

Draft Minutes of Allotment Liaison meeting, Tuesday 26th January 2016

Attending: Federation Committee; Wendy Skinner Smith (Chair), John Lardner (Treasurer), Tim Treacher (Competition sub-committee chairman), John Hastings (minutes).

OCC: Stuart Fitzsimmons, Ian Thompson.

Associations: **Bartlemas**-Rachel Coney, Lower Wolvercote-Peter Mayve. **Eden Drive**-John Lardner, E M Halliwell, **Cowmead**-John Hastings, Faith Phipps. **Bartholomew Road**-W R Hutt, **Barton Fields**-M S Evans, **Kestrel Crescent**-Roy Leach, **Cripley Meadow**-Wendy Skinner Smith, **Cotteslowe**-Bob Findlay, **East Ward Cricket Road**-Stewart Young, **Elder Stubbs**-Phil Crème, **H'ton Brasenose Farm**-W Edwards, R Chambers, **H'Ton John Garne Way**-Maurine Devenish, Eric Perkins, Mary Ashford Cooper, **Lenthal Road**- Colin Sharp, **Barracks Lane**-Andrew Fairweather Tall, **Minchery Farm**-Clive Bevan, **Osney, St Thomas and New Botley**-Nick Jackson, **South Ward**-D T Allen, Sham Murray, **Spragglesea Mead**-Tim Treacher, M Walker, **St Clements**-Phil Baker, **Town Furze**-Heather Armitage, **Trap Grounds**-Virginia Wallis, Jonathan Clark. **Upper Wolvercote**-Zeb Turner Johnson, Teresa Hall, **Van Diemans Lane**-Susanne Marburg

A total of 23 associations were represented.

1) Apologies/Minutes; Apologies from Ian Sheppard and Sarah Baker Wilkes. The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated and were **passed as a true record**.

2) Signs(IT/WSS); WSS reported that the original design for allotment signs has been dropped and a new one will be produced. SF will still be able to get the signs produced by the City Council printing section with we hope the same or similar pricing. There were representatives from 12 associations who said they would be interested in obtaining the new signs but it was concluded that as not all of the associations were represented at the meeting and the design would change, this figure could increase. ODFAA financial support for the signs will be spread between those associations who purchase them. This will be a one off offer. **Once the design has been produced the details will be circulated**.

WSS introduced Ian Thompson from OCC who has taken over from Tina Mould. He gave a brief outline of his career over the twenty years that he has worked for OCC and his duties and responsibilities in his new position. **The meeting asked that Tina should be thanked through IT and SF for her help and assistance during her time as our allotment contact**.

3) OCC update on Finances; IT gave a report on the reactive budget. He went through expenditure of the annual grant of £12,350 including the allotment grant money which had been reported on and had an agreed overspend. There was presently about 6,000 remaining in the budget but **two major works were in process**. These were

- a crumbling cliff on Ramsay Road which is posing a risk to gardens at Coppock Close

- the replacement of a bridge at Kestrel Crescent. Several hundred pounds has been spent examining the cliff but rectification work could be very expensive. At the moment there is uncertainty as to who is responsible for the cliff but this may make demands on the allotment budget. The quote for replacing the bridge is £36,000. SF said that the cost of the Kestrel Crescent bridge was being reviewed but there were other ways to access the site. SF went on to say that if this year's budget was not spent **when the budget was passed he would inform allotments if there were any remaining funds that could not be carried over so that they could be spent. Associations should be ready with applications for the order of criteria as agreed for 2015.**

Trees There was a lengthy discussion regarding tree maintenance. SF pointed out that depending on an association's lease but most associations were responsible for work. He said that OCC could carry out work but the individual association would have to pay for it. He also pointed out the safety implications of members of associations working on trees. Associations should check any tree problems with Parks. Some tree work was reported and the **associations asked to know where this was so it was recorded.** Tree work was a sensitive issue with many associations. Sf reported that the 3 yearly cycle of checking was not as yet up to date.

3) Competition and Soils talk update: TT reported that the talk on soils was well attended and that the speaker, Chris Bird from Sparsholt College, gave an excellent talk focusing on allotment gardening.

There were fewer entries for the competition than in previous years. This prompted the question of whether to carry on holding it. It was pointed out that only a very small percentage of the sites entered. WSS replied that the percentage had always been small since the competition started in 1930s. The prize giving evening, apart from being very enjoyable, gave allotment holders the chance to talk to people from other sites and she felt it was important to present as a public face to our councillors. The competition was a joint venture with OCC, who would not continue with it unless ODFAA did the management. One member commented that there were other ways to celebrate allotments.. perhaps we could have a day when all the sites were open to councillors and members of the public. WSS felt ODFAA could pursue this as well as a good idea. The past history of advertising and attendance at open days was mixed but we had not tried a single day.

ODFAA participation in managing the competition was put to vote and the vote was 22 for 2 against and 6 abstentions. This gave a clear majority in favour of carrying on. Two other topics concerning the competition rules were voted on: (1) That sites entering the Best Kept Section must enter a minimum of two individual plots from that site. (2) That a new section for individual entries for small plots that are less than half the area of a standard 10 pole plot(> 125 sqr.m) be introduced. Both motions were carried by an overwhelming show of hands.

TT announced that this would be the last year he will be organising the competition. His successor will have to be an ODFAA committee member of ODFFA but anyone willing to help with the paper

work should let us know. They can be a member of an allotment association. **TT will write a short summary of what his work entails.**

5) Training and Development plans 2016; The committee had reviewed the topics suggested by members **We felt we could organise the following :**

An evening talk with an outside speaker to discuss risk assessment. A lot of useful advice on this and other management issues are contained in the set of Allotment Regeneration Initiative leaflets that were distributed to all associations at previous ALM meetings by OCC. For those associations who did not receive these documents or have mislaid them a member reported they were on line. (Wendy could subsequently find only a summary of the project not the individual advice sheets?) Perhaps Stuart could get some copies made if associations would like a copy?

An evening talk including composting/crop rotation

These would be winter talks

1 ALM discussion evening on watering WSS reported that the committee had nothing else to offer to past discussions and minuted information on trustees (on the web site) and that we had done talks on weed and pest control recently (2014). The meeting was asked if they would like a talk by The OCC Blue Bin Recycling team. The response was a definite no.

6) Planning; WSS said that the person at OCC who was responsible for planning was very difficult to contact, enquires being diverted to other employees. **She would persevere with plans for Minchery West new allotments, Horspath sale and compensation, Brasenose and Barton Fields.** We have subsequently heard that Barton Field work has been confirmed.

7) A.O.B.

(a) New Committee Members; WSS reminded the meeting that with the AGM on the horizon we needed more committee members. **She asked the representatives at the meeting to ask other elected committee members to stand for ODFAA committee. If they wanted to discuss please talk to a member of the committee.**

(b) Flood alleviation material; TT said that with proposed flood alleviation work likely to place, there would be a lot of spoil from dredging etc. that the contractors have to dispose of. He thought that some of the allotment sites that are low lying and prone to floods might benefit from having some of this material to build up the ground level. It could also be used on sites where over the years the levels of some plots had dropped. **All members were encouraged to attend the presentations so that impact on allotments could be assessed. If anyone submitted a response they were asked to copy it to WSS so ODFAA could work together.**

(c) OCC Compost; SF said that some municipal compost might be available but a lot of the stock has already been delivered and some deliveries were awaiting drier weather. There is a charge of £50.00 per load to cover the transport costs.

Meeting closed 8.40pm