

**SWALLOWFIELD PARISH ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**8PM THURSDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2020**

**Committee members present:**

Ian Swan (Chairman)

Terry Trinder (Treasurer)

Claire Hamilton (Secretary)

Reginald Granados

Duncan Hamilton

Nick Kolpin

**Plot Holders present:**

Plot 9A Paul; Plot 10 Helen; Plot 15 Peter and Christine; Plot 19 Sue; Plot 20 Brian; Plot 23 Lisa; Plot 25 Amy

**Apologies for absence:**

Plot 3 Neil; Plot 9B Greta; Plot 14 Bev

**Approval of minutes and Matters Arising from last year's minutes held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2019**

The minutes were approved as correct. Matters arising were as follows:

- Training had been offered on use of the mower and generator. This would be continued this next year.
- Monthly working parties had been held in the summer months on a Saturday morning
- Plotters who needed help had been offered assistance but the bad winter had hampered efforts.
- Uneven footpaths had been repaired but there was still a lot of mole activity.
- Fundraising had been successful again last year.

**Annual Report by the Chair**

Another successful year saw a waiting list of 3 people. £480 had been raised at 2019's Open morning and the funds raised had been used to build a trolley for the generator (many thanks to Reg); the vermin had been controlled by a professional as well as by rat boxes; the polytunnel guttering had

been installed with guttering to 4 water butts; new members had been welcomed to plots 8, 9A, 11, 21, and 23. Plot 16 was being treated for horsetail. The Chair thanked the committee members and plotters who had turned up to working parties to tackle overgrown plots.

New projects had been proposed such as replacement clubhouse and sheds, a mobility plot, a water capture and storage system and some had been researched and costed.

The Chair thanked all the committee for their hard work over the year and congratulated plotters on having tended their plots in spite of the Corona virus pandemic.

### **Financial Report**

The Treasurer began by remarking that the constitutional rules were signed almost exactly 10 years ago so this was an important milestone for the Association. He then presented the accounts for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. As last year, the accounts have been audited by John Anderson from the Parish Council who has been a stalwart supporter of SPAA over the years and thanks are due to him. The Treasurer stated that we are self sufficient and responsible for our own funds. The project fund finances our major items and the balance stands at £393. The general fund balance stands at £1489; most plots had been let this financial year so income was up by £400. The Total funds balance stands at £1882.

The savings incurred in the area of water is not a true reflection as the billing system has changed several times and is now calculated on a daily average. A larger bill is therefore to be expected in the forthcoming year.

We did save money on maintenance and repairs as the lawnmower did not need repairing. We are trying to build up funds to match any future Lottery bid.

The Licence Fee is currently £55 for a full plot. The Committee recommended that this should stay the same for 2020/21. This was carried by 11 members.

### **Election of new committee members**

Terry Trinder, Reg Granados and Duncan Hamilton had asked to stand down from the committee. Ian Swan stepped down from the position of Chair.

**Chair** - Nick Kolpin was nominated by Ian and seconded by Terry.

**Treasurer** – Robert Spencer was nominated by Claire and seconded by Terry.

**Secretary** - Claire Hamilton was nominated by Terry and seconded by Sue.

### **New Committee members were elected as follows:**

Helen Coulter – nominated by Terry, seconded by Duncan

Sue Dormer – nominated by Terry, seconded by Ian

Lisa Evans – nominated by Duncan, seconded by Sue

Ian Swan - nominated by Claire, seconded by Nick.

Committee members standing down were thanked for their hard work, particularly Terry for keeping immaculate accounts, liaising with the PC and having secured an extension of the lease for the next 24 years. Reg had been invaluable as Site Manager and on the practical side of fixing, building and repairing equipment. Both these founder members had given more than 10 years' service each, in addition to working initially for more than a year to open the allotments. A small gift would be delivered to them in recognition and thanks.

### **Future purchases, projects and equipment**

#### **Actions from last year:**

The generator trolley is now in service and the Chair encouraged people to make use of the generator now it is easily transported.

The polytunnel guttering is successfully collecting rainwater in the 4 new water butts. Reg said this had been a challenge as sticking polythene to polythene was not easy but this was saving the Association money. The next stage could be to run underground hoses from the butts to let the overflow go back into the pond.

Polytunnel shading would be covered in Members' questions.

The wheelbarrows had all been refurbished (tyres pumped up, rust dealt with, thanks to Reg) and the rusty barrows to be discarded were on Plot 1 ready to be taken to the tip. Reg said that the wheelbarrows needed to be stored on end for safety reasons. A light-weight barrow is to be purchased in the near future.

