

# **Hotwells And District Allotments Association**

## **Annual General Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010-02-01**

Present: Bob Franks, Bob Corfield, Angie Tonge, Roy Davis, Heather Jenne, John Holland  
Lyndsay Newman, Carolyn Robinson, Phil Cass, Steve Clampin  
Apologies: Peter Tucker, Dave Brice

15 Members attended the Meeting

In the absence of the President Dave Brice, the Chairman Bob Franks opened the meeting at 7.30; he thanked everyone for coming and praised the work of Dave Brice for the Association.

### **Last Year's Minutes**

The Minutes of the AGM held on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009 were proposed by Alan Miller and seconded by Phil Cass. There was a show of hands and the Minutes were accepted as a true and proper record.

### **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **Chairman's Report**

#### **Membership**

Last January I reported that we had 431 members on 474 plots.

Today we have 446 members on 484 plots. This arises as we continue the policy of letting only half plots.

The Waiting list exceeds 160.

We have still to acquire additional land for expansion.

We have bid for a strip equivalent to 20 full sized plots on the AM land being developed for housing in conjunction with the proposed new stadium. So far there has been no response to this.

Regarding the additional land at WC, we have been promised by British Rail [residual], as a condition of sale, the strip between our existing site and the railway when the larger area on the other side of our site has been sold to developers. This has still to occur: no doubt influenced by the current lack of availability of Banks to provide the necessary capital to give British Rail a reasonable return.

Members are still failing to provide data on changes of address. This has resulted in at least one losing a plot through failing to pay dues by the 14th November. The committee strictly

enforces this rule and we make it clear in the Newsletters and the Invoices that there will be no exceptions.

Last year there were only 5 members who had not paid by the 7th November.

### **Maintenance**

Phil Cass, in his guise as Maintenance Manager, continues to provide excellent service in maintaining sheds between tenancies and controlling weeds, grasses and hedges where they are the Association's responsibility. The Committee has increased his remuneration to reflect the long hours he spends on these tasks.

He covers all the Sites and is at the disposal of the Site Reps.

A reminder that hedges at the side or rear of a member's plot as well as the shed is entirely the plot holder's responsibility. It is particularly important after the recent severe weather that everyone should check their sheds//greenhouses for damage and to repair them where necessary. There is plenty of felt and wood preservative in the Association stores.

Remember to secure shed doors [even if you should choose not to lock them], as to leave them open is to invite the wind damage which is the most common cause of destruction and could land you with a bill for a new shed of some £130!

### **Rubbish Clearance**

Rubbish clearance is not the responsibility of the Association unless resulting from discovery by a new tenant. Established tenants must make their own arrangements.

Association clearances will only consider iron/steel, plastics, glass or old carpets, which should be placed on the plot verge by the hauling way. Wood/weeds must be either composted or burned.

### **Gate Keys**

Some Gate keys, other than the new silver ones provided for all new tenants, are causing excessive wear to locks. If your key is of the old type and you are finding the lock difficult to work, please exchange it at the store. This will apply to only one key. Additional keys will be charged for in the usual manner. The old keys will be destroyed.

If your old key is still effective an exchange is not necessary.

Tenants are usually reimbursed with the initial key deposit when they leave the Association. However, if their plot is left in disorder requiring action before re-letting, or the shed requires repair/or maintenance, the key deposit will not be refunded.

### **Security**

This past year has seen only two serious cases of a break-in [on AM with no losses reported from sheds affected] and BA where machines left in sheds were affected.

How many times have we said you should not leave machines in sheds overnight!

However, when the weather improves and lighter evenings arrive, please take care to secure cars and valuables in clothing discarded nearby-all of which have been past targets.

We are endeavouring to enhance perimeter security with new fencing and, where possible, the use of severely prickly shrubs to augment security.

## **Water**

Although the stopcocks are turned off now, the recent very cold weather may have caused some damage to the systems, which will only become apparent when turned on again in the spring. Please report leaks to your Site Rep as soon as possible. Our water bills are some of our largest costs.

It is important that troughs are not allowed to overflow.

