

Minutes of the TGAA Committee meeting held at 10.30 am on Tuesday 31st January 2017 at 23 Chalfont Road, Oxford.

Present: Tony Hollander (chairman); Neil MacLennan (deputy chairman); Virginia Wallis (secretary and lettings secretary); Bob Crabtree (treasurer); Jonathan Clark (website and machinery); Tim Halliday (shop); Michael Wheale (compost); Roger Mumby-Croft (lettings secretary).

Apologies: Pete Jarvis (pest control).

1 Accounts

The draft accounts to be presented at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) showed a very healthy year-end balance of £12,140.09. However, expenditure over the year exceeded income (mostly from fees, the plant sale and shop) by £75.79. This was largely down to the cost of two big repairs to the new - but fragile - ride-on mower and one big repair to the flail mower. As money may be needed to pay for a new and more robust mower in the next couple of years, it was agreed that no changes would be made to fees this year, although a 'fee holiday' could be considered in the future. It was also agreed that there would be no change in the strategy for the shop as it is still making money. However, making members aware of the shop and its wares would be helpful.

Action TimH to send an email reminding everyone about the shop, when it's open, what's available to buy – including seed potatoes - and what a good deal it is in comparison with garden centres. Perhaps we should ask what members would like the shop to stock as well. VW to draw up shop rota for March and April.

Action JC to assist RC in mechanising plot-fee invoices.

2 Railway works

Car park Carillion has agreed to put up the private car-parking sign provided by the council and will also install four bike racks in one of the parking spaces. For the time being we will rely on the sign to stop non-allotment people using our car park. If this turns out to be a problem, we could consider putting an unlocked chain across the entrance.

Ramp and railway bridge The ramp surface will be completed some time in the spring once the weather is better. In spite of signs encouraging dog walkers to clear up after their dogs, dog mess is a problem and there is no longer a dog-mess bin on the ramp.

Action TonyH to write to councillors, parks, etc about putting back dog-mess bins and making sure they get emptied regularly.

Side span The proposed gate at the lower end of the side span – for which Network Rail (NR) have planning permission is not high enough to keep intruders out of the allotment site. We have asked for the gate to be 8ft high and for the fence next to it to extend further up the bridge. We could deter intruders by using anti-climb paint and/or planting prickly plants.

Action MW to buy anti-climb paint when all works finished.

Paths and pond The southern path is in a dreadful state. NR has agreed to pay us to get the path put back into good order with solid footings and hardcore in the particularly boggy areas. JC has organised quotes from various contractors including Parks Department. To stop people from falling into the pond, NR has agreed to build a post and rail fence where the path is now very narrow.

Action JC and a sub-committee to decide what works exactly will be done and by whom once all the quotes are in.

Signs and noticeboard The new allotment signs produced by the Parks Department need to be put up. It was agreed that the noticeboard by the now-redundant level crossing entrance gate should be moved to the bottom of the ramp down from the side span.

Action JC to buy security bolts for the new signs. TonyH and MW to move noticeboard.

Trees NMc to talk tree management with Stuart Fitzsimmons.

Bench Plot sharers with the late Sue Howarth would like to put a bench on the allotment site near the new ramp. It was agreed that this would be a welcome addition once all the works on site have been completed.

3 Dates and events

AGM is taking place in the St Margaret's Institute (SMI) on Tuesday 28th March 2017 at 7.30 for a welcome drink before business starts at 8.00. NMc to provide wine and nibbles.

Plant sale will be on Sunday 14th May 2017 from 10.00 until 1.00 at the SMI. Given that we no longer really need the money from the sale, its future will be up for discussion at the AGM.

Harvest supper The SMI has been booked for the evening of Saturday 11th November 2017 but Stuart and Gillian Skyte are stepping down from organising the event. Thought needs to be given to how to replace their superb organisational skills. The theme of the photographic competition is 'decay'.

4 Spring newsletter 2017

Copy is due by the end of February as follows: railway progress (and lack of) JC and TonyH; vandalism and crop theft TonyH; compost and bonfire MW; shop TimH; shared equipment JC; skip JC; gardening help JC; seeds and membership cards VW; and member to member communication JC.

5 Other things to do

JC to get rid of shredder.

JC to edit out now-redundant information – such as crossing guidance - on the TGAA website.

VW to liaise with CH re: planting up second bee-friendly raised bed.

JC and RM-C to undertake a risk assessment of the allotment site.

VW to remind the committee that anyone can send an email to all members by using members@trapgroundallotments.org.uk and/or send an email to all committee members by using committee@trapgroundalootments.org.uk.

The meeting ended at 12.20