

Henley on Thames Allotments Association

**Minutes of Committee Meeting held at 19.30 on Monday 3rd October 2016 at 84 Makins Road,
Henley-on-Thames**

In attendance: Peter Anderson, Dave Chilvers, Laura Dance, Lewis Every, Dave McEwen, Marisa Francini, Doug Richards.

1. Apologies

Sophie Pentecost, Anne Sandars, Sara James

2. Minutes of last meeting

Amendments were made to the section on contaminated manure and on the proposed dates for a Gardeners Question Time event. DR clarified that he was only able to produce information boards for Watermans, and not posters.

*Actions: MF to contact Wargrave Allotments about any further action that they had taken on the potentially contaminated manure.
MF to research the cost of buying a laminator for posters.*

3. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Further discussion took place on how to help plotholders minimise the risk of blight.

Actions: DE to add blight advice to his talk at the AGM.

DC gave an update on the King's Seed Scheme arrangements.

*Actions: DC to send an email about the practicalities of delivering one's seed order.
DE to put Margot and Joanna in touch to discuss the financial arrangements.*

4. Town Council Matters:

Rent letters and information for plotholders

Rent letters have gone out, along with the Health and Safety guidelines. The remaining material which had originally been intended for inclusion will now go out as a separate package in January.

Recreation and Amenities Committee

A shortened version of the presentation done for the Root and Branch Review was given to the Recreation and Amenities Committee on 13 September 2016, including additional material on areas where we would like the Council's support.

Future projects

The Town Council will upgrade the Watermans gate over the winter and replace the south side fence on Watermans will be replaced during the first week in December. A workman from the County Council has viewed the pedestrian access at Waterman's to confirm the desirability of protective fence between the pavement and the road at the bottom of the slope. Discussions continue with the Council about CCTV and repairing of car parks and roads for both sites. Also under consideration is the possibility of acquiring solar pumps for the Greencroft site.

5. AGM:

This will be held on Wednesday 2 November, 6.30pm for 7pm. An outline agenda was discussed and revised. Invitations and papers can be printed at cost price with the Council. MF will arrange this and then all Committee members will help deliver them.

Invited guests will be Becky Walker (Henley Town Council), Elizabeth Lemaire (Henley Town Council), Sam Evans (Chair of the R&A Committee), Janet Wheeler (the Town Clerk), and the two Councillors who attend the Committee.

There is budget for five honoraria of £70 each to be paid – previously agreed to be 2 x site managers, the Treasurer, the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary. As there is no formal Assistant Secretary post this year, it was agreed that honorarium should be shared between the Social Committee members (as previously that work had fallen to the Assistant Secretary).

DR will organise wine and soft drinks as usual.

*Actions: MF to revise agenda in light of discussion.
MF to arrange printing.
All to support hand delivery of invitations and papers.
DR to organise wine and soft drinks.*

6. Treasurer's Report:

- The new fiscal year began on September 1st.
- Known expenditure for 16/17 includes two brushcutters (and maintenance costs) for both sites.
- The commission for the Seed Scheme will remain uncertain until the total orders are known.
- A good quality second hand mower has been sourced through Toad Hall, as a possible replacement for the mowers damaged by stones on Watermans. The Committee approved the purchase of this, and noted that Greencroft may also soon need replacement equipment.

Actions: DC to arrange purchase of the mower.

7. Watermans Update:

- There are two starter plots and one five pole plot available.
- The first aid cupboard has been installed.
- One plotholder (Carl) has had a very successful year, including several second prizes at the Malvern Show, and a forthcoming item on Countryfile. It was proposed that his achievement should be recognised in some way (see under AOB).

Actions: MF to pass on to DR the names of those who had contacted the Council directly about giving up.

8. Greencroft Update:

- There are four plots available.
- There is a problem with mare's tail which is sufficiently bad that it has contributed to one plotholder giving up her plot.

Actions: MF to approach Council about spraying the mare's tail with an industrial strength produce within the next week.

9. Website Update:

Sara James absent.

The new website is to go live shortly for feedback, and this will be publicised at the AGM.

10. Social Events:

Christmas Dinner

This will take place on Thursday 15 December at the Christ Church Centre. DR will cater. Peter Herbert has agreed to produce tickets (which will be £20 a head). It is unlikely that the Brassica Brothers will be able to perform as hoped. A raffle was suggested as a means of making additional funds. Invitations are to be issued to Gareth Bartle (HTC Park Services), Elizabeth Lemaire (Henley Town Council) and Becky Walker (Henley Town Council).

Action: MF to collect tickets to sell at AGM.

Bonfire Night

This had originally been proposed for the weekend of 15th/16th October. The "gang" had agreed to build and manage the bonfire again. There was some discussion of pushing it back, due to the short amount of time remaining for publicity.

*Action: SP to update by email whether or not the Brassica Brothers would be available.
All to decide by email whether or not to go ahead on the planned weekend.*

Gardeners' Question Time

It was proposed to move this back to late February / early March, and be held in the Council Chamber as a joint event with Henley in Bloom. Martin from Toad Hall and Tamsin from Swiss Farm were both mentioned as potential panellists.

11. AOB:

HAA-logoed clothing

DC suggested that we investigate logoed t shirts, both as a source of income, and as a means of publicity and identification at events such as the Plant Sale.

Action: DC to investigate with a merchandising company and report back on costs and feasibility.

Special Achievement Award

It was proposed that the cup offered by Cllr David Eggleton be designated a Special Achievement Award, to be awarded only when merited. It was agreed that plotholder Carl Lambourne should be the first recipient of this award, in honour of his outstanding performance this year at the Malvern Show, as follows:

Giant Vegetables Awards

- 2nd in the pumpkin awards, the pumpkin weighed over 540lbs.
- 2nd in the squash awards, the squash weighed over 200lbs.

- 4th in the longest runner bean awards, Carl submitted 4 runner beans, all 36" long.

Action: DR to arrange engraving.

Turnover and mentoring

There was a general discussion on whether there was higher turnover on plots than previously, and, if so, whether this is something we should try to address through such measures as mentoring arrangements. It was agreed that informal mentoring arrangements do spring up naturally, but that we should have a clearer of view of whether there actually is a problem before deciding how to address it.

Action: MF to provide statistics on turnover (ie how many plots are held for a year or less).

12. Date of next meetings:

- Tuesday 8th November 2016
- Monday January 9th 2017