

Western Wards Allotment Association

Management Committee 'Zoom' Meeting Tuesday 3rd November 2020 at 7pm

Management Committee Members

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

Phil Pike, Hon. Treasurer; (PP)

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

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

Gill Rock Site Manager, Warsash (GR)

Paul Rann, Site Manager, Warsash (PR)

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

Also in attendance

Richard Bastow, Chairman of WWAA Trustees (RB);

Julie Prescott (co-opted to the committee as an HR and 'Sharepoint' software adviser.) (Julie P)

1 Apologies for absence

- 1.1 Sandra Milam – Site Manager, Lodge Road (SM)
- Martin Barnett – Site Manager, HPR (MB)
- Martin Wheeler – Site Manager, Sarisbury Green (MW)
- David Doran, WWAA Trustee
- Ted Weager, WWAA Trustee

2 Declaration of any other business (AOB)

- 2.1
 - Coronavirus – the implications of a second lockdown for plot holders with effect from Thursday 5th November (RG).
 - Progress on Standpipe rectification (KJ)

3 Minutes of the 'Zoom' Meeting dated 1st September 2020 for accuracy and content

- 3.1 The minutes of the 'Zoom' management committee meeting dated 1st September 2020 and meeting held on 7th October, purely in relation to standpipe rectification arrangements, had been circulated to members by the Acting Hon Secretary prior to this meeting.
- 3.2 There were no comments made by members of the committee and the minutes were accepted as an accurate record by the Chairman.
- 3.3 When edited for data protection purposes, a version would be forwarded by the Hon. Secretary to Rona Neilson for publication on the website.

4 Matters arising and actions outstanding

- 4.1 Minutes of committee meeting held 1st September 2020 – actions and matters arising
- 4.2 Outstanding action - RG to circulate the draft job description for a WWAA Chairman for further discussion;

- 4.2.1 The need for a job description was identified when the vacancy for Chairman was advertised. At the request of the Acting Chairman and committee on 4th August, the Acting Hon Secretary was tasked with research. It was later established that no job description existed for the role.
- 4.2.2 As a result, a draft role description was developed after consultation with former Chairman Bob Hughes and was circulated for comment to the Chair of Trustees and members for discussion at the committee meeting held on 1st September. It was important that any person applying for the role should know in detail what was required.
- 4.2.3 At the meeting on 1st September, PP felt that some of the contents of the draft role were *'overly complex, inaccurate and unnecessary'*. PP circulated a critique, offering an alternative role description which was based on one used by a neighbouring allotment association at Porchester. In essence, he felt that the Chairman's role should be confined to regulating the conduct of committee meetings.
- 4.2.4 In response, RG commented that, since Fareham Borough Council had devolved total responsibility for managing the five allotment sites, the WWAA organisation had to evolve from management by a council department to managing an independent business organisation responsible for its own funding. It was therefore necessary for the Chairman to become 'a leader' with appropriate management skills and experience.
- 4.2.5 Views were expressed amongst members.
- PR agreed that the Chairman needed to 'lead' the organisation but felt the role description document was overly wordy;
 - John P felt that RB as Chairman of Trustees should review both documents and decide what was required;
 - Julie P offered assistance as an HR specialist to develop an appropriate document;
 - GR felt that the document should be in 'plain speak'.

Action – RB as Chair of Trustees to review draft role descriptions, consulting with other Trustees as appropriate

- 4.3 Outstanding action - RG to put Julie Prescott in contact with KJ to advance the population of SharePoint;
- 4.3.1 RG had contacted Julie P as regards use of SharePoint as she had a working knowledge of the software which would be useful. Julie had been co-opted to the committee for this purpose.
- 4.3.2 KJ advised the meeting that due to the standpipe rectification process, the development of a central database using SharePoint had been deferred. When the standpipe work had been completed at HPR and SG sites, KJ would contact Julie P for advice and support and work on a system.
- 4.4 Outstanding action - PP to report with an outcome when contact made with Insurance Brokers;

- 4.4.1 PP had been in contact with the insurance brokers. He felt they didn't understand what product the WWAA needed. He would 'get back to them', though it was not clear what could be provided. KJ felt that we needed an indemnity service, for example, someone absconding with funds.

