

Minutes: Osney, St Thomas & New Botley Allotments Association committee

13 December 2018

Attending: Elizabeth, Anne, Jude, Verity, Pol, Nick, Sheila, Cathy, Janet

Apologies: Sue, Pierre

1. **Minutes 7 October** agreed as accurate. Action: Nick to post on the website

2. **Matters arising** from 7 October that are not covered in the agenda:

- **Tree survey on TPM** (*Jude and Janet*). Pending. On TPM, one large tree was removed by arrangement with the TPM committee as it was causing problems for neighbours but its size made it unsafe to require the plot holder to undertake the task. Removal also required 14 hours of unpaid labour. This circumstance points to the importance of monitoring and actively managing trees. For both TPM and BM, the City Council and the Federation are jointly reviewing site conditions/maintenance, including responsibilities for trees. The City Council conducts a tree survey every five years and has stated they are not aware of any current needs in relation to trees on our near borders. However, willows are overhanging the river and shading plots, meaning they need pollarding. Action: Janet and Jude to complete the TPM survey, Nick to contact Stuart with the results, BM to conduct a tree survey.
- **Proposal for 2019 publication** to celebrate 100 years of Federation (*Elizabeth*). After reviewing the proposal, it was agreed it could not be done in the time allotted and costs might exceed £1000. The proposal could be reconsidered at a future date when a site-specific need might arise. Action: Nick to circulate the one-page historical summary of our Association which he submitted for the Federation publication.
- **Seeking new committee members** (*all*). Several people have been approached and are said to be considering standing. On TPM, one member suggested joining with a reduced remit which, on reflection, meant they were more suitable to join the TPM management group before standing for election at the 2019 AGM. Action: Cathy to discuss this with the member. Action: all to continue soliciting for committee membership.
- **Website:** Pierre will look after the website until he moves to France and will not stand again at the AGM. Nick has agreed to take on website management after Pierre moves. The committee sent thanks to Pierre for all his help and efforts over several years.

3. **Interim Financial report**

Sheila, as treasurer, submitted an interim report which listed most annual cash flow. Reserves remain comfortable and can support on-going decisions and activity. Expenditure for the TPM water project requires more fine-tuning to allow detailed accounting. The Thames Water grant has not yet been received. Action: Sheila and Nick to provide additional information to TW before the 31 March deadline for collection.

Discussion of the shop activity and income concluded:

- Introduction of the card reader has probably increased sales
- Coffee money needs to be banked
- Seed order money has been received from plot holders but has not yet been added to accounts. This makes estimating current shop 'takings' problematic.
- The website could provide members with information on what's in stock. Action: Cathy and Nick to look at what other associations provide on their websites
- The provision of black ground cover for plots is welcomed and could be increased. Action: Cathy and Nick to discuss new items for the shop.

4. 2018 AGM proposals

A paper was submitted from the TPM management group about two ideas suggested at the 2018 AGM:

- 1.) Establishing work parties and
- 2.) Asking new tenants for a deposit to encourage leaving plots in good order.

On **work parties**, TPM suggests implementing a scheme of 3 hours/ year from members or alternatively, a £20 voluntary contribution towards site maintenance. The paper detailed issues such as exemptions, diversity of task, dealing with those who do not agree to take part, and steps for introducing the scheme, starting with a proposal at the 2019 AGM. In discussion, it was agreed that the scheme was unsuitable for BM as it is a small site where work is already managed by a small group of tenants. Action: TPM to introduce the idea of work parties at the AGM, starting from September 2019 with voluntary contribution in September 2020.

On **deposits**, discussion resulted in a decision to keep the idea in abeyance. Arguments against implementation included the possible sense of 'entitlement' to leave plots in a poor state, the low revenue sums it would generate, and issues of collection/holding money.

Action: Anne to work up the proposals as a paper for the AGM.

5. Reports from BM and TPM:

- The TPM water project progresses slowly, hampered by cold weather and very low Community Service numbers.
- A TPM asset management draft paper was created and circulated, with thanks to Roger Johnson for his advice in this area. Action: Anne to ask Roger for 'ballpark costings' for aspects which may become our responsibility after rent renewal negotiations. Action: BM to use TPM draft as a template for a similar activity in the next 6 months.
- TPM management changes were agreed. Jude will become Field Secretary with Sue and Janet as support; Gus to continue to allocate plots, with Field Secretary confirmation.
- TPM proposes creating a 'Welcome to your plot' document that sets out resources, responsibilities, rules and useful contacts. Action: Jude and Elizabeth to draft something; Nick to send them the rules as a Word document.
- On BM, the communal polytunnel is now in place with 10 rentable places. Staging to be created.

6. Proposed bee project:

Anne submitted a paper that suggests ways to cooperate with Oxford-wide measures to encourage bees. This was agreed and was thought to be well within the remit of Community Service tasks.

Action: Cathy to add bee matters to the 'Payback' rota as necessary; Anne to 'sign up' TPM to the project and ensure measures link with the proposed wildflower meadow creation on the TPM Top Field and with the creation of the flood prevention bund. Action: Anne to summarise the proposal for the TPM noticeboard and website.

Date and place of next meeting. Action: Nick to do a doodle poll.

DATE: 23 January at 7 PM at WOCA