Minutes of the TGAA AGM held at 8.00pm on March 31st 2009 at the St Margaret's Institute

Committee members present: Tony Hollander, chairman; Neil McLennan, vice-chairman; Bob Crabtree, treasurer; Kate Lack, secretary; Vibeke Mannion and Carol Jarvis, lettings secretaries; Peter Jarvis, pest control and plant sale; Stuart Skyte, social and website; Jonathan Clark, website

Apologies: Gerald Sacks, Frances Kennett, Jim Campbell and Chris Goodall.

Matters arising
TH reported that the bamboos donated by Brian Wardley had not survived the wet summer.
Re Phil and Jim School plans for the triangle of land, TH and Cllr.Jim Campbell had attended a meeting with school governors and Oxford City Council re access and use of land. No agreement reached in view of the outstanding wildlife survey to be undertaken.
Security – the new fence was now installed. Despite the raised rabbit fence, animals still getting in and out.
Rail crossing – TH had met with Network Rail in relation to the triangle of land transfer and access. NR concerned about safety and the public use of the crossing. TH advised the meeting that gates on east and west sides of railway should not be left tied open. Drivers notice and report.
NE corner of site – TH reported on the proposed beautification of the corner and circulated a plan drawn up by John Porter. Existing willow trees to be removed, and a small apple orchard, willow plantation and wildlife pond to be created.
Hardcore had been distributed around the Port Meadow gate.
The revised shed policy would be discussed later in the meeting.
Social – money raised by plant sale £600. Picnic and Harvest supper had been enjoyable.

Chairman's Report.
There had been six committee meetings since the previous AGM. In May 2008, Chris Goodall had attended re. his concerns over asserting the right of way over the crossing. TH reported that NR had informed him that the crossing would be closed if it was deemed a public right of way.
Fence – TH acknowledged the negative feelings of members about the unsightliness of the new fencing but problems of security had necessitated it. The City Council had funded and installed it. It was proposed to paint the gates after recommended time of 6 months. A decision was taken to paint the Port Meadow gates only. JP proposed NT grey as it would blend with the environment. The Port Meadow access area had been repaired making heavy deliveries much easier. It was not culverted but improved.
Lock – the majority of members had opted for a combination lock but there were difficulties. Gates were left unlocked, difficult to see the numbers etc. Ian Salisbury proposed a touch pad model. There was general discussion about the different options for locking outdoor gates. Anecdotal evidence described some touch pads that worked and some that didn't. A vote was taken re changing to touch pads or remaining with combination locks or using keys. The decision was to change to touch pads. The committee to research options and costs of installation. [JC] In the meantime members felt the locks should be used and the gates not left unlocked.
Skips – a reminder to be economic with use of skips. £1000 approx had been spent on skips in 2008.

Children were welcome on the site but parents/accompanying adults must keep them under control. They should not be allowed to run about the site at will, both for their safety (pond/wells) and out of respect for other plots.
Machinery – it was necessary for members to co-operate with the policy of the safe use of machinery in order to comply with insurance cover requirement.
Shed policy – the draft shed policy was discussed. GC pointed out that fruit cages by necessity had to be larger than the proposed shed dimensions of 7' by 5'. This was accepted. There was discussion about polytunnels. Some people objected to the industrial appearance of polytunnels. IS suggested a communal polytunnel at the NE end of the site. It was agreed that the shed policy would be adopted and polytunnels added to it.
Soil Analysis – the outcome of the soil analysis was still not known but it would only be a general site result, rather than by specific plots.
Walton Well Bridge Rd – council proposing to make it single line traffic only. There were new locks on the WWB Rd end of Port Meadow.
Treasurer – TH thanked JP for 10 years of hard work as treasurer. He thanked BC for agreeing to take on the role.
NE corner – JP and John Ashby were working on the NE corner. They had created a communal bonfire area and a communal compost bin. See above for plans for orchard etc.
Beekeeping – Joe and Maryann were both interested in developing beekeeping in a remote corner of the NE end. Both to do the Oxfordshire beekeepers course. They would liaise .Some concerns expressed about safety. Joe and Maryann to report back at the next AGM.
Pest control – Fiona Mackie spoke about control of pests. She was concerned about the killing of rabbits. PJ advised that humane traps are on site and available for members' use and that the law says rabbits are vermin and must be controlled. The committee will continue to review methods of pest control.

Treasurer's report
JP presented the accounts for 2008/9. See attached.
BC reported that RBS now has the account.
TH reported that the TGAA has now received half the rent as rebate following the 2007 summer flooding.

Lettings Secretaries report

1. CJ reported that there was a waiting list of 21, therefore important to maintain

plots if want to retain them. 63% kept in good order, 20% average, 10% poor, 7% very poor but were no wildernesses, therefore a general improvement.
It was now possible to rent half and quarter plots.
It was not possible to accommodate all requests to change plots because of flooding since 80% of the plots were vulnerable to flooding.

Website
JC reported that the website held basic information about the Association. The calendar page was popular and the history page written by SS was used as a model by other associations.
There was increasing usage of the site, with an average of 30 hits a day in a high period and 10 in a low.
JC told members that he welcomes contributions from all members.

Social
SS informed the meeting that the next Harvest Supper would be on 14/11/09.
The outdoor summer party might become a low key drinks party as attendance had become low in recent years.

Trading Shop
VM reported that it had been a very good year. She had spent £3220 but taken £4230. The markup was on average 20%.
She was grateful for all the help and support she was given, particularly from Virginia Wallis and Carol Jarvis.

Plant Sale
PJ informed the meeting that the next plant sale would be on May 24th at the SMI. He requested donations of plants and seedlings, already labelled, to be brought to the SMI on the 23rd.
AOB
IS suggested that rather than fencing, the council might have funded compost loos.

The meeting ended at 10.00pm