement, a maximum of 1 year was suggested. George asked if we are being unsympathetic to disabled people. Linda assured him that was not the Committees intention. It is very sensible for anyone having difficulties to find someone to assist them in whatever ways necessary. This would generally involve working side by side.
- b) Should there be a minimum expectation of how productive a plot is ?
Tom remembered one plot holder being persuaded to give up the plot as virtually no produce was grown. John reminded us that the tenancy agreement obliges us to act on behalf of the majority; if more than one or two people complain about their neighbouring plot the Committee would need to act.
- c) Suggested ideas for fundraising: The Committee can write bids to various Trusts and Funds.
Plot holders can make voluntary contributions.
Plant Sales
Dave Holt offered to get a band together for a fundraising event. This idea was greeted with enthusiasm especially as several plot holders are musicians.
The Committee will follow up these suggestions.
- d) February 2022 will be the 10th anniversary of the setting up of the Streatley Allotment Society. The first working party took place in April 2022. It was suggested that next year's AGM could be an opportunity to mark the anniversary. Joan and Imogen will look at ideas for a celebration.
- e) John A asked about this year's Parish Assembly. Karen reported that it had taken already taken place in virtual format.
- f) John offered a vote of thanks to the Chair and all other committee members.

The meeting closed at 20.50 pm