

Cripley Meadow Allotment Association

Minutes of the AGM held on 22nd March 2011

1. Members present: Wendy Skinner Smith, Aja Hansen, John Sivell, Alison Campbell, Sheila Allen, Cathy Ferreira, Jamie Forbes, Tony Clear, Jeremy Hyde, Rodney Smith, Stefan Nowinski, Keith Holton, Tim Bone, Caroline Godfrey, Alex Nolasco, Simon and Jane Mollison, Liz Sanders, Anita Jassi, Richard Sims, Laurence Colbert, Sue Joseph, Johanna Skye, Richard Haigh, Caro Fickling, Diana Newell, Ian Barry, Patricia Blanco-Garcia, Kate Stewart, Graham McNeill, Sarah Sheldon, Virgil Clarke, Claire Pike, Godfrey Cole, Anita Jassi, Sara Rognoni, Luis Fernando Alday, Kiri Summers, Helen French, George Burnett-Stuart, Lydia Cole, Katherine Lomas, Tom Ghee, John Langsbury, Barbara Latham, Cyril Pead Councillor Susanna Pressel Andy Howard and Damien Appleby from Heritage Fruit Tree Co. **Apologies:** Carolyn Dutton, Alex Hollingsworth, Jilly Matthews, Julia Maxted, David Rundle, Miranda Carnegie, Sue Perry

2. Welcome by Chair: Wendy commented on a series of slides showing progress on the island since it came into our lease 3 years ago. She was delighted to be able to report that the Association had passed its lottery funding inspection at the end of its 3 years of funding with flying colours. Members had put in 625 hours of voluntary work, the Parks department had done £5000 worth of tree work. It is now the intention that members of the association will keep the willows pollarded over a cycle of 2 years and members would be encouraged to use the stripped willow wands. It had been good to work with groups from St Claire's and OXGROW and to welcome school groups. Open Days had been held in accordance with our lottery funding terms. Wendy thanked John Sivell for his work as project manager of the island and presented him with a certificate.

3. Minutes of AGM held on March 11th 2010: Alison Campbell moved that the Minutes should be approved, seconded by Jamie Forbes, accepted *nem con*. **Matters arising:** none

4. Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report

Copies of the accounts which had been inspected were circulated. Alison thanked members for paying subscriptions early and reminded members that £5 extra would be added for late payers (after the end of March). She also commented on the increase in key deposits as the deposit was now £25 and on the amount raised by donations. There had been considerable expenditure on the disused part of the site and more was needed in order for the fence to be moved. The other expense was hiring skips to remove rubbish from the site and members were reminded that they should not bring rubbish and building materials onto the site. The proposal that the accounts should be accepted (proposed by Tim Bone, seconded by Wendy Skinner Smith) was approved *nem con*. The Secretary would write to thank Ken Jones for verifying the accounts.

Budget: Alison pointed out that the budget is from January to January and that since then quite a lot of money had been spent as we had paid the Parks bill for clearing the disused area. She had budgeted for 3 more skips. Moving the fence was dependent on getting another Lottery grant. In answer to a question on the need to pay for willow pollarding it was pointed out that now we were in a position to keep some of the willows on Fiddlers Stream side pollarded ourselves and would do these over a 2 year cycle to keep them low. Those on Fiddlers drain side were more difficult because they had some embedded barbed wire so it had not been possible to pollard them low. Members were urged to use **stripped** willow wands for bean poles and for willow weaving and fence hurdles as there was not really a commercial use for it. Members were assured that the association would not spend money it had not got. Wendy thanked Alison for her work as treasurer.

5. Annual Report: there were no questions on the report. Sheila Allen moved acceptance of the report, seconded by Ian Barry. Wendy was thanked for writing it.

6. Update on bees

Diana Newell and Caro Fickling reported that the bees moved in in September and seemed to have settled well and survived the winter. They were quite docile. In answer to a question members were told that if a swarm was found on the site it was unlikely to be their bees but it was necessary to ring the swarm collection number which would be on the noticeboard. (Clifford (of OBKA) on 01993 775914 or 0777 077 5827)

7. Welcome by Councillor Susanna Pressel

Susanna congratulated members on the excellent state of the site and on the success of the island project. She thanked all of the committee and Wendy in particular.

