

Minutes of Poverest Allotment Committee Meeting
Held on Tuesday, 12th March 2024, 7.30pm
at Conservative Club, Orpington

Present: Bill Whatley (BW) Chairman, Lesley Arnett (LA) Membership Secretary,
John O'Connell (JO'C) Treasurer, Graham Garnett (GG), Denis McCarthy (DM) and Bob Vine (BV)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Rob Winkley (RW)

2. Minutes of last Meeting held on 11th January 2024

Agreed as correct record.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

Padlock number to change from 1st April and notification sent out in March's Newsletter.

BV advised that he did a full water survey and emailed a spreadsheet to all including number, sizes and condition, plus a photo. 2 tanks need new lids, no leaks noticed at this stage.

4. Site Update

BW advised the shop rota has been done and will email round – shop, water and toilets to open from 1st April. Bottom road has become unpassable and a digger and 60-80 tonnes of gravel need to be organised, along with semi permeable drainage pipes to be laid along plots 69A and across the road to improve drainage. Fence in top left hand corner to have a new metal structure added to the top to increase security.

ACTION: BW to work with BV and DM to add to fence and BV to add CCTV sign once done

ACTION: BW to email shop rota and liaise with plot holder John Townsend to book digger, gravel and drainage pipe ASAP

5. Treasurer's Report

Accounts submitted to HMRC and Companies House and JO'C advised no tax liability. Bank balance coming forward to 2024 was £3228. Rents for 2024 to date £5100 which will be sufficient to cover running costs. Proposal to run drain and resurface some parts of the road will cost approximately £2k. This leaves just about enough to cover some small emergencies. There will not be enough to cover the overrun for the roofing project so that will have to wait for another year. Will submit the Lottery application with an 18 month time frame. Should we get approval it may be possible to borrow from the plot holder's deposits subject to their approval at an EGM. We need confirmation from a structural engineer that the walls are strong enough to bear the weight of the new roof. GG felt that the walls would collapse under too heavy a roof. If the project is to proceed we need a sub committee with experience to manage the project and liaise with the roofing Company, because inevitably there will be issues to be addressed once it commences.

GG thanked JO'C on behalf of all the committee for his hard work sorting out our Lottery Submission

ACTION: BV Add accounts to website

6. Secretary Report

LA advised 5 rents still outstanding – payment plans have been offered but final termination letters will be sent to ones that have not responded to several chaser email and letters. LA provided revised maps with all plot holders first names on and details of vacant plots. LA provided a list of vacant plots. 7 plots vacant, 2 require a digger to clear (19a and 22a).

ACTION: BW to clear plots with digger when its available

ACTION: LA to do to post on Orpington Gossip to advertise plots

Plot inspections and weed letters will start from 1st April.

ACTION BV: Add to March's Newsletter

ACTION LA: Send separate email on subject detailing weed letter system agreed at last AGM

7. Any other business

Sharing shed update – GG advised will complete within the next 2 weeks, at which point Joan Vine will paint

Weekend 16th March BW J'OC & DM to test mowers, strimmers etc ready for shop opening 6th April.

Items for March Newsletter discussed: Tools being stolen by plot holders, parking in the middle road and by the manure and wood chip bays to be stopped.

Removal of tyres discussed. Around 26 tyres on site. Council won't take them. Norris skips will take at £5 a tyre, plus skip hire and BW advised the company he usually uses only takes 50+ tyres at any one time.

ACTION BV: look into alternative uses – use them to fill gaps in perimeter fence, paint and use as planters around the site with wild flowers, corner of roads to protect grass etc

BV advised of several dates researched by Joan Vine (Biodiversity Champion) which could be used to boost newsletters and events:

5-11th May International Compost Week

Gather tips/tricks/ideas from plot holders in April's Newsletter, Facebook post and include them in May's Newsletter

20th May World Bee Day

Ask plot holders for bee photos in April's Newsletter, Facebook post and include in May's Newsletter, a post on Facebook and added to website

20-26th May Water Saving week

Advise in April and May's Newsletter and ask plot holders to not use water tanks that week only their water butts and see how much water we can save – take a water reading before and after – compare with week before.

25 May – 2nd June National Childrens gardening week

A chance to remind plot holders in May's Newsletter about child safety on our site.

8. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 14th May 2024, 7.30pm at Conservative Club, Orpington