

# **PRETORIA ROAD ALLOTMENT SOCIETY**

## **MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 6<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015 AT THE ALLOTMENT SITE**

**Apologies for absence:** Terry Wall. Norman Bradford

**The 1<sup>st</sup> item** on the agenda was site security. It had been intended to put forward Larry's idea of replacing the two gate locks with combination padlocks to overcome the problem of persons holding keys to which they were not entitled. However, the recent failure of the main gate lock and the need to replace it urgently, has overshadowed this idea and it has been put on hold for now.

The old lock was replaced with a security padlock and the society has had to pay for this and 100 keys, from funds. We are in the process now, of issuing keys to plot holders. It is intended that only the plot holder should receive a free replacement key and that any further keys requested will be charged at £10 each. Plot holders are reminded that these keys remain the property of the society and that they must be handed back in the event of a plot being given up or relinquished under any other circumstance. A refund will be made to the plot holder at this point.

**The next agenda item** was the over use of water facilities by one or two plot holders. Certain plot holders have been observed throughout the season, using far more water on their plots than is necessary and on a daily basis. This is not good gardening practice and can actually harm the plot and plants in the long term. Over watering weakens plants and uses an unreasonable amount of water. Whilst we all pay a water rate, those who use excessive amounts are being subsidised by the rest of us. Derek advised that, at present, our intake of money for water is just about covering our water bill. If we get to the stage where this ceases to be the case, we will have to consider other measures.

It is hoped that plans to improve our water harvesting facilities will help relieve the pressure on the mains water supply. Water bills will be monitored and the situation will be re-visited next season.

**Next,** we discussed whether we should hold a Bonfire Night get together, as we did last year. Most members felt that these events are not well enough attended to justify the effort and outlay they entail. It was decided therefore, that we will not hold a get together this November. The general feeling was that we are trying to hold too many of these events and that not enough plot holders are taking an interest. These events are sign posted and notices are put up, but few people bother to read them or attend the get togethers. The general consensus seemed to be that we should in future, hold fewer events but try to do them better.

As an aside, Angie mentioned that the general appearance of the site could be off putting to the public and that it should be kept tidier and that the Council should be approached about grass cutting (which seems a bit hit or miss most of the time) and their dumping of rubbish on our site.

**The next item on the agenda**, was Mike's suggestion that we display a list of what is on offer in our shop, on the website and also on a poster on site, to encourage people to use the shop more often instead of driving to the local Garden Centre or to B & Q. Larry was of the opinion that this might entail a lot of work and need frequent updating. It was suggested that a half-way measure should be adopted and that no specific items or prices should be displayed, but that we should just have a poster informing everyone that the shop carries a variety of stock at reasonable prices. All shop profits are used to maintain and improve the site and its facilities for the benefit of the members.

**At Terry's request**, the matter of damaged and unusable water butt taps was raised. One water harvesting unit in particular has been damaged by a council employee hitting it with a trailer unit and it has become unusable. Other taps have also become problematic. The Committee has bought brass taps to replace the plastic ones and these new taps will be fitted during the winter season.

**Angela requested an update** on progress toward new composting bays. Our situation is that whilst we have some of the materials required, we do not currently have a builder willing to take on the block work and foundation work. Roger is to liaise with Les and Larry on probable costs and he will then look into approaching various organisations to ask that they help us fund this project.

Les is to arrange a work day and a team to spread the compost which has built up in and around the old composting area (which we have been told MUST NOT be used), in order to allow it to rot down properly and to overcome the present mess caused by indiscriminate dumping of waste. Most of the waste which is being dumped, could be composted on people's own plots and provide them with good quality compost for future seasons, if only they would take the trouble to compost it properly.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held at the Casson Centre, Patchway at 7.30 pm on 1<sup>st</sup> October. We will be discussing (amongst other items), our constitution and will be issuing handbooks to anyone who does not have one. All members are welcome.

The Committee will be happy to consider applications from people wishing to become members, as opposed to plot holders.

The date of our next scheduled Committee meeting will be Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2015.