

PRETORIA ROAD ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 1ST NOVEMBER 2015 AT THE ALLOTMENT SITE

Apologies for absence: Derek Howell, Leon Ray, Angela Teakle

Les Brooks opened the meeting by requesting that the minutes of our previous committee meeting be adopted. As there were no detractors, the minutes were adopted unanimously.

A warm welcome to our newest committee member, Mike Checkley, who was attending his first committee meeting today.

The 1st item on the agenda was a statement and question from Derek. This was read by Roger in Derek's absence. Derek was concerned that the extra rent charge for late payers has not been a success. It seemed to have caused a lot of confusion amongst both committee members and plot holders. Derek feels that this has resulted in an awkward situation for him, as Treasurer.

Derek believes that one way in which we could overcome the problems associated with late payment would be to write to all plot holders and tell them the rent charges and extra charges for late payment and request that they in future, send their monies direct to the Treasurer. Another method would be to ensure that there is someone on duty on site every Saturday and Sunday during September, who is willing to collect rents and to do it properly. Perhaps a rota system could be organised.

In response, Larry said that he disagreed with Derek's comment regarding the extra charges not working. He suggested that we buy a secure box and fit this to the wall in the kitchen, with the Treasurer holding the key(s). This would be marked clearly to the effect that it was for cheques only and that they would have the opportunity to pay by cash or cheque, by attending the AGM or at least, calling in before the meeting commenced, to pay their dues.

Mike Checkley suggested that we write to every member regarding payment of rents.

Larry suggested that we have a large banner made and erected, advising members when rents are falling due and directing them to the box in the kitchen.

A show of hands was requested regarding the secure box and banner. The vote was unanimously in favour of both.

The next agenda item was a suggestion from Mike Stinchcomb to the effect that, as a secondary measure, we should obtain some plastic cash bags and put a slip inside each one. Then, when a member approaches a committee member and wishes to pay their dues directly to him or her, the slip should be made out to show the member's name, plot number and the amount paid. The bag should then be placed in the safe. This idea was also met with full approval. Mike Checkley kindly offered to print the slips for these bags.

Next, another item was read out on Derek's behalf. This concerned the deconstruction of the old composting bays and what was to occur. Derek was asking about work parties to deal with this and to also upgrade the water harvesting system. Larry was able to advise that a builder has discussed the project with him and says that it would be much better long term, if the new bays were made up from breeze blocks, as this was a more permanent structure. The old gravel boards from the existing composting bays could be offered for sale at a reasonable price. The other slabs and boards could also be offered and thus we might recoup some of the original outlay. Larry estimates that this could return around £300 to the Society's funds.

The question of raising the monies required for the new constructions was raised. The Secretary announced that he would be putting out requests for funds to assist us. Mike Checkley asked if we could apply a supplementary charge to members for the cost of the new constructions. Larry replied that he thought this would be unnecessary, as we have some quite effective fund raising activities throughout the year.

Les Brooks advised the meeting that he and Derek will be meeting with the local council soon, to allow them to see our rent accounts and that he will take this opportunity to ask them if there are any funds to be had from them. Les said that he will also raise the issue of sheds on plots with the proviso that members also utilise these as a secondary method of water harvesting, via a guttering emptying into a water butt. It will be put to the Council that we could save a lot more water in this way, thus opening up the possibility of a reduction in the water rates currently charged. Obviously to achieve this, the water company will have to be approached.

Les also agreed that he will raise the matter of the inconsistency of the grass cutting and request that it be done more frequently and more thoroughly.

As a result of our deliberations, it was agreed that we will put in place the following;

1. A banner to be displayed each year prior to rents falling due.
2. A secure box to be fitted in the kitchen for the purpose of collecting member's cheques for rent.
3. The plastic bag scheme will be adopted but not advertised on the banner, as we want members to pay by cheque in the kitchen and/or by cash or cheque at the time of the AGM.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Norman has mentioned a new water heater was needed for the kitchen. Larry has come up with an idea for a 5 litre heater costing £85. This was put to a vote and all were in favour.