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Delayed 2020 AGM

As no matters were raised relating to the offered reports, the following were passed by the Committee with the proposal that they be ratified by a show of hands at the 2021 AGM.

1. Minutes of the AGM held in 2019
2. Secretary's/Committee's report
3. Treasurer's report and account.
4. Election of Officers and Committee

David Chilvers stepped down from the position of Treasurer prior to the meeting. The following were elected/confirmed:

Secretary: Sharon Oldham

Committee Members:

Greencroft: Mandy Taylor (Site Manager), Peter Anderson, Lewis Every

Watermans: Tony Robinson (Site Manager), Doug Richards, Jane Gray

5. Watermans report
6. Greencroft report
7. Any Other Business

Honoraria: in previous years, honoraria have been voted to members of the Committee in recognition of their time, effort and resources. It was decided to defer until 2021 AGM

Matters received by email from plot holders:

Liz Reid (Greencroft):

First I would like to thank all the committee members, and other members who volunteer, for their time. I am very aware that I only spend time on my plot.... I don't do anything helpful. (I do spend time being helpful to others at school, and as part of various Downs Syndrome groups!!!! I just run out of time!!!) I am very grateful to them, as without their time the allotments wouldn't run, and I wouldn't get my 'me time' down on my plot.

Manure allocation

It used to be that when we had a delivery, and in the first 4 weeks you could take 4 barrow-fulls, that there was always some left at 5 weeks. Now if you don't get there in the first week, it's all run out. I suspect that the reason is that we now have so many split plots, there are many more people taking 4 barrow-fulls. I don't think it should be a race! I also think that the £400 for 32 tonnes is a bargain. Please could we either change the allocation to 2 barrow fulls for a half plot, and 4 for a full plot, or up the amount that we buy (though as the holder of a full plot I would still like more than the holders of half plots if possible please, as I have more plots to spread it on, and pay more for my full plot than the cost of a half!!!).

Committee response

The management of varying allocations would be complex and too onerous. Both Site Managers think self-management is working – we rely on everyone to play their part honourably. However, if anyone would like to volunteer to manage the scheme, they would be welcomed.

Elena Rawlings (Watermans):

I'd just like to offer our thanks to Tony for doing a marvellous job at Waterman's - rarely an easy job!

Bonfires

Could I raise the fact that I've seen the bonfire on the side furthest from town used on a number of occasions to burn plastic - plastic tunnel covers, pots, compost bags full of green waste. It's a dangerous, disgusting and lazy practise. We should all be responsible for disposing of our own waste responsibly at home or using the recycling centre /tip. Green waste is also often dumped on or by the fire, which I'm sure should either be composted in plotholders own compost bins or taken to the recycling centre.

Committee response

Rules in the Tenancy Agreement cover the disposal of weeds and rubbish and is quite clear that dumping rubbish (e.g. plastic, masonry, household materials, etc.) is unacceptable and constitutes fly-tipping which can result in immediate termination of the tenancy. The bonfire area is for the disposal of broken pallets and wood cleared from vacant plots only. The Site Manager has repeatedly reminded plot holders of these rules. We can only reiterate this and hope that people act responsibly.

Moira Hankinson (Greencroft):

1. Accounts:

Can we see the split of costs at item level between Greencroft and Watermans please. It needn't been at all difficult or onerous - it simply needs a column on the spreadsheet to insert a G or W against each cost as incurred.

Committee response:

The Committee tries to ensure that spending on each site balances out, but the suggestion will be passed to the new Treasurer.

2. Neglected allotments:

We all suffer when departing plotholders leave completely untended and overgrown plots. It's a lot of work for the Managers (and their helpers) to clear abandoned or evicted plots. Although plotholders know they are required to leave their plots clean, empty and tidy, they don't: and are able to because there is no penalty. We should (probably via the Council - if we have to!), take £100 deposit from all new plotholders. This is returned, only if plots are handed over clear and clean. Otherwise, this money is used to clear plots. This would immediately stop newbies casually taking over plots with no commitment.

Also, the annual plot fees are far too small and should be raised - with OF COURSE concessions for whoever. People are taking on plots with far too little commitment, and with no sanction or penalty if they don't keep up to scratch. Evicting miscreant plotholders in mid-June when weeds are 3 feet high is not a solution.

Committee response:

We are not sure how a deposit scheme could be implemented and how it would be applied (only new plot holders, or all plot holders regardless of duration of tenancy, etc). We think a better approach is for the Council to invoice plot holders leaving without clearing their plot. We will talk to the Council on the practicalities of implementing this.

There is a three-stage process for eviction of "miscreant plotholders" which conforms to the requirements set out in the Tenancy Agreement. Cutting the four week notice period is being considered, and will require a change to the Tenancy Agreement.

