



**Western Wards Allotment Association
Management Committee Meeting
Tuesday 14th July, 2020**

Introduction

Owing to the national coronavirus emergency restrictions, this management committee meeting was conducted using 'Zoom' meeting facilities. Membership of the meeting met the constitutional requirements of a 'quorum'.

Owing to the unexpected resignations of both the management committee Chairman on 7th May 2020 and Hon. Secretary on 8th July 2020, it was agreed by the committee members present that these 'vacant roles' would be performed by 'acting appointments' until a date when an Annual General Meeting can be held and permanent appointees voted on by members of the Association.

For the purposes of this meeting, the meeting agenda as circulated for 7th July 2020 (adjourned to 14th July) was adopted.

Persons Present

Management Committee Members

Alastair Burnett, (appointed Acting Chairman) Site Manager, Hunts Pond Road; (AB)

Phil Pike, Hon. Treasurer; (PP)

Robin Green (appointed Acting Hon. Secretary), Site Manager, Sarisbury Green; (RG)

Keith Johnson, Site Manager, Hunts Pond Road; (KJ)

Martin Barnett, Site Manager, Hunts Pond Road; (MB)

John Parsons, Site Manager, Posbrook and Shop Manager. (JP)

Also in attendance

Richard Bastow, Chairman of WWAA Trustees, and,
David Doran, WWAA Trustee.

1 Apologies for Absence

Gill Rock, Site Manager, Warsash

Sandra Milam, Site Manager, Lodge Road

2 Minutes of previous management meeting dated 10th March 2020

- 2.1 Minutes of the previous management committee meeting dated 10th March 2020 had been circulated by the Hon. Secretary to all committee members on 13th March by email. The minutes of that meeting were 'taken as read' by members present.
- 2.2 It appears that the next committee meeting after 10th March was due to have been held on 5th May 2020. However, the coronavirus emergency restrictions and the legal requirements prevented the meeting from being held at Victory Hall. Although the former Chairman had arranged for an alternative venue for the meeting using 'Zoom' facilities, attendance was limited to just three members and did not constitute a 'quorum'. The meeting was adjourned until 7th July 2020 until legal requirements and guidance became clearer.
- 2.3 The meeting arranged on Tuesday 7th July 2020 did not constitute a 'quorum' and was adjourned to this date, Tuesday 14th July 2020.

3 Matters arising

- 3.1 Despite the minutes of 10th March 2020 'taken as read', five actions to be undertaken were recorded and would have been reported on at the May meeting:-
1. Chair to make arrangements for providing 'SharePoint' training for members – not completed;
 2. Uploading financial documents onto 'SharePoint' – Chair and Treasurer to 'review and agree' documents – Treasurer reports some documents published using the software ;
 3. Keith Johnson to speak with Head of Children's organisation asking for a five rod plot - no further report;
 4. Chairman to liaise with Rona Neilson to publish draft CIO constitution on website – CIO not proceeded with;
 5. Chairman to discuss no increase in plot fees for 2020/21 with FBC - completed.
- 3.2 Acting Chairman to consider the need for reports for any relevant matters at the August meeting (see Item 8 - Date of next meeting).

4 Chairman's Report

- 4.1 The former Chairman had resigned his post with immediate effect on 7th May 2020. David Whitlock, Joint Site Manager at Sarisbury Green had resigned his post on 28th April 2020 on health grounds. The Hon. Secretary had resigned his post with immediate effect on 8th July 2020.
- 4.2 It was agreed by the committee that the Acting Chair and the Acting Hon. Secretary would remain in post until the WWAA AGM. Date and venue of the AGM for discussion at this meeting. (see paragraph 7.3)
- 4.3 It would be necessary to advertise the vacant posts for a permanent Chairman and Hon. Secretary to be appointed and consider using appropriate means of communication including the WWAA website, a written circular to go out with rent renewal notices, posts on site notice boards where they exist, entries in newsletters or by email.
- Action – Gill Rock to be consulted re printing and Secretary to inform Rona Neilson.**

5 Treasurer's Report

- 5.1 The Treasurer's July Financial Report together with Notes appertaining to the Agenda had been circulated by email to members of the management committee.
- 5.2 The Treasurer advised that his report was 'as published'. However, one issue related to the 'Transfer to General Account. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, JP retained some Posbrook rent payments, settling the Church rent due in the Produce account. The £279 accounted for is in excess of Posbrook rent after accounting for the Church rent payment.
- 5.3 SharePoint
- 5.3.1 PP was asked about the payment of SharePoint invoices and when they might be due. He commented that there were 4 invoices. The payment was a matter for the former Chair. The former Hon. Secretary had assumed that responsibility but resigned and PP was not now aware of the position.

Action – RG to consult Mike Roberts and ascertain the precise position regarding payments for SharePoint.