As a matter of health and safety, never wash produce in troughs. Use a bowl.

The WC water supply is due to be upgraded as a result of compensation for a partial use of the main entrance area for a city cycle path. This will involve a new larger main and more standpipes and troughs. We will do likewise elsewhere should the opportunity arise.

Sadly, the BCC moneys are not at this time available to assist, and we are unable to meaningfully fund the work for all other sites.

However we are still pursuing alternative funding sources for this capital-intensive work.

A site by site approach may be necessary.

## **Stores**

Yet another good year for the stores.

Dave Brice continues to source the best deals so as to keep down prices to our members; undercutting virtually all competitors.

Ron Pedley has really got to grips with the seeds and is likewise making some solid purchases without great risk to the Association.

Ron has incidentally transformed the Bower Ashton store with new shelves and paintwork making the stock more readily available to customers.

## **Lectures and Workshops**

Very popular and fully subscribed; Tim Foster's events on preparing plots, grafting and pruning will undoubtedly have to be repeated. The Gardener's Question Time was a landmark event, which I am happy to say, is to be repeated on the 12th March.

Charles Dowding talks on 'No Dig Gardening' on the 22nd February--should be interesting. Make a note in your diaries. First come first serve; £3 at the door.

There **will** be others: watch the Newsletters, gate notices and the Web Site.

## **Association Web Site**

Under the very professional control of our Webmaster, Bob Corfield is held in high regard. I am given to understand that approaching 40% of our members have access and can enjoy the latest stores news, notification of events and feedback, besides getting their Newsletters electronically which is better for them and saves postage, stationery and the stuffing of masses of envelopes.

If you have not advised Bob of your E-mail address [or a change], please do so right away.

## **Open day**

The Committee requires response as to whether we should continue the annual Open Day which has been very successful in past years but last year fell a bit flat due to the poor representation from members, particularly from Sites other than Alderman Moores where the event is held. A great deal of work is involved and outside judges are brought in for what should be a fun day.

Originally it was used to encourage new membership, to create a rapport with neighbouring residents and to celebrate our hobby across the Association meeting other members and picking up ideas. The first is no longer an imperative but the other aims remain valid. Angie Tonge would welcome your comments.

## **COMMITTEE**

### **President**

Dave continues to be a tower of strength on the stores and almost everything that goes on in the Association. You will be voting on his post shortly. Thank you Dave.

### **Treasurer**

Bob holds down a demanding professional post; still runs the Sea Cadets for Bristol, is our Webmaster as well as being the Site Rep for Kennel Lodge 1 and, by no means least, our very efficient Treasurer. How's that for multitasking! We are so lucky to have him. He keeps a good plot too!

### **Secretary**

Angie has so many jobs and interests it is bewildering. She is behind so many of the new developments, organises the Alderman Moores' stores roster; maintains the official member's files, controls the approval for structures such as greenhouses and extra sheds, keeps and distributes the Minutes of Committee meetings almost before the meetings are over and generally brings a balanced view to all our discussions.

### **Plots Secretary**

Peter Tucker has the unenviable task of maintaining the official list of all members and the burgeoning Waiting List of some 160 or more applicants. He provisionally allocates aspirants for decisions in principle by Site Reps and does all the agreement paperwork as well as collecting the cheques and maintaining the New Member's Pack [considered such a boon to all who join and take the trouble to read the contents].

Having recently injured himself in the big freeze he is unable to make this meeting but is recovering fast. We really value his contribution.

### **Newsletter Editor**

Heather Jenne organises the Quarterly Newsletter, gathers recipes and contributions from members. Being herself a gardener who likes to experiment she is always on the lookout for ideas she can pass on to others.

The Newsletter is a vital form of communication that binds all our members together.

Heather does it all with humour and style.

She has also assumed the role of organiser for events such as lectures. Thank you H.

### **Site Reps.**

**Phil Cass** is responsible for the 199 of the 446 members that have plots on Alderman Moores. As such he has 2 Assistants in **John Tully** and **John Parke**. Besides holding down a very demanding self-employed schedule and acting as Maintenance Manager for the whole Association, Phil is very hands-on as a Site Rep; even visiting over Christmas and during the deep freeze to ensure all was in order. If you are warm tonight it is because he has ensured the gas cylinders are full and that the generator has fuel.

