

Harborne Hill Allotment's Committee Meeting 24 May 2022

Present were – D.Dennick (Chair), A.Garbutt (Hon Sec), T.Beach (Hon Tres.), G.Adams, B.Coles, N.Amos, S.Coote, A.Chebil. Apologies were received from J.Smith and J.Cherrington

Minutes of last meeting held in March 2020 – there were unanimously approved.

Secretary's Report- A lot has happened since our last meeting, we have had a number Council funded inspections in the last 12 months, a Condition Survey which resulted in Hand Rails being fitted to two bridges crossing the Chad Brook, an Asbestos Survey, samples were taken of the corrugated roofing sheets on the tool lockers and the DPC of brick buildings, plus a survey of the contents of our Shed. We were advised to have a sign indicating that we had a Gas Bottle, the Gas Bottle has since that inspection has been stolen. On the night of 31st March there were a number of break ins of sheds and the Shop and Office. The large window was smashed, Tom contacted Bartley Glass and we ended up with a clean window. The Council Tree man Bill Leach came and looked at a Salix Caprea tree which hangs over the bridge at the back of Miklor's plot because I believed it had shifted a bit, the water of the Chad Brook has washed away much of the bank below the tree to a distance of 1 yard. His verdict was that the tree is safe, but it will be looked at the next tree inspection. Towards the end of last year tree surgeons were with us for a week carrying out remedial work recommended in the 2018 Tree Survey. A recording device has been placed on the Site to record bird song between the hours of 2200hrs and 0500hrs, it is part of a university project, the recording unit is very small about the size of two Oxo Cubes,

Sue Griffiths has collected examples of Irises developed by Bob Nicholls who had a couple of plots here up to about 1996, she intends to invite friends to visit her plot to look at her collection on Sunday 5th June in the afternoon, providing they are in bloom. Plus she has tamed Plot 7A. Tim Wright organised the collecting of scrap metal and that collection was taken away a few days ago. Stephen Jarvis has erected a number of bird nesting boxes, plus he has a hedgehog as a regular visitor.

Our Management Agreement with the Council was for 5 years up to the end of March 2019. It was got together hastily and was heavily loaded to us doing more and the Council doing less. Some time ago we were invited to sign up for a continuation of that Agreement and all except one Site said, "NO WAY". The Council is keen to renew The Agreement; there is a sub Committee of the BDAC negotiating with The Parks Department and notes taken at those meetings are available on the BDAC website. Self-Management is being discussed once again, that was last discussed about 22 years ago. The BDAC have sought advice from the NSALG. There is a target date for the completion of these negotiations and that is the end of November.

Water – more water is being used than at any other time except in 2013, there has been a surge in usage since beginning of the Covid Pandemic, we have spent about £800 this year, this is high partly because of estimated readings, Water Plus claim that they cannot find the water meter which is strange as they fitted a new one mid-2000, it is supposed to be a Smart Meter. Last year we used 445 units, prior to the year 2000 the average annual usage was about 120 Units, with the exception of 2013 when 360 units were used.

Treasurer's Report - we have a healthy Bank Balance, the major expenditures this year so far has been £1,000 for doors for Tool Lockers, £900 for water, £1,200 supplies for the shop and £100 for supply and fitting of replacement for office window. Shortly we should receive from BCC £1500 for maintenance and about £550 our percentage from the rent collection. A copy of the audited accounts has been sent to Committee Members, thanks was expressed to Brian Cole for preparing the Balance Sheet and Sue Maslen for auditing the Accounts.

Shop – sales have increased during the Covid pandemic, 2019 £1,954; 2020 £3,197; 2021 £4,165 and 2022 up to the end of April £1,726. Multi-purpose compost and bagged Farmyard manure being the big sellers. Offloading and stacking these many bags when they are delivered is no mean task and we thank Bobby George and Peter Brown for helping.

Extra-ordinary General Meeting 12/06 – it was decided to call this meeting as due to Covid there had been no AGM for two years, it was recommended that at this meeting the Constitution should be changed to make March as the time of year to hold our AGM.

Website – the website continues to have a high level of visits just over 1,000 per month. It continues to be good means of communicating with our members.

AOB - a member had suggested that the Plot Numbers of Committee Members should be included on the website, this was turned down but there was a suggestion the photographs should be included.

- Neglected plots, it was suggested that a standard of cultivation should be published.

Neville Amos thanked the Committee's Officers for looking after the running of the Site during the time of the Covid restrictions and it was agreed the next Committee Meeting should be on Sunday 18th September 2022.