

# **Pretoria Road Allotment Society**

## **Minutes of the committee meeting held at the allotment site 3rd January 2016**

**Apologies for absence:** Norman Bradford.

The chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. The minutes from our last meeting (1st November 2015) were adopted and signed off by the chairman.

**Item one.** Mike Stinchcomb asked for an update on plans to allow sheds on plots. Les Brooks responded by telling us that he and Derek had raised this at their meeting with Patchway Town Council (PTC). The idea was well received and the council will get back to us after discussing the matter at their Parks and Open Spaces committee. Les will chase them up for a decision.

On the subject of sheds, Terry suggested that the Society should look at joining the allotment association, as members reap a number of benefits including lower insurance rates for plot holders, should they wish to insure items on their plots. This will be looked into by the committee. It was felt that insurances should be arranged on an individual basis and not as a blanket cover with the costs shared by all.

The purchase of sheds was discussed after being raised by Mike Stinchcomb and Larry thought that sheds must be uniform (6 x 4) in order to avoid the site looking like a hotch potch and to make it easier to source the sheds and keep costs down. This was agreed by those present.

**Item two.** Larry wanted us to discuss the clearing of existing compost bays and general rubbish. In response, Les explained that the removal of rubbish and waste would be treated as a priority as soon as weather permits the use of the tractor.

The question of costings for the proposed new composting bays was also raised by Larry. Roger pointed out that in order to submit an application for funding to organisations such as the Lottery, we must have three quotations in writing. Further quotes are being sought by the committee.

**Item three.** Mike C wished us to discuss fund raising in 2016. It was agreed that the Patchway Festival would be our best opportunity to hold an effective fund raising event. Larry suggested that we make a special effort for the Patchway Festival and just have the odd bacon butty morning. It was suggested that better signage at the shed to advise people of events in advance, might help to improve attendance. Mike C suggested getting notices put up at places away from the site. It was stated that this has previously been done and it was felt that this should be done again, perhaps on a bigger scale.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that an Easter Bonnet event may be held but this would be the responsibility of whoever decides to organise it. Whilst the committee is happy for the shed/kitchen etc, to be used, it will not be allocating funds for the event.

Angela asked whether we could get a table at the Patchway Festival, in order to sell produce. Les explained that the Festival committee do offer this to Festival participants, as a matter of course. It was agreed that we should take up this offer and also arrange signage directing people onto our site, where we could offer bacon butty, hotdogs and etc. Past experience has shown that our prices are lower than those charged at the Festival.

The existing notice board is to be repaired or replaced and consideration given to siting it outside of the allotment boundary.

Mike C suggested that we should make every effort for the Patchway Festival and leave bacon butty mornings open for those who wish to organise them. This was given general agreement.

**Item four.** Derek asked about costings for upgrading the water harvesting system, as the local council have agreed to provide £500 toward this, subject to seeing quotations for the work. Larry has found a source for a gazebo type structure which could be used in conjunction with an increase to present water harvesting. This would also provide shelter in the event of sudden downpours of rain. The structure would be sighted at the bottom right hand corner of the site. Larry advised that the cost would be £675.00 and the suppliers would also erect the structure, putting the cost nearer £1000.00. It was agreed that this idea was a very good one and that we should submit the idea to the local council and request funding toward this.

If the gazebo structure goes ahead, then this together with the improvements to water harvesting agreed to previously, would allow the committee to initiate savings on the cost of mains water by adjusting the timings for turning on and turning off the water supply. This will not only save money but will make our site much "greener".

As an additional suggestion, Roger said that we could further utilise the gazebo to provide another area for notices, as there are a number of plot holders who never visit the shed/kitchen and therefore, never read notices which are put up for their benefit.

**Any other business.** Mike S advised that he has now paid the fees for running our website for a further year.

Larry is to go ahead and order the posters advising of annual rents etc. These will be displayed from July onward.

Les mentioned that the gent's toilet was recently left in a disgusting state by someone. The floor was muddy, the sink was very muddy and no effort had been made by whoever made this mess, to clear it up. These toilets are provided for the use of all plot holders and should be treated with respect. They ARE NOT to be used for washing mud from produce and should be left in a clean and tidy state.