

PRETORIA ROAD ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Pretoria Road Allotment Society, held on 1st October 2015 at the Casson Centre, Patchway.

Committee members in attendance:-

Les Brooks – Chairman
Larry McQuaid – Vice-Chairman
Derek Howell – Treasurer
Roger Fussell – Secretary
Angela Teakle
Mike Stinchcomb
Norman Bradford
Terry Wall
Darren Bowden

Apologies for absence:- Leon Ray

The AGM convened with Les Brooks in the chair, welcoming everyone to the meeting.

The minutes of the 2014 AGM were adopted and signed off by the Chairman.

The 1st item covered was the amendments to our constitution. The vice-Chairman covered these. The amendments consisted mainly of minor alterations to existing sections. These amendments were to simplify and clarify the constitution. The amendments were put to a vote and carried unanimously.

The Chairman raised the question of auditing of our books, as we do not have an official auditor. The Vice-Chairman stated that this had never presented a problem and that our books were available for the Town Council to inspect at any time.

As Treasurer, Derek Howell presented his report and advised that the rents shown as collected were a little higher than those paid over to the council, as there was a “carry over” of some late paid rents from last year. The accounts presented to the meeting showed a healthy balance in hand, despite a Net expenditure of over £500. Derek answered a few general queries about this and all were satisfied. On the subject of fund raising, Derek showed us that we had a net gain on the year of over £400. This despite slightly higher than expected outgoings. Copies of the accounts can be had on request.

The question of rent collection was raised, as this is an ongoing problem every year. The Committee had agreed amongst themselves at a previous meeting that we would add £10 to the membership fee this year and that any plot holder who paid their full rent by 1st October, could receive a discount of £10 from this. This was intended as an incentive to pay on time. Anyone paying after 1st October would pay the full published rent and the extra funds raised would offset our costs in chasing and collecting delinquent rents. This was explained to the meeting and a show of hands in favour of it

was requested. The decision to implement this was carried by a great majority.

On the subject of payment of rent, there were two comments. One was that persons with memory loss might not realise they had to pay. It was thought that the fact that many others were paying would jog their memory and that the neighbouring plot holders might mention it to them. Another comment was that some plot holders had mentioned that they were happy to pay, but could not find anyone to pay their money to. It was stated in response that Committee members are on site quite often, but cannot be expected to be there 24/7. Anyone wishing to pay, could contact a Committee member and arrange to do so.

A suggestion was made that we set up a safe box at the site, where members could deposit their rents. However this could present problems in the event of a dispute over whether a rent had been posted in the box or not.

The Chairman stated that at this point, that there are 3 vacant plots and that we currently have a waiting list of 6 people.

Election of Committee members:-

Nominations were called for, for all posts.

Les Brooks was nominated and reinstated as Chairman. Larry McQuaid was nominated and reinstated as Vice-Chairman. Derek Howell was nominated and reinstated as Treasurer. Roger Fussell was nominated and reinstated as Secretary. Norman Bradford, Terry Wall, Mike Stinchcomb, Angela Teakle, Darren Bowden and Leon Ray were all nominated and reinstated as Committee members. One additional Nomination saw Mike Checkley added to the Committee.

Any other Business:-

The Chairman raised the matter of compost bins and stated that we could receive more free bins from the Council, should we wish to. Although no one at the meeting specifically requested a bin, it was felt that a few more in hand would be welcome.

The matter of the Council's agreement to shred woody waste for us was raised. It was pointed out that the Council had thus far, not lived up to their agreement over this. The Chairman has been told by the Council that a lot of the waste was too wet and would jam the shredder. However, following our recent prolonged dry spell, it was felt that the Council should be approached again and asked to shred what they could, before the winter sets in.

One member raised a query about Committee members on site and said that there is rarely anyone there in the afternoons. This query was answered to the effect that we cannot be committed to specific times and days to attend, as we all have lives outside of the allotment society. We do our best as volunteers, to ensure that the site is manned most days and cannot reasonably be expected to do more than this. In addition to this it was agreed that a laminated sign would shortly be displayed at the site. This would show an emergency number that could be called. It was stressed though that this was for emergencies only and not just for someone wanting the shop or shed opened etc.

Norman Bradford raised the matter of the water taps in the WC and kitchen. These are in need of maintenance and he volunteered to assist with this.

The Chairman mentioned the possibility of having sheds on plots for those who wished them. We had discussed this at a previous Committee meeting and it was felt that, if this were allowed, that the sheds would have to be uniform. To this end, we are agreed that we will try to broker a deal with a supplier and obtain the sheds at a favourable price. The addition of a shed to a plot could possibly increase security, but more importantly, could allow the plot holder to harvest rainwater via a guttering, emptying into a water butt. The matter has to be raised with the Council's Parks and Open Spaces Committee, at their next meeting. Once this is done, we will report back to the membership via a newsletter.

It was noted that on a few occasions, the fridge in the kitchen has been turned off in error, with the resultant loss of produce. The Secretary is to produce a label for the switch, to warn people not to switch it off.

The general look of the site was raised, as it does look rather a mess. The Chairman stated that he is to get a work party together to tidy up and spread the compost area and to have a general tidy up. The Council will also be approached, asking that they avoid dumping waste and rubbish in general on the site.

The meeting ended with Les Brooks thanking all who took the trouble to attend and inviting everyone to enjoy Tea, Coffee and cake before heading home.