

Minutes of Imberhorne Allotment Association AGM 7.30 p.m. Friday 31 October 2014 at Trinity Methodist Church Hall

1. Apologies: Roger and Dianne Gray, Sue Robinson, Dick Clark, Elizabeth Philp, Lesley Ann, Edward Archer

2. Minutes of last year's AGM were agreed.

3. Chairman's report – Paul Phillips

Good evening all, I would like to welcome you to the Association's 2014 AGM.

This year has been another interesting year for us, with the high winds and rain between November and February; this was a very mild winter with hardly any ground frosts.

Trying to get down the allotment and prepare for the planting of the early potatoes was challenging. On arrival some of us had tree branches to remove from our plots after the stormy winter.

The mild spring and the record high temperatures this summer were nice, but for us allotment growers getting down every day sometimes twice a day was challenging. Trying to get all the plot water took some considerable time. But lucky this year we didn't have too many concerns with the weeds due to the dry weather.

Once again I would like to thank Anne Gray, for all her work on the Orchard.

This season we have had no reported thefts, which is always good news compared with last year.

This year we had a successful BBQ, we are always looking at having a few more social events during the year, so that we can all get to know each other better. If you have any ideas of social events we could have please let the committee know.

This year we purchased web software to update our out dated website. This was done by me with the assistance of the committee for content ideas. Please have a look and see what you think of the site.

I would like to remind you about our Facebook group page I would encourage you all who are on Facebook to join the group. This is a great way to communicate information quickly.

This year we had issues with reliability of the mowers, at one point we had no serviceable mowers available for tenants to use. We had to right off two old mowers and repair the 2 remaining mowers. The committee made the decision to buy a new mower, to add to the 2 existing mowers we currently have 3 serviceable mowers. If you do have issues with any of the machinery please email the committee, don't just leave it for someone else to

This year we extended the main car part to allow more cars to park on the site.

We had a couple of working parties this year for clearing the stream and perimeter areas.

This month we had some sad news that Peter Andrews, who had plot 12 passed away after battling cancer. Peter had been a tenant for well over 45 years. Peter who was a plot neighbour of mine was always happy to chat and give advice to me.

I would like to thank all the current committee officers and members for their dedication in the giving of their time and effort in the day to day management of the site. Also I would like to thank Sue Robinson who after many years on the committee is stepping down.

4. Membership report – Mark Cunningham

Currently there are 3 plots to be relet by the end of the year and 34 people on the waiting list.

5. Treasurer's report – Robin Yetman

A copy of the audited Income and Expenditure Account – year ended 31/8/2014 was available at the meeting.

The accounts have been reviewed by the Committee and independently audited by Bill Blackledge, a current allotment holder and past Chairman of the Committee.

At the end of August, our financial year end, the current account stood at £1610.19 in credit, the deposit account at £2973.00 in credit and petty cash at £93.62. Our finances have thus returned to a sound albeit modest position.

Income

Income for the year rose from £1792.62 to £2442.76. This was due to the rent increase from 10p to 15p per square metre that was applied at the 1st January 2014.

Overall, income exceeded expenses by £659.85 and the committee sanctioned a transfer of £1500 to our deposit account to replenish our reserves which had been spent on projects in previous years.

Note 1 to the accounts shows the breakdown of rents. Forty percent of members are now paying their rents by internet banking compared to 30% last year. This is to be welcomed as it does reduce the administrative effort and cost of collecting rents.

One relevant factor the Committee would wish to bring to members notice is the timeliness of rent payments. The second table in note 1 shows that 80 % of rents were paid in December or January but 20% were paid late. Inevitably this does lead to further work in chasing slow payers.

Rent is due on the 1st January each year and the Committee would like to remind members that the rules of the lease agreement (Rule 8) stipulate that members may lose their plots if rent is not paid by the 31st January.

Also under note 1 you will see a reference to outstanding amounts owed to the Association for the bees and bee-keeping equipment. Firstly a typo, the amounts are payable by October 2014 (not 2004). Secondly I am pleased to report the amount payable by Mr Coldman has now been received and agreement reached with Mr and Mrs Colcomb on the repayment of their portion of the loan.

Expenditure

Expenditure for the year totalled £1762.91, a reduction from £2244.80 on 2012-13.

The reduction is due to lower amounts for metered water, site maintenance and equipment and repairs. Costs that rose were third party insurance, functions (i.e. AGM and inaugural barbeque), and our site rent.

Site maintenance costs include £180.54 for site drainage through the roadway and in the car park, £240 for mowing of communal areas, as well as £119.95 for weed-killing on neglected and abandoned plots and around the car park. We again had to replace locks on the gate at a cost of £61.84

The Association acquired a new mower at a cost of £171.98.

During the year the Association's website was updated and as with most things technological these days we first needed to acquire some new programming software at a cost of £89.99 in order to be able to do that.

As you will see from the pie chart, site maintenance and mowing currently consumes 37% of our total expenditure. There is little we can do to avoid the costs of materials but we are dependent on the goodwill of volunteers and contributions from working parties to keep costs under control. I would like to thank Eric Eves for his work in servicing all the water butts this year and ensuring they comply with SE Water regulations. In the event this cost the Association nothing but if we had had to find a commercial plumber it would not have been cheap.

Conclusion

Our finances are in a sound but modest position and the good news is that the Committee intends to hold rents at their current level of 15p per square metre for 2015 plus the £5 membership fee.

However to encourage more timely payments of rent it also intends to introduce a late payment fee of £5 for members who have not paid by the 31st January 2015. This is not intended as a revenue raising measure but as an incentive to encourage timely payment of rents.

6. Association Business

Site maintenance

Winter working parties on the first Sunday of the month were to start again from December and members were encouraged to join in. These met at 10am and worked eg trimming overgrown trees, for a couple of hours. We would be grateful for plot holders to identify issues and priorities to address.

Contractors for G&G Vitamins had felled all the trees along their boundary and now faced the difficult job of deciding what to do with the large tree stumps to enable the fence to be replaced.

We would continue to press Nightfreight to cut down some of their overgrown trees.

The roadway would be closed in the next couple of weeks for the winter.

Security

The code for the combination lock would be changed on 31 January 2015. Members would be informed of the new code when they renewed their membership.

Machinery

Members were asked to let the Committee know if machines went wrong or if advice was needed on how to operate them as we were happy to do so. Members were also reminded to clean out the underneath of mowers as some had been found full of mud and grass cuttings.

It was agreed to provide clear labels on the machinery so people know what fuel to use and from which storage can.

7. Resignation of committee members and Election of new Committee members

Paul was to continue as Chair for another year and Roger Tullett would unofficially act as vice-Chair.

Sue Robinson had resigned from the Committee. New members Jim Thomson (plot 11) and Vic Runacre (plot 15) were welcomed to the Committee.

Signed Date
(Chairman)