

WILBERFOSS ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting 3.11.16

Chairman's Welcome

Alan welcomed everyone to the 9th Annual General Meeting of the Association.

Apologies

Apologies were received from S. Ambrose, G. Gaunt, B. Thirsk, S. Thirsk.

Minutes of the 2015 AGM

Update:

The perimeter hedge is now well established. Thanks to Tony Bryan for his work in planting and maintaining the hedge.

Rubbish removal. A skip was hired at a cost of £186 and was soon filled and removed.

Use of incinerators. The Parish Council agreed to the trial use of incinerators provided that they are of the standard size and type with a chimney, only allotment rubbish is burned, the wind direction is suitable and they are not left unattended. Alan approached the Parish Council and as no complaints have been received, their use can continue subject to the above conditions.

The minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting were agreed as a true record.

Annual Reports

Chairman There has been maximum occupancy of the 21 plots with 7 full plots, 24 half plots and 8 quarter plots which equals 39 plotholders. Three plots have now been given up, 2 half plots and 1 quarter plot. Only 2 people on the waiting list are willing to take on a plot so there is now a need to consider recruiting new members. Current plotholders are in the best position to promote the allotments.

Two years ago a system of Notices of Improvement was introduced. This has not been entirely effective and will be discussed further as an item on the agenda. Financial issues relating to this will also be discussed.

Alan confirmed that this would be his final report as Chairman since he is stepping down from the role after this AGM. He thanked his fellow officers and committee members for the help and support received from them over the past 4 years. He also reminded all members of the huge debt of gratitude owed to the small band of volunteer fence fixers, path strimmers and track repairers whose work ensures that the whole allotments site is kept tidy and accessible for everyone.

Treasurer Geoff was unable to attend but provided an audited financial statement which was circulated (see attached sheet for details). He reported that costs, particularly for maintenance and repairs, have been rising while membership fees and plot rents have not increased in eight years. The committee therefore proposes an increase in membership fees from £10 to £20 per year for each plotholder with effect from February 2017 renewals.

We have never been asked for an increase in rent by the Parish Council and they will remain the same for next year. This means that the cost of a full plot will be £50, a half plot £35 and a quarter plot £27.50. The committee believes this still represents excellent value and very competitive compared to other allotment sites.

The proposal was put to the meeting and approved unanimously.

Geoff also confirmed that he is willing to continue in the role of Treasurer if required and that Neil Turner is willing to audit the accounts if required.

Election of Officers

Chris Dennison (secretary) and Geoff Gaunt (treasurer) expressed their willingness to stand again and no other nominations were received. They were proposed, seconded and elected unanimously.

The current committee plus George Brabbs expressed their willingness to stand again. No other nominations were received and the above were proposed, seconded and elected unanimously.

Alan had indicated that he was stepping down as chair. Steve Langstaff expressed his willingness to stand and no other nominations were received. Steve was proposed, seconded and elected unanimously.

On taking over the role of chair of the meeting Steve thanked Alan for his four years as chairperson and as treasurer prior to that and confirmed that Alan has agreed to stay on the committee.

Control of Rats

Rats continue to be a problem on the site. Colin confirmed that he regularly baits the rat boxes and the bait is still being taken. However new regulations mean that larger quantities of bait can only now be bought by someone with a qualification costing £50. Colin will therefore continue to buy it in smaller quantities although this will be at increased cost. Plotholders can help by clearing plots of unused produce and keeping plots tidy.

The committee has considered the issue of whether the keeping of chickens contributes to the rat problem and whether therefore in future plotholders should not be allowed to keep chickens (this would not apply to anyone who currently has chickens on their plot). Differing views were expressed and the terms of the Allotment Act debated. The committee will keep the situation under review and request that all plotholders remain vigilant, reporting any sightings to a committee member and ensuring that plots are kept clear of any food or rubbish which attracts rats.

Uncultivated and unproductive plots

New plotholders: When plots are given up they are sometimes left in a poor state and the Association has to spend money to have them cleared and rotovated. It is therefore proposed that any new plotholder should pay a deposit of £25, to be returned in full if the plot is in good condition or used to pay for restoring the plot. A test period of a year would go hand in hand with a mentoring system (if wanted) offering help and advice.

Uncultivated and unproductive plots: This is a problem on many sites causing frustration for other plotholders and for people on the waiting list. Currently a Notice of Improvement is sent requiring the plot to be dug over, kept tidy and 75% cultivated. While in some cases this has been successful, in others no

further significant progress has been made after the initial 4 week period. It is therefore proposed that the situation should continue to be monitored for a year (with help and support offered) without the need for a further Notice of Improvement.

Both above proposals were put to the meeting and agreed unanimously.

Change of Lease

Colin reported that he has recently met with Grant Burton who confirms that plans for the extension of the lease are on-going and in the hands of his solicitor.

Financial Matters

These have already been covered (see above). The costs of the water meter rent and charges are not yet known.

Seed Orders

The new catalogues are now available. If there are sufficient orders the discount will be 50% on seeds and 15% on other items. Please return completed forms to Steve by Friday November 25th.

AOB

The meeting was asked to consider whether beehives should be allowed on the site. While there was general agreement that bees should be encouraged, the Association also has a duty of care to plotholders and members of the public. It was suggested that a site which takes account of the flightpath of the bees and the needs of plotholders should be sought (this could be near the hedge). To be considered by the committee.

The meeting closed at 8.20.

Next Meeting

To be arranged.