Further Action – PP to further re-contact the WWAA Insurance Brokers

4.5 Outstanding action - Finalised budget documents to be forwarded to PP:

- 4.5.1 Warsash budget was work in progress as advised by PR.
- 4.5.2 Sarisbury Green had submitted their document to PP for comment which included income and expenditure for 20/21. RG was concerned that the Treasurer had ruled that there could be no 'carry over' of income not spent. PP commented that all sums which were not spent went into the General Account. RG commented that this had been debated 2 years ago and it was agreed at that time that sites would be permitted to carry over unspent funding. It was important that sites were not penalised for being prudent with their annual expenditure. This view was endorsed by the Acting Chairman.
- 4.5.3 John P felt that there should be a financial policy setting out 'rules' for financial management.
- 4.5.4 PR felt that sums not spent during the year could be treated as 'accruals', provided that projects could be identified. PR advised that he was meeting with PP in due course to discuss financial matters.

Action – PR and PP to meet and comment further on use of unspent funds as a policy.

4.6 DPA policy

- 4.6.1 PR had developed and circulated a draft policy on Data Protection. There were three matters which needed agreement for the document to be finalised:-
- The means by which members agreed for their personal data to be held – signing of the lease document;
 - Third party disclosure – there was no disclosure to third parties by the WWAA;
 - Identify a member of the organisation to be responsible for DPA issues and provide a contact email address – the meeting agreed that it should be the Hon Secretary's role and his email address to be added.
- 4.6.2 RG had developed a comprehensive policy document some two years ago for the (then) Chairman. However, RG felt that PR's draft was an excellent document which met the need. Registration with the Information Commissioner's Office was not required.

- 4.6.3 The 'right to be forgotten' as enshrined in the GDPR was discussed. A reasonable period for retention of data after termination of lease was 12 months. The extent to which the personal data of 'evicted persons' might be retained was discussed but agreed that it should be for no longer than necessary as required by legislation.
- 4.6.4 The meeting agreed that the draft DPA document should be published subject to date of publication and review date being added, as raised by John P.

Action (discharged) Rona Neilson was requested by the Acting Hon Secretary to publish the document on the website as the first WWAA policy document.

5 Acting Chairman's Update

- 5.1 There was no update from the Acting Chairman.

6 Treasurer's Report

- 6.1 The Treasurer had circulated his reports to members by email. He had no further comments to add.
- 6.2 It was identified that there was a typographical error in the accrued figures published.

Action (discharged) PP to check the published figure and amend as necessary

7 Rent renewals update

- 7.1 RG had raised this subject because he was not clear who has and who has not paid. It is hoped that a central database might resolve this.
- 7.2 There was a detailed discussion by members about non-payment of rent and at what stage non payers might be evicted.
- 7.3 GR raised the issue that one of her plot holders was always late paying his rent. The Acting Chairman undertook to write to this individual and would speak further to GR for details.

Action – Acting Chairman to send a letter.

- 7.4 The green coloured 'WWAA Terms and Conditions Booklet' issued to new plot holders was clear on the matter at paragraphs 2.2 and 20.4 and Appendix A.

8 Site Managers' Reports

- 8.1 There were no additional comments from site managers regarding their site reports which had been published and circulated as follows:-

8.2 Warsash Site Management Report

- 8.2.1
1. Budget - work in progress and will submit to PP shortly;
 2. Fire - we have not claimed on the allotment insurance as the shed on the vacant plot did not belong to the association. The two allotment holders who had their sheds and contents burnt have received their insurance monies and are progressing with clearing the debris from the fire. Work has started on clearing the debris (including the burnt shed) from the vacant plot so this can be let.
 3. Tap Updates - work has started on installing the additional stop cocks on each tap. This is being carried out by one of the plot holders. Another plot holder will complete the boxing in.
 4. Vacant Plots - currently there are 6 vacant plots and 6 on the waiting list.
- 8.2.2 GR expanded on item 2 that the fire had accidentally been started by a neighbour of the allotment site. It spread to the allotment hedge and burned two sheds belonging to plot holders. To assist, PR had assisted with insurance claims.

8.3 Sarisbury Site Management Report

- 8.3.1 Vacancies - There are no plot vacancies available for lease at Sarisbury at the current time. We are 100% 'let'. Seven plots became unexpectedly available in the past two months but have been quickly re-let to 7 applicants on the waiting list.

Waiting List - At the time of writing, there were 16 persons on the Sarisbury waiting list. No one has been waiting for longer than 3 months.