The new website was up and running, thanks to Nick.

The rats had been controlled professionally but there were still issues with moles and the new committee could perhaps look at how to control them.

**Future projects** had been researched with some feasibility studies done. Large projects would all require lottery funding. The Chair showed slides to demonstrate the following points:

- a) The mobility plot on the site of Plot 3: visits had been made by committee members to Sherfield Allotments and to Thrive which had proved very interesting and informative with a wealth of ideas to do with support for the less mobile or disabled. A quotation for ground works has been requested from a local landscaping firm.
- b) Water capture and storage: water could be extracted from the pond in winter and put in a tank; currently, the pond evaporates in summer. Our environmental footprint could thereby be improved. Initially, the pond had been created to drain the far end of the site and this had been successful. A liner could be put in the pond. Reg asked if all plotters' sheds had guttering connected to capture water in a butt. Claire will remind plot holders that this could be done.
- c) Clubhouse and new storage sheds: plot holders present thought that as there is no electricity and bottled gas is not environmental, and turnout for social events is poor, maybe this is not a priority. The issue of a compost toilet was raised again; this

would cost £7.5K or more and at Sherfield, where there are 120 plot holders, it took 5 years to generate any compost! This is not viable for us.

### Questions from Members

(These questions had been raised in advance).

- a) Extending the water troughs to the outside edge: the committee had researched this and come to the conclusion that it would be too costly to install unless it formed part of a larger, lottery funded project. There were also issues about access for the professional grass cutter.
- b) Topsoil from the Parish Council: shortly after the meeting, the Committee learnt that this was not going to be a possibility.
- c) Temperature balancing in the polytunnel: the committee had done calculations as to how many water tanks would be needed inside the polytunnel in relation to the height and volume of the space. It was discovered that the tanks would have to be huge and buried 3 foot underground so this was not practical as all the floor space would be taken up. It was decided that shading would be a better way to control the temperature; costings for an inside and an outside method had been done and either system would cost about £100. With the current COVID crisis, it was proving difficult to get through to suppliers but this should become easier. Plot holders at the last AGM had indicated that purchasing shading was a good idea and the committee has followed through with this. Claire will tell plotholders about the shading again in the newsletter.
- d) Padlocks: experience had shown that buying heavy duty, expensive padlocks was not the solution; such intensive use on the main gate caused them to break and Reg has twice had to cut off jammed padlocks. It had been decided that replacing cheaper padlocks more frequently was a better option.
- e) Site security/map of the site on the website: concerns had been raised by a plotholder about advertising the site on the web. The committee had discussed this by email. Terry had looked at a lot of other Allotment associations, the majority of which have a map and the address/directions of the location. A discussion was had and the following points were made:

We wish to raise our profile ; most allotments have a waiting list and we don't. The website has a very low amount of traffic so any security risk would come from passers by, not from people searching the web; our Deepcut neighbours would be a more attractive site for burglars. Nearly all allotments have kept their gates unlocked and wide open during the COVID pandemic to stop virus transmission and we haven't. Plot holders have found it useful to direct deliveries to the site via the Google map as suppliers need a map.

A vote was held and it was unanimously agreed to keep the map and directions on the website.

The Chair asked if there were any other questions: Helen said that the mole holes in the polytunnel under the canvas flooring were dangerous. She asked the committee to think of a way to mitigate the risk of injury.

**AOB:**

- a) The Chair said that Terry Edmond had sadly passed away. As a founder member, the committee wanted to plant a heritage apple tree in his memory and Terry had done some research on this. Claire will forward Terry's email to the new committee for them to take this forward.
- b) The Chair thanked Terry and Reg and all the committee, Helen for her support with the articles and marketing side and plot holders for their efforts at working parties. Claire thanked Ian for his chairmanship over 4 years and said that she was pleased he was carrying on as a committee member.
- c) The cup for the Best Kept Plot 2019-20 was awarded to Peter and Christine (Plot 15) with the committee's congratulations.

Congratulations were also offered to Lisa and Stuart on Plot 23 for Best Newcomers and Highly Commended went to Stefanie and family on Plot 13.

Well done to all the ploholders for maintaining their plots so well in spite of the wet spring and the pandemic!

The next committee meeting will be held on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July at 8pm and will again be a virtual meeting.

The meeting ended at 10.10pm.