

Allotments Liaison Meeting

Draft minutes of ALM meeting following the AGM at Oxford Town Hall on Tuesday 22 January 2019

Association:	Attending*:	Apologies:
Barns Court	David Robertson	
Barracks Lane	Stephen Pegg	
Bartlemas Close	Susi Lee	
Brasenose Farm		Bill Edwards, Tim Graham
Court Place Farm	Alan Milosevic	
Cow Mead	John Hastings	Faith Phipps
Cripley Meadow	Manda Joyce, Wendy Skinner Smith	
Cuttleslowe	Ian Sheppard, Bob Findlay	
East Ward	Clare Ferguson, Stewart Young	
Elder Stubbs		Phil Creme
Fairacres Road	Paul Hopkins	Polly Woolstone
Fairview		
Headington Eden Drive	John Lardner	
Kestrel Crescent		Roy Leach
Lenthall Rd (Rose Hill)	Jon Piggott	
Marston Ferry & Blackhall	Gill Edwards	
Minchery Farm West	Les Blewitt	
Old Marston Mill Lane	Chris Mitchell	
Osney – Twenty Pound Meadow	Nick Jackson	
Osney – Botley Meadow	Nick Jackson	
Risinghurst	Jenny Bowles	
South Ward	David Allen	
Spragglesea Mead & Deans Ham	Tim Treacher, Kathy Bramble	
St Clements & District	Phil Baker, Penny Gardiner	
Town Furze	Sadia Azeem	
Trap Grounds		Virginia Wallis
Upper Wolvercote	Edward Wincott, Zeb Johnson	
OCC Parks et al.	Stewart Fitzsimmons, Emma Taylor	

* Please note if you **did not sign** the attendance sheet circulated in the meeting you will not be listed here

1. Welcome and apologies.

- Meeting chaired by Stuart Fitzsimmons (OCC Parks), who introduced Emma Taylor (OCC) and Wendy Skinner Smith (ODFAA Committee).
- 27 site reps representing 22 sites were thanked for attending.

2. Minutes of the last ALM

- The minutes of last ALM held 25 September 2018 were circulated and have been on the website since the last meeting. No amendments were considered necessary.

3. Our new 21-year Leases (due to start in September 2021)

- General agreement from last time that leases mainly worked but some tweaks necessary.
- Insurance clause needs looking at – possibly some more autonomy for associations as to how insurance can be purchased.
- Trees – instead of straight rental uplift OCC are looking at ‘service charge’ that can be used to manage the on-site trees. Uplift would vary between 3% and 6% across associations. In addition it

will be necessary to use some of the reactive maintenance grant to service the trees. This to be included in the new leases. The proposed service charge would cover **all** trees on site, and **may** cover some boundary trees – OCC need to do some further costings and report back in April. **A1**

The priority for tree work would be based on safety conditions.

- All Association leases would be the same and Associations will be responsible for maintenance of everything other than trees (e.g. fences, roads etc.)
- The meeting agreed that it would be prudent for Associations to start developing Site Asset Management Plans (mentioned already at previous ALMs) in order for them to plan well in advance for repair/replacement of large cost items like fencing. **A2**
- There was unanimous support for the proposal by those present.
- APSE report has been circulated – it is worth checking this to contrast Oxford allotment rents with the national average **A3** – although this is balanced by the fact that Oxford has the most devolved form of allotment management in the country.

BREAK: There was a twenty-minute information gathering exercise – for collecting views on a variety of issues surrounding the renegotiation of the leases. The information collected is presented in **Annex A** at the end of these minutes.

4. Oxford City Council Reactive maintenance budget 2018-2019 update

- This will be the last round of grants for this financial year – from the remaining reactive maintenance budget.
- OCC Parks have approximately £9,500 remaining but some £6,000 of this needs to cover existing tree work. This would leave c. £3,500 for grants (unless something else needs the money before the end of FY).
- OCC to send out grant forms by the end of next week. **A4**
- The same criteria will apply as applied last round: Priority funding for composting, water harvesting and solar power – (focussing on sustainability; building & site security; accessibility).
- Associations will then have approximately three weeks (c. 21st Feb) to get forms back to OCC, making sure that ALL necessary documentation is included. **A5**
- Please be sensible in terms of amounts being sought – i.e. don't apply for close to half the total available amount!

