

## Allotments Liaison Meeting

Draft minutes of ALM meeting held on Zoom Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Association:	Attending:
Barracks Lane	Liz Bentley
Bartlemas	Tracy Crossman
Barton Fields	Julie Cordery, Carolyn Davies
Court Place Farm	Jane Wilson
East Ward	<b>Jane Millar, Jon Willis</b>
Fairacres Road	Paul Hopkins
Fairview	Paul Langford
Headington – Eden Drive	<b>John Lardner</b>
Headington – John Garne Way	Fiona Floate, Alan Cooper, Mary Ashford
Kestrel Crescent	<b>Roy Leach</b>
Lenthall Road (Rose Hill)	Nick van Hear, Lorin Watt
Minchery Farm	Michael Evans
Osney, St Thomas & New Botley	<b>Nick Jackson</b>
Risinghurst	Jenny Bowles
St Clements & District	<b>Phil Baker</b>
South Ward	Emma Tinker
Spragglesea Mead & Deans Ham	Jane Henderson
Thompson Terrace	<b>Julia Brocklesby, Helen Fetzer</b>
Trap Grounds	Jonathan Clark
Van Diemans Lane	Susi

\*Those in bold are ODFAA Committee Members

### 1. OCC updates

There has been no progress on the lease. The only change is that Oluyinka Awofisayo is no longer our contact in the OCC Property and Asset Management Team. There is now a temporary replacement – Richard Waple ([rwaple@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:rwaple@oxford.gov.uk)). The main sticking point on the lease is still OCC's stipulation that Associations commit to taking liability for major capital expenditure on fencing/gates. In the meantime, allotments will continue operating under the old leases, and thus old rents.

There was some discussion regarding which buildings on allotment sites are the responsibility of OCC. ODFAA will confirm which they are with OCC.

As an aside, Caroline Chanides ([cchanides@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:cchanides@oxford.gov.uk)) is still our main contact at OCC, but only works Wednesdays and Thursdays.

### 2. Member updates

Jane Wilson (Court Place Farm) reported that they had decided to convert to a Community Interest Company, as it was deemed quicker and simpler than going down the Co-op route. They were able to do this because of their benefits to the wider community, including a community garden and links with the Probation Service etc. If another other allotment association would like more information, please contact Steve Bagnall.

A couple of allotment sites reported that someone from ODS had turned up unannounced to do a tree survey. Jonathan Clark (Trap Grounds) was told by the ODS tree surgeon, Ren, that he inspects all the trees in the City on a 3 year rotation looking for public safety issues. He gets access to allotment sites by waiting at the gate for an allotment holder to let him in. Laura Harlot is in charge of the tree team, if you need to contact the council regarding trees.

Tracy Crossman (Bartlemas) and Nick Jackson (Osney) reported that they have converted to Metro Bank, and that they are a great improvement on Barclays.

It was reported that Castle Water (the outsourced billing company for Thames Water) is very difficult to work with, and it is recommended to switch to another 'supplier' – First Business Water, for example, is used successfully by a number of allotments.

Jane Wilson (Court Place Farm) is currently investigating switching electricity supplier, because the current supplier SES has a standing charge of £1.23/day. [Secretary's note: East Ward are supplied by Scottish Power, which has a standing charge of £0.42/day currently]

### **3. Finance report**

ODFAA has £8,203.94 in its current account, £4,000 of that will be needed to cover the insurance renewal in April 2023. The only big expenditure this year was the £950 for legal costs for setting up the FCA co-op arrangements, most of which should be re-cooped from individual allotment associations when they convert. In normal years, the £1200 collected in subscriptions covers expenditure for the year, and as the finances are sound, the treasurer is not recommending any change in subscriptions for 2023.

ODFAA pays for a Zoom license, which is available to any association wishing to use it.

### **4. NAS Fed membership - requirements**

ODFAA has also been offered free Federal membership of NAS, but that would require all allotments to sign up, at £3 per association member. Given its cost, and limited benefit, it was decided not to pursue this.

### **5. Future of the Competition / Potato Fair**

Following a wide-ranging discussion of pros and cons of organising a potato fair, it was decided that ODFAA would investigate having a providers fair (i.e. wider ranging than just potatoes) for 2024. It was deemed too late to do anything for 2023. Jane Millar (East Ward), Jane Wilson (Court Place Farm) and John Lardner (Eden Drive) will be supplying potatoes to their allotment holders, but this is also open to other allotment associations.

There was some support for reinstating a competition in 2024, though it is recognised that this would be a significant undertaking. It was suggested that individual associations discuss it with their members, and if there is interest, come back to ODFAA with ideas on how it should run, and a commitment to help organise it. ODFAA, itself, doesn't have the capacity to organise it without significant support from the individual associations.

### **6. Break-ins, site security.**

There have been a number of break-ins, vandalism and theft at various sites, but it is clear that it is not a priority for the police. As well as material cost, it has also caused loss of members, particularly at South Ward. It was noted that if you plan to install any sort of security cameras on site, it is necessary, due to GDPR, to put up notices warning of such. ODFAA will contact Crime Prevention for security advice, and updates will be put on the ODFAA website.

### **7. ALM & meetings diary 2023**

Meetings for 2023 will be in March (AGM), September and January (2024), either face-to-face, or on Zoom.

8. **AOB**

Jane Millar asked what people wanted to do with the ODFAA photographic archive. It was decided to add it to the newsletter to gauge interest.

Jonathan Clark asked whether the association can vote to limit the use of chemicals on site. This has happened on a couple of sites - Nick Jackson said that St Thomas & New Botley have banned various chemicals, against his advice, and Alan Cooper explained that at John Garne Way, chemical spraying has to be supervised by a committee member. There is a legal requirement not to use various chemicals if you are near a waterway (e.g. the riverside Botley plots).

9. **Date of next meeting**

Not set