

AFTA

Minutes of the AGM held at 7.30pm on Wednesday May 30th 2018

at Frodsham Community Centre

Present:

Ken Spencer (chair)

Will Moran (sec)

Isobel Ridley (treasurer)

John Davies (maintenance sec)

Robert Yardley

Tatjana Yardley

June Withenshaw

Dave Withenshaw

Kathryn Pill

Colin Nolan

Angela Heverin

Stuart Bennison

Mike Blackburn

Tracy Mason

Keith Mason

Heather Gregory

Karyn Libecans

Lauren Amphlett

John Davies

Shash Otiv

Anya-Karis Wolfson

1. Apologies: Madelaine McCraith, Gillian Waring, Jill Watson.

2. Election of officers for the year 2018 - 19

Ken proposed that those existing officers who were willing to stand again be agreed by the meeting as a group.

Chair: Ken Spencer

Vice Chair: Kathryn Pill

Secretary: Will Moran

Treasurer: Isobel Ridley had indicated last year that she wished to stand down, and Jill Watson has agreed to take over as treasurer. She is familiar with the accounts as she has already audited them, and she is an accountant. Will thanked Isobel on behalf of everyone for her work as she had been treasurer from the beginning of the association 2011/12.

Maintenance Secretary: John Davies

Assistant Maintenance Secretary: Dave Withenshaw

Publicity & Social secretary no nominations received. Isobel, Will, and Kathryn agreed to continue covering this with the rest of the committee.

Website: Lauren Amplett agreed to take this role on and keep the website up to date. Will will contact Warren of Rabbit Digital to give her a link.

Heather Gregory, Robert Yardley, Tatjana Yardley, and Isobel Ridley were confirmed to continue as members of Committee.

Angela Heverin, and Keith & Tracy Mason asked to stand down. All have been on since it was set up and have been very active and generous with their time and commitment to the allotments. The meeting thanked them for their work.

3. Minutes of the last AGM on 18th May 2017 were approved as a correct record.

Matters arising included an update on the state of the field boundary with Beardsmore's field below. The hedge we planted is doing well and the remaining plastic collars could come off soon. Will reported that he had spoken to Adam Beardsmore about the broken posts and wire fence in the corner and would check if he's done anything about it.

4. Finance. Isobel reported we had a year end balance of £593.84 in the rent account, and £1,161 in the general account. The detailed reports are attached.

Expenditure on the raised beds was covered by the landlords who were reimbursing for all the costs.

The purchase of the lawnmower had had a significant impact on our outgoings following its purchase. That will be even more marked this year. Also costs on publicity included some expensive ads in Helsby to Hand and Runcorn Local, and the one off website creation costs. In this and future years there should just be a domain name fee of £8 and a site hosting fee of £68 so again significant savings. The bulk of new enquiries were coming through the website or word of mouth so there may be no need for further ads at the moment.

Other fixed costs included Shield Allotment insurance, annual membership of the National Association (NSALG), and £200 to CWAC for rodent control.

5. Secretary's report.

Plot letting had been busy during the year with 12 changes of plot and new lets. At the year end all four rows were fully let and the people who have dropped out at, or since the start of the new financial year have mostly been replaced from the waiting list. Issues remain about neglect on some plots and that will be discussed under any other business.

There was a general discussion about liaison with the owners over the Car Park and other site issues. It was agreed that Will would write on behalf of the committee and membership to request a face to face meeting ideally on site about these issues.

The compost heap needed turning and Will has spoken to Josh Shallcross about using his digger to shift it again and also taking a cut off the grass for silage.

Shash said that horse manure is available in Woodhouse lane in blue bags and is free. Will to try and find the contact details to circulate again.

6. Maintenance. John reported we had had a lot of help on Site Maintenance mornings for which many thanks. In response to a suggestion from Anya we agreed to trial a Sunday maintenance morning for the next one.

The raised beds needed to be finished off and the site was looking good with the new mowing rota. Josh will sort out the compost but we might need some heavy duty sheeting to cover it. It was agreed to purchase some heavy duty sheeting to cover neglected or vacant plots and keep the weeds down.

Kathryn Pill has drawn up a grass cutting rota to try and keep on the site tidy.

7. Website report. Website up and running. Lauren has agreed to look after it and keep it up to date. Thanks also to Alison Warburton who set up a Facebook page for the allotment.

#### 8. AoB.

There was a lot of vigorous and lively discussion with sometimes overlapping conversations at the same time so as harassed minute taker I've tried to split them into separate topics!

- plot expansion - there was a lively debate about whether we should extend into a new Row E or allow turnover to clear the waiting list. The same applied to the building of the raised beds when only one was let at the moment. I think the consensus was towards holding back a bit on further expansion and keeping a waiting list.

- Neglected plots. Several members had asked for this to be discussed. The tenancy agreements require plots to be well maintained and cultivated. In practice we have tried gentle persuasion and offers of help with strimming etc. Some wanted a more prescriptive approach and were unhappy about refunds when plots were left in a mess. I think the consensus was that the secretary should write offering help but reminding them of their obligations to cultivate their plots and control the weeds. If this approach failed in a specific case we should discuss at committee as to whether they would be deemed to have abandoned their plot.

- Security. Many felt the Dummy Cameras should be put up and the boundaries secured. Some were little more sceptical about their effectiveness. John agreed we would put them up.

- Communal Poly Tunnel. Kathryn asked if there was any interest in a communal poly tunnel sited over by the old committee shed. It was agreed that Will would write to everyone and ask.
- Bees. Two members have bees and were wondering about moving the hives to somewhere on site fenced off behind a willow screen. A few were anxious about reaction to bee stings. It would be good for pollination. Again it was agreed that Will would ask for feedback. In principle it seemed like a positive for the plants.
- Composting toilet. Ken is getting quotes for cheaper options with a servicing contract. Some queried the need but when Will had done a survey last year two thirds of the members were in favour. One member felt very strongly that we should not be applying to charities for assistance when the allotments were a private business. However, the Halton and CWAC Council allotments all got lottery grants to help pay for toilets on some of their sites. It was agreed that Ken should pursue our option and funding help for the toilets should be one of the items for discussion with the owners. If necessary we would still go for a Windfarm grant towards the costs.

With thanks to everyone who attended, the meeting adjourned just after 9.15pm.

Will Moran

Secretary  
31/5/18