5. ODFAA 2019 Centenary Plans

- Draft format of Centenary publication was presented – available for inspection at the meeting.
- There will be a few more things to add in (e.g. illustrations etc.) – but we will also be developing an online version which Associations can add their own illustrations to.
- Publication date likely to be in the autumn.
- Will be further communication about ordering hard copies.
- The Committee would welcome ideas for a good title – ALL to please make suggestions to ODFAA Committee members. **A6**
- Every site is mentioned in publication – there are some surprising histories.
- 2019 is also the 30th Anniversary of Oxford-Grenoble link. 29th April to 5th May earmarked for activities relating to 'gardens and allotments'.
- The Oxford-Grenoble link will look to obtain OCC funding to support link activities. **A7**

6. Allotment Competition 2019

- Tim Treacher recapped on Competition information from last ALM.
- Key change – **Associations have to choose their best plot in each category** to put forward and prizes are increased.
- There will be a winner and runner up prize for each of the categories.
- Position of new plot holders – ‘best new starter’. Would like to include these if possible (they only get certificates but these were always very well received). Competition Committee need to think further about how to apply this if competition is only run every three years.
- Entry by Associations to qualify for ‘Best site’ award requires a minimum entry of one plot in **at least three of the six** categories:

• under 35 years	• 35 to 64 years	• 65 to 75 years	• older than 75 years
• Small plots (≤ 2.5 poles)	• ‘New starters’		

- Proposing to bring the draft Competition paperwork (invitation letter, details and forms) to the next ALM meeting with the intention to send it out to Associations around 29th April. **A8**
- The deadline for entries will be around **24th May** (exact date will be on the form).
- Judging weeks (dates are provisional): first visit – week of 10th June; second visit – week of 16th Sept
- Judges will assess **allotment sites** on **both** visits.
- Mike Kent and Tina Mould (ex OCC Parks) are both happy to act as judges.

7. AOB.

- East ward asked for advice on keeping hens on site – several sites do this. Apparently Allotment law allows keeping hens and rabbits.
- Upper Wolvercote sought advice on provision of water to sites (mains and non-mains supply).
- No other items were presented.

8. Next meeting.

- April 9th which will be both the ALM and the AGM.
- **URGENT**: Wendy encouraged all associations (especially the larger ones) to think of possible ODFAA committee members as the committee is currently too small to function as it should. **A9**

NJ/23Jan2019

Annex A results from the information gathering exercise:

<p>Comments re. the APSE report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments 	<p>All leases come with OCC rules. Association rules have some room for change but must accept OCC rules. OCC rules concerns/problems? :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think more for ODFAA would be acceptable. I agree 	<p>Other concerns re. Lease wording:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HSE recommendation for storing petrol at home, club/association or similar premises is 30 litres Health & Safety – how much work will each Association have to do with the Insurer or will there be blanket coverage?
<p>Green Spaces Allotment Plan & Allotment Charter updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree with North Oxford – a development of this size should have provision Yes 	<p>Comments – OCC Oversight & Structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments 	<p>Should we all contact our local councillor to canvas opinion re. Allotments? Should ODFAA do a draft? :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes Yes Yes Yes Not so sure to canvass views as to inform about linkages to community. Allotments themselves should be proactive in attending community forums, contacting schools and attending local meetings. Could it be a joint paper with the Cllr lead? Or would this make it unhelpfully party political?
<p>Allotment funding comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments 	<p>Progress with Association Asset Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Asset Planning”? – After the budget for rent, maintenance, insurance, etc. there aren’t any assets left from the members’ dues. 	<p>Site rents – comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments

<p>Future of Insurance – either with OCC or with ODFAA. It the latter will it come out of rent to OCC? If ODFAA we would look to have a basic agreement but with sites doing renewals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep insurance as it is 	<p>Comments re. service charge (part of rent):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments. <p>Tree management plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments. <p>Ditches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments. <p>Grants/Competition budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments. 	<p>Future of OCC provision for a rising population:</p> <p>Associations with room for growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments. <p>Associations with land usable</p> <p>No comments.</p>
<p>Non OCC sites – ODFAA/Allotment budget would no longer support paying insurance or grants to sites that did not pay into the OCC rents. Do Marston Village, Risinghurst (uncertain, need to check but unlikely), MF&BH, L Wolvercote & Fairview (uncertain as Golf Club under new management) have any support from landowners?</p> <p>Is rent lower/higher?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fairview – yes, lower per plot <p>Maintenance?</p> <p>To be included in future insurance arrangements would need to pay for this</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risinghurst – would be interested to know costs. <p>ODFAA keen to continue to support & work with non-OCC sites</p>		

Provisional dates for ALM meetings, Committee meetings and deadlines:

2019		
January 6 th	10am - 1.30pm	Pennard Plants Potato Fair at West Oxford Community Centre
January 22 nd	Tues 7pm for 7.15pm	Allotment Liaison meeting
February 1 st	OCC should have sent Grant forms out to associations by the 1 st February	
February 21 st	Return Allotment grant forms back to OCC with ALL relevant information	
March 12 th	Tues 3.30pm - 4.30pm 4.30pm - 5.30pm	OCC / O&DFAA and Fed Committee ODFAA committee
April 9 th	Tues 6.30 -7 pm 7.15 - 9pm	O&DFAA AGM Allotment Liaison meeting
May 1 st	Insurance renewal (fees must be paid and insurance paperwork received before/at AGM)	
c. May 24 th	Allotment Competition – deadline for entries	
Week of June 10 th	Allotment Competition – first judging visit	
Week of September 16 th	Allotment Competition – second judging visit	