Financial - We believe our financial position is broadly in line with budgeted spending for 19/20. Our budget for 2020/21 has been submitted subject to two queries. Further to our rubbish clearance programme of work, we wish to make use of a large skip to dispose of non-combustible rubbish before the winter bad weather sets in although we shall be arranging for the collection of scrap metal by a dealer. The proposal is within agreed committee protocols for site managers (one skip per year if required) and the cost is likely to be c £500.

Standpipe Rectification Process - Phase 1 of the standpipe rectification process was completed on 9th October by contractor David Barber and his colleague, removing rotten woodwork from 12 standpipes and replacing with new posts concreted in place. A review of the plumbing needed to bring the standpipes up to the standards required has been carried out by Alastair.

The 'boxing in' woodwork has been made by Norman Hatch to a high standard and has been delivered to Sarisbury awaiting the Phase 3 fitting process. Boxes have been painted to protect them from wet conditions.

Whilst funding has been arranged for the standpipe rectification process centrally, we anticipate our share is c £760.

I need to say thank you again to Keith Johnson, Alastair Burnett and Norman Hatch for the work they have undertaken. Martin and I are very grateful for the excellent support we have received from HPR managers.

8.4 Hunts Pond Road

8.4.1 Marketing - On the 13th September, we were asked to make a second appearance on the BBC Radio Solent show, Kitchen Garden. This gave our site a good plug and a great marketing opportunity.

Standpipe rectification programme - Following our visit from Southern Water, work is well underway upgrading the stand pipes to the required standard. All the wooden posts that were in poor condition have been replaced and Keith and Alastair are making good progress with the plumbing. Norman Hatch has been busy producing the wooden casing boxes for the stand pipes, worthy of a Spitfire factory. In addition to our visits from Southern Water, there have been 3 visits from ClearWater to test for Legionella and do a risk assessment that proved unnecessary in the end.

Waiting list - We are starting to let plots again as we have a long waiting list. Several of the people contacted explained that they already had plots on another site. This must also happen to other site managers, it can be very frustrating and time wasting. Perhaps there is a way of stopping this by sharing the names of new tenants with all sites so that waiting lists can be updated, this should not compromise data protection restrictions as they are all Association members. We do get the odd person advising that they have a plot elsewhere, but it is rare.

Vacancies - There are 35 on the waiting list, 15 vacant plots and 6 have been evicted.

Site Maintenance - The hedge along Hunts Pond Road has been re cut, as contractors could not access a lot of the hedge due to a lot of parked vehicles. It looks a whole lot better and the boundary with the recreation ground has had a long overdue trim.

8.5 Lodge Road

8.5.1 No report from SM.

8.6 Trading Hut

8.6.1 JP confirmed that the Trading Hut will close for the Christmas and New Year period on 20th December 2020 and re-open on 24th January 2021. Potatoes would be available from 21st February 2021.

9 Any Other Business

9.1 Coronavirus - the implications for plot holders of a second lockdown with effect from 3rd November (RG)

9.1.1 RG had researched and circulated to members the new guidance as regards the lockdown with effect from Thursday 5th November 2020.

- 9.1.2 The official government guidance is now published on their website - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november> and at section 3, it sets out that -
*You can exercise or visit **outdoor public places** with the people you live with, your support bubble, or 1 person from another household (children under school age, as well as those dependent on round-the-clock care, such as those with severe disabilities, who are with their parents will not count towards the limit on two people meeting outside).*

Outdoor public places are defined as, and include:

- parks, beaches, countryside,
- public gardens (whether or not you pay to enter them), **allotments**,
- playgrounds.

Addendum – a further check of the Government website on 6th November revealed that the guidance had been amended. Section 2 now dealt with the above issue.

- 9.1.3 As I write, the National Allotment Society website advice has not been updated since March - it can be accessed at the address - <https://www.nsalg.org.uk/news/covid19-information/>.
I can only assume that the advice has not changed and this lockdown period remains the same.

Actions

- (1) – Site Managers to notify their tenants of the Government guidance either by email or on notice boards;**
(2) (discharged) RG to arrange for Rona Neilson to publish the guidance on the WWA website. Rona also updated on the addendum above.

9.2 Progress on Standpipe rectification (KJ)

- 9.2.1 The Phase 2 plumbing work at HPR was almost completed and, subject to weather conditions, it was hoped to start at Sarisbury Green site in a week's time.

10 **Date of next meeting**

- 10.1 It was agreed that there would be no necessity for the committee to meet again before January.
- 10.2 The date of the next meeting will be on Tuesday 5th January 2021.