

# Minutes of the Poverest Allotment Committee Meeting held on Thursday, 11th January 2024 at 7pm at The Conservative Club, Orpington.

Present: Bill Whatley (BW) Chairman, Sam Whatley (SW) Secretary, John O'Connell (JO'C) Treasurer, Lesley Arnett (LA) Deputy Membership Secretary, Rob Winkley (RW) Deputy Site Manager, Graham Garnett (GG) Denis McCarthy (DM) and Bob Vine (BV).

Apologies received from Joan Vine (JV) Biodiversity Champion

## 1. Minutes of last meeting held on 21st October 2023

Agreed as correct record.

## 2. Matters arising from minutes

BV apologised for several actions that were his and have not been done. Namely, placing vacant plots advert in Tesco's; renewing poster board on side of community shed and water tank survey. BV will try to sort out most before his holiday on 18th January, but will complete upon his return.

## 3. Performance vs Budget

JO'C advised quotes are being sought to generally refurbish the shed, including insulating, re-roofing and redecorating. The Committee will apply to the lottery for a grant/award to cover the cost which we think may be around £20k. The first quote we got was to remove the asbestos which was £2,340.

The Committee are most grateful to the many ploholders who donated their deposits to the allotment when they gave up their plots. We returned some deposits where the ploholders provided their bank details. We are unable to hold bank details due to GDPR requirements.

The year end figures were

Income:-

Rents received £5,380

Shop sales £718

Deposits donated £180

Costs:-

Electricity £316

Water £1,403

Rent £505

M&R £964

Insurance £618

Shop Purchases £367

Admin £370

Deposits refunded £150

Balance at bank £3,228

There is a provision in the accounts of £2,340 to cover some repairs and additional works to the lower road which has been flooded again this year.

**ACTION: JO'C to advise of progress of Lottery funding at next meeting**

#### **4. Site update**

BW advised that more improvements are needed for our roads. After much rain several parts are flooded especially at the bottom end of the site. Estimated a requirement of 40 tonnes of road chippings along with 1 week hire of digger and dumper truck. Working party for this to be done to be scheduled for summer to sort out plus a drainage pipe to be dug in along the bottom road to take water away down to the drain.

#### **5. Secretary's report**

SW advised that LA has now taken over full responsibilities of the Secretary role and she will be stepping down from the committee. She will still be on hand to help LA and the committee but very much just in the background. All thanked SW for all her sterling work and support as Secretary and LA for taking over the role which is one of the most demanding roles on the committee.

**ACTION: SW to provide confirmation of this for Newsletter.**

LA Provided a new list of ploholders, updated map with first names and a list of 13 vacant plots as of writing these minutes. Rent invoices have all gone out.

**ACTION: LA to place add on Orpington Gossip Facebook page**

#### **6. Any other business**

BV Raised the issue of the toilets been closed from October to April with some feedback from our Facebook Group for this to be looked into. BV looked into the possibility of hiring a portaloos for 5 months, but the cost (just over £760) would mean an increase in everyone's rents to cover, plus BW advised from experience the companies involved are unreliable around cleaning and they don't have any lights. Discussion was had around locating pipes again but this also would be cost prohibitive but something that could be dealt with later as at some point, the whole water pipe network for the site will need to be replaced as it uses imperial pipes and fittings which are becoming increasingly difficult to buy. Another Lottery Grant/Award could be the answer to fund this and at the same time sort out a separate section for the toilets. In the meantime, BW will look into a separate water tank that is rain water fed direct or from water butts on the side of the community shed that will enable toilets to be flushed over the winter period. Scaffolding would need to be sourced along with an appropriate tank. If we get a Lottery grant/award for the community shed this may also cover the toilets or this water tank plan.

Sharing Shed - GG advised he will look over the parts of the sharing shed and let us know whether it is repairable or whether we need to purchase a new one.

**ACTION: GG to let committee know outcome of review and next steps**

#### **Biodiversity Update:**

The Lead from Idverde has left and the job is being advertised. JV has emailed Andrew Harby our contact, for an update on the this year's planned survey.

The designated wildlife area - We have created the log pile, we will use the branches left over from the hedge cutting to build a support for native climbers to cover the gaps in the perimeter hedge. Ploholder Matt Fletcher says he will source the climbers. There may be enough for some of the other gaps around our site too. Once the pallets have been sourced we can build a large insect habitat with living roof.

A seed swap is being planned to enable plot holders to share seeds gathered from their plots to increase our biodiversity.

BV went onto discuss a 2024 Working Party and Events calendar for 2024 which he worked on with LA. He advised that potential talks from experts need to be booked a year in advance so will work with LA to sort out these for 2025 but see accompanying sheet of ideas.

Working Parties agreed upon: Community Shed Clearance; Water Drainage clearance every 3 months; Site rubbish/metal clearance; Road works; Water tank lid painting/maintenance; Perimeter

fence cutting/trimming.

Events agreed upon: New season natter & seed share; School visit; AGM and BBQ; End of season natter with international food; Christmas drinks and mince pies

**ACTION: BV to work up 2024 timetable to go out with January Newsletter**

**ACTION: BV to look into seed catalogues and discounts from Kings and Sutton Seeds**

**ACTION: BV to ask Coolings about talks/demonstrations**

BV asked whether the padlock number should be changed seeing as we have now had quite a few ploholders leaving. All agreed and a new number will be advised to ploholders late January once all rents have been received giving a months notice.

**ACTION: LA to send out email with new number (8215).**

DM asked for another emergency number to be added to the existing one on the gate and said he doesn't mind his being added as he is not to far away.

**ACTION: BV to make up new sign with extra phone number**

## **8. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday, 27th February, 7pm at the Conservative Club Orpington