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

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

Vice Chair: John Sivell – nominated by Wendy Skinner Smith, seconded by Simon Mollison

Secretary: Sheila Allen – nominated by Wendy Skinner Smith, seconded by John Sivell

Treasurer: Alison Campbell –nominated by Wendy Skinner Smith, seconded by Jamie Forbes

Other committee members: Tony Clear, Jamie Forbes and Alex Hollingsworth were re- elected unopposed. Jeremy had been co-opted since January to help John with the island. Wendy Skinner Smith proposed him for election, seconded by Tim Bone and he was elected unopposed. (Jane Mollison asked for thanks to John for his island work to be recorded in the minutes.) Richard Haigh (Plot 15) (proposed by Wendy Skinner Smith and seconded by John Sivell) and Claire Pike (Plot 48B) (proposed by Wendy Skinner Smith and seconded by Kate Stewart) were elected unopposed as new members of the committee. Aja Hansen and Cathy Ferreira did were thanked for their contributions.

9. Items for discussion from Annual Report:

a/ Wednesday Working Parties:

It was confirmed that the guidance is for members to put in 3 hours of work or make a donation which most members did. After discussion it was agreed to have just 2 Wednesday evening working parties and email members with additional Wednesday dates if something urgent cropped up.

b/ Complaints:

Cathy summarised the complaints procedure as set out in the rules – a member should initially write to the committee stating how they were acting unconstitutionally but if the member feels that the committee is still acting unconstitutionally s/he can call an Extraordinary General Meeting with 19 other people’s signatures or give 7 days’ notice for an AGM agenda item. Only after those procedures can a member complain to the Parks Dept. Alison urged members to raise issues with the committee informally. Wendy reported that all allotment associations had had a couple of unhappy members as audits were now a necessity to be fair to all. 2 of our members had complained to Parks in the past couple of years and it had taken up an inordinate amount of committee time. It was agreed that no change was necessary to the current procedure.

c/ Bamboo: this issue was being raised again because a member had complained to Parks about being asked to manage it in accordance with our rules. The committee had referred it to the AGM. It had not proved possible to manage the bamboo on the site under our current rules as agreed in 2008 although the 5 feet hedge rule should cover it. The member had been offered to have some on the central green where it could be mown round. Members asked about getting advice on how to remove it and on alternatives to bamboo for canes etc. Native hazel kept to 5 feet was recommended and this and stripped willow would be available as a by- product of managing the island. After discussion **Tim Bone proposed that bamboo should be banned and this was seconded by Caroline Godfrey. 29 members voted in favour of the proposal, 2 against and 4 abstained.** The committee was charged with implementing this.

d/ Bonfires and rubbish: Jamie informed members that the association had received complaints in the past year about smoky bonfires and he reminded members that the City Council code for bonfires was on the noticeboard and web site. Guidelines included drying all material before burning and composting as much as possible and avoiding bringing rubbish onto the site (members were asked to notify the committee if they saw anyone doing this and were reminded that our lease stated that there should be no building materials brought onto the site). The association had provided a communal bonfire site near the island noticeboard but members must burn the material immediately and supervise the bonfire if they used that site. Bonfires are not allowed on Bank Holidays.

e/ Communal ordering: (see agenda for summary of the issue). Members were notified that the Trap Grounds Association has a shop (see trapgroundsalotments.org.uk for details). The association will be able to publicise this when it has its member-to-member noticeboard.

f/ Castle Mill Development Site: unfortunately our letter of objection representing our 250 members had been taken as one objection so members were encouraged to write individually objecting to the development of more flats next to the allotments on the grounds of light, flooding, badgers, access and bonfires. Wendy had brought copies of a letter which members were urged to take and send in and a copy would be on the website. It was understood that the university had commissioned an environmental report. Susanna recommended that members specify any objections. The members understood that student accommodation was needed to get students out of potential family homes. It was agreed that a letter should be sent formally from the AGM with the list of members present attached.

8. AOB:

No items were raised in AOB

The meeting ended at 9pm