

MINUTES OF ALLY PALLY ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEETING 28.09.14

Present – Bob Hare, Jill Pullan, Peter Campbell, Jenny Bourne Taylor, Sally Chubb, Alison Liney, Arthur Leigh, Angela Silva Jones

Apologies for absence – John Wilkinson

Minutes of last meeting – Agreed. Trading Shed paint should read Trading Shed Creocote

CHAIR'S REPORT – Bob Hare

Welcome to our two new Committee members, Jenny Bourne Taylor and Angela Silva Jones.

After Show BBQ: Thanks to Jenny and Pamela for organising this event on the site and thanks to Alison for lending her fire pit. It was an enjoyable party but after such a long day at the Show, many people felt too tired to attend. A BBQ after the AGM in past years has been more successful.

Top shed roof: Thanks to Colin and also Mike for repairing the Top Shed roof which was leaking.

Council compost: There will be a delivery of Council compost at the end of October and November. Thanks to John O'Connor in the Council for the deliveries. Bob will organise some pictorial guidelines for size of load and cost.

Show Plants: We left some plants left over from the Show for sale outside the Trading shed with an honesty box and this generated about £5.00.

Alexandra Park and Palace Consultation Committee: We need a representative on this Committee and Jenny Bourne Taylor volunteered. There are four meetings a year about the activities and developments in the Park and Palace. The wartime garden project in the concrete service yard is going ahead and we have offered advice.

Polytunnel in winter: Angela hopes to start preparing again for the Plant Sale in April next year. In the meantime, the polytunnel is available for over-wintering plants. Any damage to the polytunnel needs to be reported immediately.

North London Waste Trip: Thanks to Pamela Harling for organising this. Those who went (about six from the site) on the visit found it really interesting, and we were given lunch!

Organic Lea in Waltham Forest: Bob and Angela have visited this interesting project and suggest it could be an interesting allotment trip for next year. It is quite difficult by public transport so we may need to arrange a few private carloads.

2-Ring Hob: This has never worked properly and we no longer need it. Bob will buy it for £25.00.

Propane gas bottles in the Top Shed: Peter will ask Colin to house the gas bottles in an outside waterproof cage and run the gas into the shed for the cooker, as this is safer.

Website: Bob will create a section for the Minutes of our meetings. Sally will post them on.

SITE SECRETARY'S REPORT – Alison Liney

Waiting List and Lettings – Waiting list 198. 3 probationers have reached the end of their probationary period and passed. 1 probationer still to complete his probationary period. There are 4 vacant plots. After the July Inspection there were 11 NCNs issued and one termination. Most tenants complied by the required date and one has been given an extension. After the September inspection there were 6 NCNs issued including 2 for excessive weeds and non-cultivation, 1 for rubbish, 2 letters for control of trees and 1 letter to nudge a normally good tenant.

Repairs and Improvements:

Trees: Oak between 22 and 24 GLM pruned. Dead tree by the bottom gate cut down. We agreed to pay Pete Oliver to reduce the trees on two vacant plots, 4B A.P. and 11 GLM.

Alison will meet with Pete Oliver about some Autumn pruning. A Springfield Avenue neighbour has been dumping grass cuttings over the fence and has complained about trees spoiling his view. His actions need to be monitored.

Communal plot: Jenny asked whether a communal orchard plot had ever been suggested. The work involved in regular maintenance of the site and pruning of the trees to prevent them getting out of hand, have so far put us off pursuing this idea.

Plumbing: Colin is to repair another leak by plot 44 GLM.

Lock on pedestrian gate: Repaired and replaced, thanks to Geoff and Colin. We now have a spare.

Rubbish collection gratuities: We will give the truck operator a gratuity only if there is an excessive amount of rubbish to collect. Next collection in October.

Plots 27A & B A.P. 'Parking Bay': Hilary Thomas has made a useful 'Don't park when the ground is wet' sign. Thanks to her.

Trundle wheel: I have still done nothing!

Insurance Policy: Displayed on the notice board.

Bee Plot: Pamela Jackson from last year's training is helping on the plot. We have offered to organise extra help if needed.

Repair to fence along top path: Alison will consult with Colin over this repair. The Council have agreed to pay.

Security: There has been a spate of substantial crop thefts including onions, peaches and aubergines. Alison noticed a path cleared through the undergrowth by the bottom gate and Ann had a chair moved from her plot to the fence there. Colin has blocked this path with branches. If you have crops stolen please put a note in the Site Secretary's box so we can build up a picture of the thefts. Anyone found stealing from another plot will lose their tenancy. Alison reported the crop theft to the 101 Police line but has not received an acknowledgement. Arthur is liaising with the Safer Neighbourhood Group. Some sites are changing to more secure gate locks and the Golf Course Allotments put an extra chain round their gate from late at night until early morning. A volunteer locks the gate night and morning but this seems impractical on our site as it would ask too much of what would be a small team of volunteers. There is always the possibility of changing the padlock key but this involves contacting every tenant to sell them a new key and is expensive. A slam lock on the bottom car gate, similar to the pedestrian gate would encourage tenants to lock the gate behind them. Arthur felt a better positioned chain would also make it easier to lock the gate. Peter to talk to Colin and investigate either a slam lock or a chain system similar to the top gate. will investigate the cost of a heavy duty slam lock for the bottom car gate.

Arson: Creighton Avenue had both trading sheds burned down. Alex Fraser will eventually send round reminders about the safe storage of gas and inflammables, hence the need to move our propane gas cylinders from the Top Shed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Current Account: £2728. Business Account £1609. Figures for the current account are not exact because a few transactions (deposit, payments) are currently outstanding. The post Plant Sale sales raised profits of £172. The sale of some old tools raised £24.00 so far.

SECURITY CAMERA

The location of the security camera is being changed.

SOIL CONDITIONING AND COMPOSTING WORKSHOP

Sally and Peter will organise a workshop before November.

MENTORING SCHEME

This was suggested at the AGM to offer to new tenants. Peter, Sally and Jenny volunteered to be the first Mentors. Recent starters who have made a particular success of their plots (e.g. Rowland) will also be asked to act as mentors.

FRUIT PRESSING

At the recent successful fruit pressing afternoon organised by Peter and Susie, 5 groups pressed their fruit and 30 litres of juice were produced. The fresh juice is delicious. The next date is 11th October.

ART GROUP

This group has now closed for the winter but there was an exhibition of art from the 4 regular members at the Allotment Show. The group will start again in April 2015 and is open to all.

ALLOTMENT CAFE

This has been successfully running for over a year now. The Café raises money for a chosen Charity every other month. The alternate month the proceeds pays for the expenses of running the café, equipment etc. and there should also be a pot of money for APAA funds at the end of the year.

CREOCOTING TRADING SHED

A November date for this will be organised.

ALLOTMENT FORUM FEEDBACK

Alison recently attended a steering group meeting and Sally and Alison attend the regular meetings at Bruce Castle Park, which are open to all tenants. The new Council computer system should be up and running by the end of September. Concerns and negotiations about the safety of the water are on-going. Arthur pointed out that the stop cocks leading onto the allotments already have non-return valves. If not resolved, there is a possibility all hose pipes on allotments will be banned. Alison regularly circulates the Allotment Forum Minutes if anyone wants to know more.

A.O.B.

Arthur pointed out that the key for the stop cock which should be kept in the trading shed, has gone missing. It is essential this is available in case the water needs to be turned off in an emergency. Arthur will buy another one on behalf of the site.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7th December at 2pm