

Minutes of the Imberhorne Allotment Association AGM 7.30 p.m. Friday 27 October 2017 at Trinity Methodist Church Hall

1. Apologies: Sue and Vic Runacre, Dave Williams.
2. Minutes of last year's AGM were agreed. Proposed by Karen Colcomb, seconded by Eric Eves. All in favour.

AGM 2017: No business items had been submitted by Members. The meeting was attended by 23 members.

3. Annual Report to 31/8/2017 – Roger Tullett, Chairman

Roger ran through the key points from the report which had been circulated with the papers for the meeting at the end of September.

In addition:

Roger thanked Karen Colcomb for her excellent work as Membership Secretary. This had resulted in full letting of plots throughout the year and currently 14 or 15 people on the waiting list.

Roger thanked those that had got involved in the working parties over the previous winter. The next one was planned for Sunday 5 November from 10am.

We had identified an area for communal bonfires. Our preference was for 1 or 2 large burns of woody material each winter to minimise the impact on our neighbours.

A manure delivery had been made a couple of weeks ago and if plot holders had missed out they should talk to Robin Peach after the meeting as another delivery was planned for the first weekend in November.

It was agreed to try and avoid arranging the BBQ in August 2018 for the same day as the Felbridge Horticultural Show as several members were involved in that.

4. Treasurer's Report – Robin Yetman

A copy of the audited Income and Expenditure Account – year ended 31/8/2017 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. The following report was accompanied by a 12 slide presentation.

At the end of August, our financial year end, the current account stood at £2,875.88 in credit, the deposit account at £4,478.76 in credit and petty cash at £62.68. Our finances thus continue to remain at a sound albeit modest position.

Income

Income for the year rose from £2,704.64 to £3,076.41, an increase of 13.7%. This year's income benefitted from equipment sales of £44.40, contributions from the hire of mowers and strimmers of £248.82 and the reimbursement of £29.99 from Homebase in respect of one of our mower guarantees.

As many of you will be aware the parent company of Homebase has changed hands and the new company policy is not to offer 3 year extended warranties, but to continue to honour those already issued. The IAA held 2 of these in respect of its Qualcast mowers. During the year we needed to exchange our push mower which Homebase duly did under the manufacturer's 12 month warranty and it therefore reimbursed us for the 3 year warranty which it was unable to carry over.

It is appropriate to mention at this point that we have also just exchanged our self-propelled Qualcast mower under the extended warranty scheme. We took the opportunity to do so as Homebase will no longer be stocking this brand and is currently running down its inventory.

Income under Donations also includes a figure of £126.95 collected in respect of monies collected at the East Grinstead Lions Mayfair. This was paid in full to the Lions for their charities and you will see a similar figure under Expenditure.

60% of members are now paying their rents by internet banking. This is similar to last year and the figure may now have plateaued at this level. Nevertheless, this is still welcomed as it does reduce the administrative effort and cost of collecting rents. I am also pleased to report that rents are being paid on time and we did not need to apply the late fee in any case. So thank you to every one for making timely payment and I look forward to being able to report a similar position next year.

We also banked £200 from petty cash.

Expenditure

Expenditure for the year totalled £2,368.52 an increase of 105% on the £1,156.08 of the previous year.

Nevertheless, our overall income exceeded expenses by £707.89 (£1,548.56).

Looking at our expenditure in more detail :

The largest item and largest increase is in respect of **Equipment and Repairs** with a total of £567.53 (150%). We purchased 2 picnic benches and parasols for the new community area at a cost of £407.06 and a new barbeque for £29.75. There were also costs for a back pack sprayer for the orchard, new security locks for the gate and a First Aid box.

Site Maintenance costs rose 116% to £490.56. This comprises amounts of £147.60 for 3 bags of shingle to improve the car park surface area particularly in wet weather, and £101.57 for the gabions – the metal cages – which we used to rebuild part of the stream embankment which had collapsed and was being further eroded in bad weather. We spent £164.24 in respect of the orchard and common areas and this includes further new fruit trees and an educational visit by Orchard nurseries to help prune the trees and provide instruction and guidance to our members on maintaining these in the future. We spent a further £60 on repairs to the gate and allotment signs.

We experienced a very dry start to the growing season which is reflected in the **water bill**. At £394.50 this was 46% higher than last year. The committee will be considering ways in which members can save on the water requirement next year and how any initiatives may be supported.