Gate locks are another of his burdens. We are so fortunate to have such a dedicated and talented member of the Committee.

Bower Ashton's Rep is of course **Roy Davis**. Besides holding down a full-time job he keeps a grip on the member's problems and proffers experienced advice at meetings.

The Site Rep for White City is **John Holland** who works for a Garden Centre as well as providing forward thinking on many matters on the Site: especially now relating to the recent Cycle Path involvement and the possible provision of toilet facilities on WC which could serve as a pattern for others. The erection and use of a Site hut tends to integrate the community of members. He is ably assisted by **Graeme Dowling** who has done so much to make the site attractive.

**Terry Hoskins** continues to quietly run Kennel Lodge 2 with a word of encouragement for the new tenant and experienced advice to all. Whatever his 'magic', it certainly shows in the inclusive attitude of his members and the fine state of the site.

The Meadows is in the very competent charge of **Lyndsay Newman** who fortunately lives nearby. The bickering that used sometimes to be associated with the Meadows is no longer evident and the plots look healthy and well kept. Thank you Lyndsay for your support on the site and at meetings.

The Environment Member of the Committee is **Carolyn Robinson** who screens all our proposals/decisions against the standards in our written Environment Statement. A very busy lady doing much travelling, her involvement is perhaps peripheral but non the less important.

I would like to thank every member of the team for their dedication and hope that you will later vote them back into office.

## **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer Bob Corfield distributed copies of the Accounts for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009 to the members and explained the accounts to them. Bob Corfield thanked Igie Fung WC 29 for his help in auditing the accounts. He reminded members that Rents - £50, £40, £30, would not be going up this year Bob Franks reminded members that an external audit could be called for. He suggested that we don't go to audit. Phillip Keen AM33 proposed and there was a show of hands supporting this proposal. There was a vote on the acceptance of the accounts Phil Cass proposed and Carolyn Robinson seconded. There was a show of hands and the motion was passed.

Angie Parr AM207 questioned the cost of printing and postage. Bob Corfield explained that we try to keep down costs by using people's emails but that some things have to be sent by post. He asked for more people to give their email addresses.

This spring we will receive our last capital money from BCC, no more money will be coming from this source. In future we will have to find our own money for walls, fencing, water etc. Carolyn Robinson asked who is responsible for boundary walls; Bob Franks replied that we are. Steve Clampin added that BCC could be asked to cut back brambles outside the walls.

## **Election of President**

There was a show of hands and the President Dave Brice was duly elected.

## **Election of Committee**

There was a show of hands and the Committee was duly elected.

## **AOB**

Steve Fay KL1 68 asked if the waiting list could be closed. Steve Clampin replied that BCC doesn't like to close lists; people have a right to go on a list as long as they know the length of time they might have to wait.

Alan Miller KL1 62 expressed a concern about accidents. A cricket ball landed on KL1 if injured someone who would be responsible? Bob Franks replied that the liability would be with the Cricket Club.

Phillip Keen asked what could be done about rabbits on AM. Bob Franks replied that we could put pressure on BR to gas them. Ferreting would be difficult without access to the warrens.

Phillip Keen asked if we should ban bonfires. Bob Franks replied that the committee had considered this but decided that it might be better to restrict bonfires to the winter months.

Steve Fay asked Steve Clampin if the council still published the Growers Grape Vine. Steve Clampin replied that it is no longer cost effective, but that BCC has a web site.

Annabel Storrer expressed an interest in what was discussed in committee meetings; she would like to know the issues, concerns and discussions. Angie Tonge to send her a copy of the minutes from time to time.

Angie Parr wanted to know what the shed survey is. Phil Cass replied that it is to look into the state of the shed stock.

## **Harry Green Shield**

The Chairman announced that Nigel Perkins AM 78 has won the Harry Green Shield.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and closed the Meeting at 9.05 pm.