**Marlow Allotments Association Meeting: 3rd April 2023 at Britannia Pub 6.30pm**

Attendance: H Stevenson (Chair), S Miller (Secretary), M Talbot (Treasurer), J Stilliard (HH), R Harker (FP), Fred Tillier (FP), Denise Bagge (FP) Apologies: Ian Brown (HH), P Cooper (HH).

**1.Treasurer’s Report and membership -** Maren Talbot (MT) reported that although the seed discount would be coming through MAA faces payments due in respect of insurance and the website. Donations had not been strong & MAA needs to look at raising money. It was hoped that funds could be raised on donations for tools given to the MAA and from the Plant Sale. Membership, MT confirmed that there were 116 members.

**2.Waiting lists, vacant and neglected plots -** Marlow Town Council (MTC) had visited the sites in March to identify neglected plots in advance of the new renewal date. MTC will visit again in June when formal action will be taken where plots had not been cultivated. There are 23 people on the waiting list: 8 for Hanging Hill; 12 for Foxes Piece; and the remainder open to either site.

**3.End of Triangle Project -** SM reported that because there was no interest from groups or schools to use the Triangle, the MTC would now be looking to let the area as allotment plots. SM also explained what would now happen to the monies that had been raised for the Triangle. First, there is a lump sum held by the MTC from donations specifically for the work previously being undertaken on the Triangle site, hence this would continue to be available for persons with a disability who use the allotments. Secondly there was a grant for renovations from MTC which could now be used for the allotments more generally. Action: Committee members to put forward ideas so the grant might best be used, to be discussed at the next meeting in June.

**4.Overhanging and neglected trees and shrubs -** The Committee discussed the handling of clearance of overgrown brambles and shrubs around the sites and the need to encourage wildlife where possible. It was important that clearance by MTC should include removal of man-made rubbish embedded in the bushes and of derelict sheds, and welcomed the MTC’s intention to do this in the area behind the Surgery at Foxes Piece. The Committee discussed encouraging the long-term development of healthy hedgerows for birds and insects with new plants rather than a mono-culture of brambles. Action: DB to take forward with MTC.

**5. Badgers -** The committee discussed options for dissuading badgers from plots including using Perspex fences that they cannot climb and low voltage electric lines to circle crops and give them a mild shock. Action: SM to ask MTC to give a view on the use of electric lines around crops on an allotment plot.

**6.Events and bonfires -** SM said that the Mid-Summer BBQ Event is planned to go ahead as usual, there may be another popular Dahlia talk late summer. Action: SM to seek ideas for events and talks.

**7.Plant and Seed Sale -** The Plant and Seed Sale provided an opportunity to provide some needed funds for MAA. Tenants should be encouraged to sow a few extra seeds now to ensure there are plenty of spare plants in May for sale. Tables will be set up at Foxes Piece allotments and volunteers were needed to run the event. Action: DB to confirm a date, probably 27th May, taking into account the Coronation & the Horticultural Society’s plant sale. Committee members to confirm their availability. SM to include in the newsletter.

**8. Winter Work -** SM reported that weather had made this a challenging winter to make progress, however, pruning in the Communal Area had been very successful.

**9. Competition –** MTC hope to be holding an Allotment Competition this year. The Committee agreed that mid-June and the end of August would be good times for judging. Judges with a horticultural background were needed to make a proper assessment of the sites. Action: SM to advise MTC about possible sources for judges eg National Vegetable Society.

**10. Track Repairs -** SM reported that the worst of the holes had been filled as MTC had appointed a Contractor. It was agreed that it was important that tenants did not drive at speed on the track.

**11. Newsletter -** SM invited committee members to identify items for the next newsletter. This might include, for example: joining the MAA, the plant sale, successful communal pruning at HH and ideas for events.

**12. Woodchip bays -** A second wood chip bay had been built at Foxes Piece. The Committee agreed that it was appalling to note that a tenant had immediately filled it with rubbish before it could receive the woodchips.

**AOB - Renewal agreements -** The Committee noted that the notification for renewal did not appear to include a couple of usual items. First, there was no notification of “Notice to Quit” for tenants to sign and secondly, information about the proposed rent in the Financial Year 2024/25 (there is usually a 12 month notice of the rent). Action: SM to raise with MTC for clarification.

**Next Meetings** The next meeting will be at HH on Monday 12th June in Holland’s Hut. The following meeting will be on Tuesday 8th August at FP.