- 5.3.2 PP was asked about the extent to which financial information had been published on Sharepoint as agreed with the previous Chairman. PP advised that the accounts for 14/15 and some financial reports had been published.
- 5.3.3 It was agreed by the meeting members present that there must be a secure central database for the publication of WWAA personal data and financial information which would be limited to committee members (and Trustees). However, some concerns had been expressed about the use of SharePoint as the appropriate tool.
- 5.3.4 PP advised the meeting that Microsoft 365 was a cheaper option than SharePoint with more facilities available. This proposal was endorsed by KJ. Two points were made:-
- SharePoint costs £4 – 60p per month per user and might prove expensive in the longer term, and,
 - To the knowledge of PP, the former Chairman had selected SharePoint as a central database because it was free to registered charities. The proposal to become a CIO had been voted 'down'.
- 5.3.5 It was agreed by members that further research about costs was necessary in relation to both Microsoft 365 and SharePoint.

Action – Microsoft 365 and costs to be researched by PP/KJ. (now discharged)

Addendum - following the meeting and to assist, KJ reported as follows by email:-

'The business edition of Microsoft 365 includes SharePoint and all the other programs such as Word, XL, PowerPoint and Outlook. Documents produced might be easily shared between the committee members and uploaded to SharePoint. However, the cost is £9.40 per month per user.

The annual subscription for Microsoft 365 family (which includes all the above programs, not including SharePoint) is £79.99 for up to 6 users with 6TB of Cloud storage (1TB per user, I'm guessing this cannot be viewed by all members?). Double this cost to cover all members of the committee. So the cost would be in the region of £160 per annum for up to 12 users. The number of users requiring access needs to be the subject of further discussion.'

- 5.3.6 **Committee to debate use of Microsoft 365 and/or SharePoint at next meeting. Matter to be included in the next meetings agenda by the Secretary.**

6 Site Managers' Reports

- 6.1 E mailed site management written reports had been circulated by the Hon. Secretary on 1st July 2020 to all members of the committee.
- 6.2 Posbrook
- 6.2.1 Report as published by JP. No vacant plots and 5 persons on the waiting list. All plots being worked and the site is in good condition. The hedge is due for cutting this year and 3 quotes received - FBC quoted £2,300 and was the most expensive. The lowest cost quoted was £900. The cost is projected within the budget for this year. No other projects planned

6.3 The WWAA Shop

- 6.3.1 Has been open for the past few weeks and the procedure for selling products is working well. It has been very busy and stock has reduced to the last few products of various items. Warwicks has re-opened and it is confirmed that there will be a delivery of 11 pallets of products before September. The costs will show in this year's figures which will be an over spend in the accounts.

6.4 Hunts Pond Road (HPR)

- 6.4.1 Report as published by KJ on behalf of HPR. There are currently 2 vacant plots at HPR and the waiting list grown with 25 names on it. The site is looking generally very good as many plot holders are on their plots daily due to the lockdown restrictions for Covid-19.
- 6.4.2 Managers have now started letting plots again, by using social distancing and pre-printed Tenancy Agreements minimising contact and contamination.
- 6.4.3 The site managers have been clearing some of the overgrown plots in readiness for letting with KJ and AB strimming and rotavating some before letting.
- 6.4.4 The mower shed on row 11 has fallen apart, so we are moving the mower to an old corrugated iron shed on row 8 once it has been repaired. The old wooden shed will be burnt in the autumn once bonfires are allowed again. Once the shed is removed this area can be cleared and put back into tenancy again. There was a lot of rubbish in this area as there were two problem plots, with a lots of plastic waste left on them. The plot holders in this area have cleared it all and created a wonderful community garden for people to relax on. This is a wonderful way to use the lock down to positive effect. The rubbish is currently being stored in the corrugated iron shed, but it is hoped to get a skip to remove it soon.
- 6.4.5 There have been reports of plot holders bringing green waste on site, so a reminder was issued about the consequences of such actions and there have been a couple of bonfires reported. KJ had to go down one evening and put one out and read the plot holder the riot act. Once again a reminder of the rules was issued to all concerned. A laminated sign on each gate reminding folks of the bonfire rules is being considered so there is no excuse of the rules being violated.
- 6.4.6 The three HPR site managers are now using Zoom for their site updates to each other. This seems to work well as they have fewer interruptions from plot holders and background.

6.5 Lodge Road

- 6.5.1 MB spoke for the Lodge Road Site Manager who was not present. There was no written report available but there are no issues for the meeting to consider.

6.6 Sarisbury Green

- 6.6.1 Report as published by RG. His report is truncated as follows - No plot vacancies. Now 16 persons on the waiting list. David Whitlock had resigned in this period due to health issues. Have identified a suitable replacement who is considering the position. Financial profile is broadly in line with budgeted spending. RG has been assured by Matt Wakefield that FBC cutting the hedge in Allotment Road will be a priority after 1st July. Site appearance looking very good with just one plot to be brought up to standard. A ton of scrap metal and 60 vehicle tyres disposed of at no cost in this period but a need for a skip to dispose of plastics and other non combustible items will be essential.