3. Wish lists:

We saw in the AGM reports that Waterman's have put a wish list in to the Committee and Council. We think this should be a comprehensive list, for all of the Henley allotments. Then the Committee can, in consultation with plotholders, decide on priorities that would bring both lots of allotments to similar standards.

Committee response:

The list in Tony's report goes back to last year when both Site Managers were asked by the

Council for a list of items to be included on a wish list to be financed by either HAA or HTC. The list is discussed and prioritised by the Committee with a view to ensuring a reasonable balance of expenditure between the two sites, bearing in mind there are likely to be more requirements at Watermans as it is the larger site. A new shed was on the Greencroft list and this should be arriving shortly.

4. Greencroft toilet access:

Can we use the toilets at the Cricket Pavilion again please? Please PRESS (i.e. don't get fobbed off 😊) for early availability. We've had our legs crossed for 15 months now !

Committee response:

Sharon asked the Cricket Club who replied:

"I am afraid nothing has changed yet. We are still restricted to track and trace obligations. Hopefully after July 19th things might change."

We will let everyone know once things change.

5. Greencroft water:

We need a concerted campaign for the laying on of mains water and standpipes for Greencroft (this is the C21st !!!).

Committee response:

Unfortunately the expense of this is too great. A recent quote relating for an additional line at Watermans came to over £6000; Greencroft would be more expensive as it involves greater distance. If anyone is willing to take on the role of fund raiser for such, we would welcome it. In the meantime, we are looking at alternative water harvesting options.

6. Greencroft parking:

At Greencroft, there is only parking at the entrance. It's a loooooong way to the far end. Simply being able to drive around the loop and drop stuff off is not the solution. This needs addressing as a strategy. Watermans have multiple parking areas, Greencroft needs the same. There is the ideal area at the top adjacent to Manager's Office/sheds etc. Access needs sorting naturally. We should now plan to not re-let all or parts of plot 13 and possibly 14 (its divided currently) when they come free (We're not, at this stage suggesting evicting the current plott holders 😊). Other areas - perhaps on the east side, towards the northern end, where there are repeatedly neglected plots, are a possibility. (But not nearly as good, and also plots there are much shorter, and therefore space more restricted).

Committee response:

Unfortunately this is not viable. That area floods in the winter and there are issues of health and safety. It would also require planning permission (as the main car park did). Watermans has multiple parking areas as it is a larger site.

Tony Robinson (on behalf of Watermans plot holders)

1. Barbecues.

We need some rules on these. Are they acceptable but only in a small family group or can friends be invited? Should they be banned altogether or only where a plot-holder allows smoke, etc to adversely affect neighbours? Should they be banned anyway when bonfire ban is in place?

Committee response:

We agreed that this should be trialled up to the AGM in October. Only small or disposable barbecues are allowed. They should not be placed on the grass, and should be fully extinguished before leaving the site. Groups are limited to a maximum of four. No large or gas fired barbecues are permitted under any circumstances.

2. Fruit trees.

According to the Tenancy Agreement trees that mature in a year are permissible and this has usually ruled out apples, plums, etc. In some cases these trees have been allowed if grown in a

large pot with a sealed bottom so if the tenant leaves the trees go with him/her. We need a clear policy here and also with regards to cordon fruit trees which only reach about 4ft in height.

Committee response:

That trees are not allowed unless planted in a pot with a sealed bottom and pruned to maintain a maximum height of 2m. Any which have been planted in the ground must be removed immediately or the Site Manager will arrange for them to be felled. The few trees which pre-date the Tenancy Agreement will remain.

Plot holders are reminded that the Tenancy Agreement stipulates that only fruit, vegetables and flowers for domestic consumption are allowed. Anything other than this is not permitted and must be removed. A joint site inspection will be held.

3. Uncleared plots.

When a tenant leaves or is evicted then the plot should be cleared as stated in the TA. Often there are useful things left like fruit cages and cloches which the new tenant can take on. However, in other cases there is a lot of rubbish left, I currently have a plot with 12 bags of concrete fragments left! According to the TA if the plot is not cleared HTC (or HAA) will clear the plot but there will be a charge. We really need a process in place to invoice the tenant in these cases either HAA or HTC as often clearing plots has involved items going to Oakley Wood in the trailer and is costly in time, fuel and effort.

Committee response:

Dealt with under neglected plots above.

Edward and Anne Sandars (Watermans)

You are stoic in the work you are doing for HAA..And a BIG thank you from both of us.

Ania Kozniewska (Greencroft)

Thank you for all the details and reports, to which I have nothing to add in advance of the online committee meeting.