Many thanks again to Eric Eves who maintains and services our water butts throughout the year. He has also installed an additional valve so that the butts can be drained and cleaned before being refilled next year.

As mentioned under Income we made a **Donation** to the East Grinstead Lions of £126.95 and bore the associated costs of the pitch and the stall sign as part of our donation. The committee also agreed to donate £50 to the Just Giving appeal launched by our member Emma Maxwell in respect of a 'Sit Ski' for her special needs son, Henry.

Our **Third Party Liability Insurance** cover rose 17% to £203.79. Our rent from East Grinstead Town Council by 3.48% to £82.43 - in line with RPI.

The cost of last year's AGM and our summer barbeque (**Functions**) came to £94.23.

Our Internet site cost £62.38 and office expenses came to £44.35.

Other items include our usual office expenses, the internet site licences, and also reflects that we banked £200 cash to our current account.

2018 Budget

The committee is expecting the financial situation for 2018 to be broadly similar to that of 2017. We expect rents and membership fees to raise approximately £2,500 which will be enhanced by new members joining fees, monies from petrol contributions and equipment hire.

Our rent currently increases in-line with RPI, but after 2018 we expect a renewed lease with East Grinstead Town Council to be in place and that is likely to be higher than what we currently pay.

Our water bill is very much dependent on the weather in the early growing months when demand is high. As this now looks set to exceed £400 for the year the committee will be discussing ways in which we might make savings. The usual maintenance will be carried out and we will look into the possibility of capturing rainwater from shed roofs and how this might be best achieved.

It is also intended that a second stop cock be fitted inside the allotments perimeter to make it easier to access for maintenance and avoid the potentially dangerous activity of lifting the plate in the pavement on the edge of Imberhorne Lane whenever we want to turn the water off.

The committee is intending to improve the main car park area further by laying more ballast. We may spend around £150 on this. There will be ongoing maintenance costs for the orchard and other repairs as they occur

Since Homebase has withdrawn their extended warranties on equipment and we have exercised our rights we intend to make provision to acquire another new mower of approx. £200 in the course of the year. We are also mindful of the need to maintain our strimmers and cultivators.

The committee will consider hosting a stall again at the East Grinstead May Fair on a charitable basis. We expect the Association will bear the associated costs of site rental and licences as part of its donation as in 2017.

There will also be some costs associated with the renegotiation of our site lease beyond 2019 and in this regard the committee recommends we increase our deposit account reserve to £5,000 an increase of approximately £500.

Conclusion

Financially, 2016 – 2017 has been a successful year in terms of managing our costs and undertaking regular maintenance activities to maintain the site generally to a high standard.

The Committee intends to hold rents at their current level of 15p per square metre (nominal) for 2018 plus the £5 membership fee.

It also intends to retain the late payment fee of £5 for members who have not paid by the 31st January 2018 as it appears to be an effective measure in encouraging timely payment of rents.

There were no questions and Roger thanked Robin for his thorough report on the Association's finances and plans.

Proposed by Jenny Eves and seconded by Paul Phillips. All in favour.

5. Association Business

Site improvements

Members were asked for suggestions on improvements to the site or for additional equipment. Eric Eves suggested a small electric fence, at a cost of around £100, be purchased to deter badgers from feasting on plot holders sweetcorn and other crops at the key period in the year. It was agreed to look into this.

An entry to East Grinstead in Bloom in 2018 was to be discussed at a future Committee meeting. In 2017 we had been awarded a Certificate of Excellence. Our plan was to put the site forward as this year it had looked really good in July when the judging takes place.

On the lease renewal we had identified the issue of the exact site boundary to establish who's responsibility some of the very large trees were and whether it ran down the middle of the stream by the public car park alongside the part pf the site near the gate. Also we expected the Council to want to transfer responsibility for the water infrastructure to the Association as part of the lease renewal. This was another reason for to add a stop cock inside the site.

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

The Secretary Mark Cunningham was stepping down and Sue Robinson was elected to replace him. Proposed by Jim Thomson and seconded by Paul Phillips. All in favour.

Mark Cunningham was also stepping down from the Committee and Michael Moon was elected to replace him. All in favour.

The others on the Committee: Robin Peach, Alan Stonley, Vic Runacre, Jim Thomson, Dave Williams, Peter Simpson, Karen Colcomb, Ina Milne and Paul Phillips were all re-elected. All in favour.

The meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.

Signed Date
(Chairman)