

SPAA chairperson report

Nick Kolpin, SPAA AGM, Thursday 8th of July 2021

The global pandemic and a transitional committee have made 2020/21 an unusual year for SPAA. We've managed to keep the site open and running with good finances and in a decent state of repair. This year we have not been able to implement any improvement projects, but hopefully a return to normality in 2021/22 will enable more project fundraising soon.

The SPAA Committee

2020/21 has been a transitional year for the SPAA committee. A number of long-standing committee members stepped down at the previous AGM and Ian stepped down as chairperson but remained on the committee. I'd like to thank all the committee members for their efforts over the year.

The 2020/21 committee included: Nick Kolpin (chair), Claire Hamilton (secretary), Robert Spencer (treasurer), Helen Coulter, Sue Dormer, Lisa Evans and Ian Swan.

At this AGM Lisa and Robert are both stepping down from the committee. The SPAA constitution requires that the committee be formed of a chairperson, a secretary, a treasurer and two to six committee members. We will therefore be hoping to elect a new treasurer and new committee members at this year's AGM.

Finances

SPAA is a private allotment that has to operate from its own funds. The committee tries to run the allotment such that the membership fees cover the costs of the bills and maintenance of the allotment site. We attempt to keep two years worth of rent (£1k) available in our general account. Events and other fundraising efforts then contribute to a project fund, used for occasional improvements to the site.

The lockdown last summer seems to have increased demand for allotment plots. Over the last year the site has mostly been fully occupied, usually with a few people waiting for a plot to become available. This has ensured that we have had a good income from membership fees, covering the usual site costs.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic it has not been possible to hold a spring open day in either 2020 or 2021. These are usually our main fundraising events in normal years. Instead we have had to find alternative ways to raise funds.

Both last summer and this year we have run plant sales for plot holders. The committee would like to thank everyone who donated surplus plants for others to purchase. We have also organised a couple of manure deliveries. The committee pays for the manure from allotment funds. With a suggested donation of £1 per wheelbarrow of manure, these are designed to make a small profit to bring in alternative funds. Whilst the first delivery resulted

in the expected profit, the second one has not and so the committee requests that any plot holders who have used the manure on their plots do make a donation to allow SPAA to cover the costs of the manure.

Despite the lack of our usual fundraising, the committee has managed to meet our normal financial goals. We have not allocated any funds towards improvement projects. We hope that next year we will be back to a normal fundraising situation. This would allow us to consider improvement projects again.

Site maintenance

The committee is responsible for ensuring that the Calico field site is properly maintained. This is almost entirely done by holding working parties, where plot holders voluntarily help to keep the site in good working order. At various times over the last year the pandemic regulations and guidelines have meant we couldn't hold the usual working parties or that they had to be limited to a small number of people.

The reduced working parties have meant it has been a hard year to keep the site up to the standard we would like. We are hopeful that over the next year we can get back to more regular working parties with more people in attendance.

The committee would like to thank all the plot holders who helped out at working parties this year. We'd like to encourage all plot holders to attend at least a couple of working parties each year. These usually involve a couple of hours of work followed by tea, coffee and cake. They are a good way to both contribute to the ongoing success of SPAA and to socialise with other plot holders.

10th Anniversary

2021 saw the 10th anniversary of SPAA moving into the Calico field site. The current committee would like to thank all the original SPAA members and other supporters in the community for getting the site up and running. We'd also like to thank all of the previous committee members who have kept SPAA running over the last decade.

We'll be having a late celebration of the anniversary with drinks and a BBQ on site on Saturday the 24th of July and hope that current plot holders and a range of our current and previous supporters will be able to join us.

Outlook

I'm hopeful that 2021/22 will be back to a more normal year. More regular working parties with better attendance will be welcome and will help maintain the site better. I also hope we'll be able to hold an open day again next year which will help us raise more project funds.