

Osney, St Thomas & New Botley Allotments Association

Minutes of Committee meeting 12 January 2017

Attending: Nick, Anne (Chair), Sally, Sid, Verity, Pierre, Jude (Minutes), Phil

Apologies: Nia, Sid, Sue

1. Minutes

10 November 2016 agreed as correct.

2. Matters arising

- The **abandoned car** on £20 Meadow was removed by the Council. There is now a system in place should another be abandoned. The incident will be mentioned at the AGM.
 - **A CCTV camera to monitor bonfires on £20 Meadow.** It has been purchased but is not yet in place. Action: Nick will liaise with Sue on the best location. Pierre has checked rules for CCTV and advises of the need to ensure placement only shows in-boundary images and that there is a clear sign stating surveillance is in place. Action: Sue has made a sign and it will be weatherproofed and installed. Action: Nick to talk to Stuart on the City Council, informing him of the camera. Nick will raise the issue of bonfires at the AGM and ask members what they want to happen in future, mindful of past problems with smoke and neighbours.
 - The **Community Service work party** organiser, Diane Major, has been contacted about work on £20 Meadow and the work is planned to start in the week of 16 January. Nick to include a message about rubbish disposal at the AGM. Community Service crews will only be asked to clear un-let plots and commonly held areas. Phil and Jude will discuss future projects when the current plans for £20 Meadow are achieved.
 - **An event at Anne's** will happen on 15 January but without current members bringing along potential 'new blood' plot holders from £20 Meadow. The aim is to identify how the £20 Meadow plot holders on the committee can contribute to better stewardship / maintenance of their site. The meeting will draft proposals and bring ideas to the next committee meeting.
3. The committee received a statement by the granddaughter of the plot holder concerning the [suspended] eviction from plots 17-19 on £20 Meadow. The statement included a range of issues not connected to additional information relevant to the [suspended] eviction. The Secretary will have further contact with the sender about non-relevant issues – an exchange of messages has already taken place. After consideration of the written statement received on 12 January, the Committee decided unanimously by a vote amongst those present to uphold the decision to evict the plot holder on grounds of a breach of rule 28. There is one month left before the plots can be re-let, meaning they can be reassigned from 9 February 2017.
4. Progress has been made, on the **Botley Meadow pilot project to investigate water extraction** from adjoining watercourses. BM has acquired a large tank and plans to construct a base. There was an application to Oxford Community Fund (OCF) to cover the cost of pumps and solar panels. Measures are in place to gather and evaluate the impact of this pilot project. With a view to using data from July 2017 to bid for a larger-scale effort on £20 Meadow. On £20 meadow, issues still to be resolved include access to water and siting of tanks. In the meantime, the committee should be encouraging use of water butts and telling people to cover storage vessels against mosquitos.

One consequence of the BM pilot is that committee members have been asked to advise other associations in Oxford who are considering similar efforts.

5. An **allotment leaflet** for the WOCA display cabinet is in draft form and will be further developed by Nick. Nick has also produced an illustrated leaflet of the Association rules for distribution to new plot

holders and for general use at rent renewals. Stock can be kept in the shop and handed out, as and when. Action: Verity will take on ensuring a regular paragraph in the WOCA newsletter.

No progress was made on the idea of instigating a springtime article in local papers on allotmenting and on the benefits of renting a plot.

6. The committee discussed **ways to allocate funds and resources between the two sites**, mindful of significant differences between sites. Differences include size, presence / absence of amenities such as the shop and toilets (and now, potentially, a water supply), and variable stewardship of communal areas. The current budget does not break down costs by site but the committee agreed a fair 'rule of thumb' was to allocate funds on 25% / 75% ratio. As opportunities arise for increasing amenities, care is needed to protect relative equity and to take into account potential savings for water costs at BM. Action: Nick will remind Stuart on the City Council of the adjoining meadow at BM that could be used for expansion. In the shorter term, efforts will need to continue to ensure the two sites operate in tandem and with collegial good will.
7. **Plans for the AGM:** the meeting will take place in the week of 3-7 April. Action: Sid will be asked to find a date when the Main Hall is available. Papers and nominations need to go out at the beginning of March, with a 14-days notice on all notice boards by 20 March. Rules will need a thorough overhaul and Nick will bring changes to the meeting though ideally, they might go out with notices about the AGM.
8. **AOB:** Pierre has offered to take on management of the website. Action: He will approach Sid and discuss the issue. A possible 'promotion' of the website at the AGM was discussed.

Next meeting: 23 February. Action: Sid to reserve a room at WOCA.