6.7 Warsash

- 6.7.1 Site manager not present – written report circulated to members states that all plots have been 'let' and there are 3 persons on the waiting list. The condition of plots is mixed – some are looking better than usual, some are not being worked as their tenants are being shielded and others are 'messy' as tenants struggle to find the time in the current situation. Management review of the site before rent renewal time. Matt Wakefield FBC has visited the site dealing with an unused gate revealed by recent hedge renovations. Paul Rann has agreed to become the second site manager.

7 Any Other Business

7.1 (i) Letter from Mr Clark HPR and allegations

- 7.1.1 Letters and complaints from Mr Clark and a tenant were outlined by KJ following receipt of a series of claims and counter claims.
- 7.1.2 Although these matters had been investigated as far as possible, the plot leased by the tenant at HPR had become so overgrown through inactivity that formal notices had been served on her in accordance with WWAA procedures and eviction should take place on 10th August 2020. Mr Clark has been informed.
- 7.1.3 It was agreed that an investigation into the complaints and action taken should be recorded in writing by KJ in the event that it would be necessary in the future to refer to action taken.

Action – KJ to submit report to the Chair – Secretary to retain the document for future reference if necessary.

7.2 (ii) Email from Mr Shears, Waypoint Church

- 7.2.1 An email request had been received from a Martin Shears representing the Waypost Church who advised that he had volunteered during the coronavirus lockdown to distribute food to some 90 needy families in the local area.
- 7.2.2 Martin Shears was proposing to collect surplus fresh vegetables grown by local allotment plot holders to supply to needy families. This is clearly a well meaning initiative but because of the problems of communication with plot holders and collection, the logistics would be very difficult to achieve in practice.

Action – MB to advise Martin Shears

7.3 (iii) Organisation of the 2020 AGM – date, venue and notification to members

- 7.3.1 It was reported that a provisional booking of St. John's Church rooms had been made for the AGM to be held on 21st November 2020. A cash deposit had been made by the Treasurer to secure the venue and date. A communication had been sent to the Church staff by the Treasurer to confirm arrangements but no response received.
- 7.3.2 KJ reported visiting St John's Church and finding a printed notice on the door stating that owing to the coronavirus situation, the Church was closed until further notice.

7.3.3 The meeting members felt that, because of the coronavirus emergency restrictions and uncertainty, the November date was too soon and should be postponed. There were no constitutional restrictions to hold the meeting at a later date. It was felt that the AGM should be postponed until January or February 2021 and was a safer option.

7.3.4 (Addendum – received from KJ as a draft suggestion for a printed notice to be sent out with rent renewals to plot holders as follows:-

The date for the WWAA Annual General Meeting, traditionally held in November each year, will be postponed until further notice due to the current Covid-19 safety and social distancing regulations. No future date has yet been fixed due to the uncertainty of the situation but the event is unlikely to be held before January or February 2021.

Notification of a new date will be published on the WWAA website <https://www.wvaa.org.uk/new>, on site notice boards, seasonal news letters or emails to update you.

Members of the committee elected in 2019 will remain in post to ensure continuity of the WWAA organisation.

7.4 (iv) Liability Insurance

7.4.1 Whilst this matter had been included in the agenda by the former Secretary, it was not clear to members of the committee precisely what was included in the term.

Action – RG to contact Mike Roberts re the issue for clarity.

7.5 (v) Microsoft 365 subscription

7.5.1 The discussion and research thus far is set out at paragraph 5.3.5. This will require adding to the next meeting agenda, further debate and a decision taken.

7.6 (vi) Zoom subscription

7.6.1 The need for the WWAA management committee to communicate using Zoom facilities results from the coronavirus situation. It is unlikely that there will be an early resolution to the emergency and resumption of normality.

7.6.2 The meeting considered the use of Zoom in the future and whilst this meeting was held using a 'free' facility, it automatically terminated after 40 minutes use and seriously impacted the flow of the meeting whilst being re-set.

7.6.3 **Action – Research into the cost of a Zoom Licence (now discharged)**

Addendum - Immediate research undertaken by AB indicates that the cost of a Zoom licence for use by the WWAA is £11 – 99p per month. Adopting the facility for a period of 12 months will need further debate and a decision at the next meeting.

7.7 The Treasurer's Role

7.7.1 PP has given an indication that it is his intention to resign as the Treasurer with effect from the 2021 AGM, allowing a handover of 12 months to a newly elected Treasurer to ensure continuity.

7.8 The WWAA Constitution

- 7.8.1 Some uncertainty exists about the WWAA constitution contents. It was thought that the last version might be dated 2014.

Action – JP to trace the latest version, review the contents and make recommendations.

8 Date of the Next Meeting

- 8.1 Whilst meetings are usually held at 2 monthly intervals, there is a great deal of outstanding work for the committee and the Acting Chair felt it appropriate to hold a further meeting on the first Tuesday in August.

Action – Acting Secretary to draft minutes of this meeting, circulate with an agenda and notify members of the proposed date Tuesday 4th August 2020 at 7pm