

The Marlow Allotments Association



Minutes of the Allotments Meeting – 05.02.2024 at 11.30pm, Marlow Donkey

Attendance:

Chair: Huw Stevenson (HS), Treasurer: Maren Talbot (MT), Secretary: Sylvia Miller (SM),
Minutes Secretary: John Stilliard (JS), Denise Bagge (DB), Ian Brown (IB), Fred Tillier (FT) & Richard Harker (RH)

Apologies: Pete Cooper

Appointment of minutes secretary:- John Stilliard was appointed.

Matters Arising from the last meeting & AGM

It was agreed that the AGM had gone smoothly and that the Mayor was supporting us. There was nothing from the last Allotment Meeting minutes apart from Pete Cooper saying that the fencing at the top of HH needed repair.

Treasurer's report & Membership

Report - The Treasurer's report was tabled and discussed and she will add more comments next time to aid understanding. MT plans to use a receipt book which would be useful to record cash memberships received.

The funds held in the bank were discussed. It was agreed that a good float was required and that a deposit account for the rest should be investigated. The report was approved. **Action MT to investigate deposit account.**

Membership - The aim is to get the ratio of tenants to memberships to more than 50%. Tenants are defined as the number of plots per household. FP has 117 tenants and 55 members – a ratio of 47%. HH is between 144 and 139 (MT & SM to check figures further) with 53 members, so the ratio is 46%.

DB requested new posters for the gates asking for people to join. **Action SM to organise this**

Waiting lists, vacant & neglected plots - SM reported that there were no vacant plots at the moment, there will be at least 5 coming up at the end of March (4 at HH, 1 at FP). There are 24 people on the waiting list (7HH, 9FP, balance would like either site), there are 2 people on the waiting list who have existing tenants in their household. Since October 6 plots have been let to new tenants. If an Allotment holder dies during the tenancy, the dependants are allowed the use of the plot until the end of the tenancy period. Debbie is due to view the plots in March, it was suggested that it would be better if the viewings and thus any subsequent warnings should be done by early March.

Action SM to send out an email by the end of February to advise plot holders of the inspection in Early March

Overhanging Trees & Shrubs - DB said that MTC had not done much of tree work at FP so far this winter. The Triangle has areas of shading by Leylandii trees, but like other areas, these trees were mainly in gardens next to the allotment and therefore could only be cut back to the boundary. It was agreed that DB should raise any concerns on these areas to MTC.

Action DB to contact MTC

AGM – Sound System -- The AGM and the ability to hear what was being said was discussed. MT said that she and other people could not hear what was being said; it was agreed that either a new seating structure or a PA system was needed – or both. MT knows of a PA system that was being used for some other meetings and it was asked if we could rent it.

Action MT.

Grant Funds- Incinerators & Wild life

Incinerators - SM reported that there had been a great deal of interest in buying incinerators one has been which is being passed around FP and has been popular. John Holland has made an incinerator and that is being circulated around HH.

Wildlife at FP - Wild Marlow have conducted a survey on improving FP (with costs) – please see attached note.

It was noted that the work should be agreed with the MTC before it is started and that it could be done in annual phases and that an email should be sent round to notify tenants & get volunteers. RH has organised a work party at FP clearing up parts of the site and there are some items that could be re-used and potentially sold.

Action HS to list these items, for SM to circulate to members. HS will send her photos of the areas of clearance work & RH will send with a writeup to SM so that this can be put onto the website.

Next Allotments Competition - The judges will be contacted in April. It was agreed that whoever accompanies the judges should be neutral and preferably be from MTC. It will probably be committee members for the initial walk round and MTC for the second. It was suggested that we should distinguish between large & small plots – SM to contact MTC & report back.

Action SM – who has contacted MTC who reject the suggestion as there are now very few larger plots.

The definition of new tenant needs to be formalised. It was agreed that if a tenant's household already had a plot, then they were not to be considered a new tenant for the purpose of the Competition. It was agreed that the plot numbering should be brought up at the next Working Party meeting and an update requested asking for action. **Action SM**

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Committee Officer Deputies - SM proposed that a deputy is in place to cover her role should there be a need, who will be instructed regarding the various duties that need to be undertaken to ensure that in the event of her not being able to discharge her duties, the required activities could continue.

MT advised that she sends a monthly back-up of the finances with bank statements and the accounts to SM, to ensure she has a duplicate of the financial data. SM said that she will organise an alternate IT program for MAA to move over to. It was agreed that JS act as deputy for SM and SM act as deputy for MT. All present voted in favour of these proposals.

Action SM to investigate

MAA Rules - FT said that he is now agreeable to the present set of rules. However, he advised those present that he had received a letter from MTC which has given him concern. MT offered to draft a letter in response to this and send it to FT.

Action MT to draft letter for FT

HS advised that it is proper practice that for the AGM a separate formal notice should be sent out along with a copy of any of the changes to rules if there were any. This was agreed SM will send this with the appropriate Newsletter for the next AGM.

AWP Meeting – matters to put forward - The following topics will be put forward:-

1. HH Fence repair
2. Post numbering and corner posts
3. Letter from MTC to FT
4. Playground area

AOB

The Shed at FP that was used by the Horticultural society is no longer used, those present considered if this would be of use to MAA and rejected the idea as no-one is in place to maintain and renovate it.

SM suggested that her daughter, who works in anti-viral software, has offered to give a talk with advice to help tenants to protect themselves when using the Internet. **Action SM to find out if there is sufficient interest from tenants.**

Plant sales – SM, JS & MT will liaise with DB at a later date.

Tools – there are tools available for sale, but as SM cannot at present deal with this IB will escort interested members for the next few weeks, SM will remind all tenants of this facility. **Action SM .**

Fruit tree pruning – HS suggested that a talk on fruit tree pruning would be useful. SM said that she knew of some people who could do this and agreed to contact them and discuss this. **Action SM to look into**

Next Meeting date

The next meeting will be held in April – date TBD.