

Minutes of the TGAA Committee meeting held at 11.00 on Tuesday 19 February 2019 at 23 Chalfont Road, Oxford.

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

Matters arising

Further to the action points completed since the last committee meeting on 16th October 2018:

- VW has still yet to update the TGAA rules on the shed policy and fruit-tree planting.
- JC had investigated the cost of solar panels for the equipment shed as well as the cost of lighting and a battery-powered strimmer but the total cost would have been in the region of £700 and the equipment shed would not have been a suitable site for the panels because of asbestos. It was therefore agreed to let the matter drop. MW volunteered to clear the rubbish from the shed roof.
- Richard Gordon, in collaboration with owl experts, has installed an owl box on Burgess Field rather than on the allotment site which was not considered to be a suitable site after all. This means that we can continue to use rat poison.

Allotment water supply

Thanks to NMc and CB for their thorough investigation of water supply solutions at other allotment sites and their detailed proposed water supply project with an estimated cost of £15,065. Following a wide discussion of the pros, cons and possible risks of the proposal as well as alternative lower tech options, it was agreed that a time-limited discussion would be held at the AGM to ascertain how much of a problem the current water supply is seen to be, whether members would be prepared to pay for improvements (on top of plot and membership fees) and what expertise and manpower they would be prepared to contribute to any improvement project.

Action: NMc to draft a document about the various options for improving the water supply to send to members before the AGM.

Fruit-tree pruning and communal orchard

The pruning session with Chris Lanczak, orchard manager and pruning expert at Waterperry Gardens went really well and it was agreed that it would be made an annual event. It was also agreed that a charge of £5 to attend the session would be introduced and that the whole of the communal orchard should be pruned before trees on individual plots. Chris will be returning to host a session on stone-fruit (damson and plum) tree pruning on Saturday 4th May 2019 from 9.30 to 12.00 starting with the damsons planted by NMc. A maximum of 20 places on the session will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis with a charge of £5 per person.

Action: VW to email members and draw up a list of attendees.

Compost area

David Haynes has replaced the third compost bin with telegraph poles which were sunk 4' into the ground creating a structure which should last another five to ten years. However, it may not last that if the communal bonfire is lit too close to it.

Action: MW to put up a sign next to the compost bin asking members to put material for the bonfire well away from the compost bin.

Shop

The racking installed in the shop is a huge improvement. If the water supply project goes ahead, CB intends to give up his shop-related duties which includes fray prevention on ground cover. The shop no longer stocks seeds or seed potatoes.

Action: A notice needs to go up in the shop with CB's mobile number on it so that purchasers of ground cover can have any potentially fraying edges blow-torched.

Pollarding

Most of the willows on the south and west sides of the allotment site have been pollarded but park ranger, Julian Cooper ignored the suggestion that the sycamore and ash trees should

also be dealt with. The willows on the north side were supposed to have been pollarded over the winter.

Action: TH to contact Julian Cooper. Done. He'll fit the work in if he can.

Footpath access

The predicted erosion of the footbridge path did not materialise largely because of the dry weather. Although no action is needed, we need to keep an eye on it.

Harvest supper

The harvest supper went very well and there was plenty of food. There were also plenty of high-quality entries in the 2018 photo competition. The theme for this year's competition is 'texture' and winners will be announced at the harvest supper which will be held on 9 November 2019.

ODFAA meetings

Thanks to NMc and Sally for attending the ODFAA meeting on 22 January 2019 which was largely concerned with the new leases for allotment sites across the city. The two key points were that allotment associations will have to pay for work done on their sites but that the council is responsible for dealing with trees on the boundary outside any site. Stuart Fitzsimmons reckons that dealing with the trees on TGAA's boundary costs around £6,000. It was agreed that committee members would take it in turns to attend future ODFAA meetings in the following order: chairman; deputy chairman; treasurer; secretary, lettings secretary and then in alphabetical order by surname so CB, JC, PJ and MW. RC will attend the meeting on 9th April 2019.

Yarnton

Yarnton Nurseries have decided to continue to accept our membership cards in exchange for discounts on gardening-related products. As well as showing the card, members will also have to quote number 508 (which has been written on all new cards).

AGM reports

Chairman will cover the path, fence, well covers, car park litter bin, mowing, water supply (as above together with NMc) and expert pruning sessions.

Treasurer will go through the accounts and raise the issue of possibly increasing fees.

Secretary will report back on the various discount schemes as well as the plant sale and swap and the shop (in CB's absence).

Lettings secretary will cover number of plots and people on the waiting list as well as the results of the spring plot inspection.

Website and machinery will look at member-to-member communication.

Pest control will remind people that rat boxes and poison are available.

Compost will report back on the state of the communal compost.

The meeting ended at 12.45

The next meeting is at 11.00 on the third Tuesday in June which is the 18th June 2019