

MARLOW ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION (MAA)

Meeting on 9 January 2020

Attendance: Fred Tillier (Chair), Sylvia Miller (Secretary), Maren Talbot (Treasurer), Pete Cooper, John Stilliard, Juliette Chanoir, Denise Bagge.

Apology for absence: Loredana Cornea.

1. **The Treasurer reported** that membership was currently 113 – this was up on the same stage last year and seemed to reflect the helpful arrangement of asking Marlow Town Council (MTC) to send out the renewal form with the tenancy letter. The Treasurer noted that MAA was in a good position financially, and had for example done well in terms of donations for blue barrels, but said that the main expenses (NSALG membership and insurance) were yet to come in. The process to establish signatories was now underway.

2. **Waiting lists, vacant and neglected plots – plus tenants/membership ratio.** There are currently 4 vacant plots at Foxes Piece and 11 vacant plots at Hanging Hill – just one person is on the joint waiting list. The committee noted that in the tenancy letter MTC had undertaken to review neglected plots throughout the year with a first assessment in January. The committee agreed to review the ratio of tenants/membership at intervals as this was important to the credibility of MAA as a representative body.

Action: SM to contact MTC about the focus of the first review of neglected plots and the general state of the sites.

3. **Events.** SM proposed a talk on bees (for example, solitary bees); JC proposed a seeds and seedlings swap, and the possibility of organising a session on how to make a Christmas wreath. A bonfire and barbecue was expected in April.

Action: SM for the March agenda - the committee to discuss the practical arrangements for a seed and seedling swap in mid-April. SM to pursue arrangements for the bee talk.

4. **Website and Facebook updates.** JC reported that Facebook went live after the AGM and was still in the early stages of development. Photos and items were welcome.

Action: SM to include an item on Facebook in the next newsletter.

5. **AGM 2019 – review**

The committee reviewed the minutes and practical arrangements of the AGM and made recommendations for next year as follows:

- a) Preparations for the meeting should include timings and tasks for everyone involved, for example, collection of monies.
- b) The order of the AGM was successful ie the Mayor speaks and takes questions from the floor at the beginning of the meeting.
- c) The 'minutes secretary' should sit on the head table so that they are able to hear points from the floor.
- d) The 'fees' table to be positioned so officers can hear and participate in the meeting, for example, at a right angle to the head table.
- e) The Chair should encourage and if necessary remind speakers to identify themselves before making a point to the meeting.

- f) The raffle was a success, but fewer prizes were needed so that the session does not go on too long.

Action: SM to put a date for a planning in the diary as soon as we know the date of the AGM.

6. Judging. SM reported that the judges had decided to step down and a new judge would be needed for 2020. MTC was contacting local councils to look for recommendations. DB suggested contacting the National Vegetable Society (NVS) which has a list of judges by region. SM said that the Mayor's prize for the most unusual feature was not going to be continued.

Action: SM to liaise with MTC about approaching the NVS.

7. Winter work party. The work party at Hanging Hill is currently focussed on clearance of the area near Berwick Road to create more plots and has constructed a fourth woodchip bay at Hanging Hill to accommodate high demand.

8. Locks. The committee discussed the weathering and cracking that was starting to emerge on the new locks. The option of a combination lock that could be protected by a cover was considered.

Action: SM to liaise with MTC about the review of locks.

9. Woodchip bay at Foxes Piece & Blue barrels

A woodchip bay had been established at Foxes Piece by the school entrance. The committee discussed the need to take account of issues in relation to access/delivery via the gates and access to manhole covers when building woodchip bays. There had been a good take up of blue barrels by members following the offer at the AGM.

Action: FT to liaise with MTC about the whereabouts of the manhole covers.

10. AOB

- a) **Membership cards.** Members should be given the option of not bothering with a paper card as this was only relevant to those who use the discount at Hunts.
- b) **NSALG warning about horse manure.** The committee noted there were continuing concerns about the possibility of damage caused by herbicides in manure. If the Association does get hold of a load of manure it would therefore arrange for testing.
- c) **Bonfires.** The ban on bonfires comes into force on 1st May.
- d) **Water.** The water is usually turned on in March/April subject to the weather and danger of frosts.
- e) **Stop-cocks.** **Action:** SM to liaise with MTC about the need to check and clean out (as necessary) the stopcocks.
- f) **Posters and potatoes.** **Action:** SM to include details of the Hunts' potatoes in the next newsletter.

Date of next meeting: 12 March 2020.