

Cripley Meadow Allotment Association

Minutes of the AGM held on 15th March 2007

1. Welcome by Chair: Wendy thanked members and Susannah Pressel for attending.

Members present: Patsie Franks, Tim Bone, Caro Fickling, Diane Newell, Alex Hollingsworth, Gina Cowen, melissa Gemmer-Johnson, Jilly Matthews, Katie Colbert, Emily Flashman, Belinda Allen, George Burnett-Stuart, Sue Perry, Roberta Catizone, James Allan, Tom Worsely, Carolyn and Richard Dutton, Charlotte Vinnicombe, Keith Holton, Dave Simms, Tony Clera, John Sivell, Eugene Jones, Diana Pfetscher, Jane and Simon Mollison, Sam Bickerssteth, Mick Buckingham, Roger Turner, Sheila Allen, Wendy Skinner Smith, Ed Todd, Andrew Honey, Jamie Forbes, Bernis Fry, Matthew Sel.

2. Apologies: Alison Campbell, Tim Bradshaw, Louise Bruce, Sophie Petersen, David Bennett, Emma Titcombe, Caty Amey, Carol Kennet, Nicola Halliday, David Rundle, Miranda Carnegie Aimee Payton.

3. Minutes of AGM held on March 16th 2006 were approved.

Matters arising: the Autumn newsletter had clarified the situation re sheds on half-plots to the effect that only tool boxes could be installed on headlands.

4. Accounts: Copies of the audited accounts were circulated. It was pointed out that there appeared to be quite a lot of money left but that was because £1500 designated for mowing and clearance for Jan. to March had not been spent because it had been too wet. The accounts were accepted. Agreed that the Secretary would thank Ken Jones for auditing the accounts.

5. Annual Report: Wendy gave a slide show in order to present her summary of the development of the site. The meeting agreed with the proposal that the Darts' plot should be let in one bed plots to newcomers who would share shed and well in order to encourage them. Members who entered the City Council's competition were thanked for doing so and congratulated on winning some awards (with particular mention of John Sivell). Working Parties had managed to clear several plots in the course of the year. Members were encouraged to follow the example of committee members and join these parties which were working to benefit all members. It was agreed that the idea of a £10 donation in lieu of volunteering should continue. There were photos showing both the new fence and issues to do with the car-park (see 7/5 and 7/6 below). St John's has reorganised its leaf mould area and will be putting gravel down alongside. Their clearance was compromised when a member (or members) added some more brambles and garden waste to their newly cleared plot. Members were urged not to dump waste anywhere off their own plot (see 7/1 below).

6. Elections: (all officers and committee members were elected unopposed)

Chair: Wendy Skinner Smith – nominated by Sheila Allen seconded by Keith Holton

Vice Chair: Ed Todd – nominated by Wendy Skinner Smith seconded by Andrew Honey

Secretary: Sheila Allen – nominated by Wendy Skinner Smith seconded by Belinda Allan

Treasurer: Alison Campbell – nominated by Wendy Skinner Smith seconded by Sheila Allen

Other committee members: John Sivell, Andrew Honey, Tony Clear, Jamie Forbes, Alex Hollingsworth, Melissa Gemmer-Johnson. Gina Cowen resigned from the committee at the meeting.

7. Items for discussion from Annual Report:

7/6 Environmental report: (this item was taken first because Karen Seal from the City Council had come to speak on the subject)

Karen summarised the broad findings of the 1997 survey which had tested for heavy metals and for their uptake in vegetables. The conclusion had been then that though there was some uptake it was not above safety levels and the advice had been given to wash and/or peel vegetables and not to eat the soil. The situation had been reviewed in 2006 but was found to be basically unchanged though there is the intention to tie up some loose ends with further tests when money becomes available.

Karen then responded to members' questions. The conclusion was that currently the risks were at an acceptable level (even plots which were originally withdrawn could now be returned to cultivation) and it was expected that those levels of risk would be somewhat relaxed under new government guidelines expected by end of this year. In response to a comment that members could contribute to the costs Karen said that the City Council was approaching DEFRA for money in the first place. Wendy thanked Karen for giving up her time both for the meeting this evening and for a prior meeting she had had with her.

7/1 Responsibility for rubbish: dealing with waste was becoming increasingly expensive therefore members should make sure they do not bring potential waste on to site and should take any they have to Redbridge themselves if possible. Management in future would be to clear plots before handing them to new member so that volumes of waste were kept down. Old cement/asbestos sheeting if found should be wrapped in wet material, sealed in plastic and taken to Redbridge as we had failed to get City Waste to deal with it. We agreed to have 2 skips this year, 1 for waste already in the shed and 1 for general use. In future we would have an annual skip.

7/2 Regeneration of site: agreed that methods used to date should continue though a member suggested there was a Soil Association-approved substance for dealing with overgrown plots rather than glyphosate (Diana Pfetscher would liaise with Wendy about it). 6 plots remain to be cleared and the big clump of trees in the middle after which the site would be in line with the lease which allows for fruit trees under 10feet. The Council was to remove the ivy from the big tree by the gate and check it for safety; if it is safe it would remain because it does not impact on anyone's plot there.

7/3 Improving cultivation: it is not possible to get insurance for all members to use equipment and the mower is being much less used anyway. The committee may purchase a heavy duty strimmer for working party days.

7/4 Working Parties: Wendy stressed that members should realise that in helping on such occasions they are helping themselves as well as others as the general standard of the site is improved, weeds are kept down, etc. All should aim to contribute.

7/5a New Fence: south side and railway side are being completed. The other sides would be done after further consultation and exploration of the ditch as there has been a problem with another site's fence close to a ditch. We have been advised to keep the fence clear and shall have to decide how we are going to prevent brambles from destroying it.. The double gates bolt holes and block had been damaged by the machinery and would be repaired.

7.5b Cripsey Island: after discussion it was agreed that the lease-holders of the island would become members to avoid further problems. The lease is due to be renegotiated with the council in Dec. 2007 and we will be looking for some clarification of our relationship and responsibility to ensure the lease did not undermine or restrict our function as an allotment. Members expressed concern re access, gate procedures, pests and trees. It was agreed we would continue to talk when they had a proposal and membership for the interim would help with these problems.

7/7 Future of the green (central area): bearing in mind that the area would always have to be mown members agreed that they would like some seating and shade provided by a small hazel grove for coppicing and possibly bigger fruit trees. It should be a child-friendly space with no play equipment which would involve insurance and noise. It was agreed not to go for toilets of any description!

Car Park problems: Susannah was able to tell the meeting that the Council had agreed to restrict number of hours cars would be allowed to park there (after discussion it was agreed that it should be 4 hours rather than 3); drivers would have to take a ticket though no payment would be necessary but there would be no return within 24 hours. Members also asked for signs to warn cyclists that cars used the bridge to get to the allotments. We considered it was dangerous to have the same stretch used by cars, pedestrians and cyclists with no warnings. This has been reported to the council many times. Our thanks are due to Ian Shephard, Mike Gass, and all at Parks and Graham Smith in Car parks for their work on this.

8. AOB:

1. In 2008 we are due an rent review. It was agreed any rent increases would be passed to members.
2. Susannah had 3 items of information – clarification of the local beat officer for the allotments as it is not the Jericho officer- an exhibition of work on Port meadow in the Town hall Gallery- Jericho Street Fair is Sat. June 9th.

The meeting ended at 9.15.