# PRETORIA ROAD ALLOTMENT SOCIETY – MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9th JANUARY 2021

**Committee Members Present:** **Les Brooks – Chairman**

 **Mike Stinchcomb – Vice Chairman**

 **Derek Howell - Treasurer**

 **Diana Sidwell – Minute Secretary**

 **Doug Blackwell- Secretary**

 **Mary Hayward**

 **Terry Wall**

**Apologies:- Norman Bradford**

 **Plot Holder: Alex Dommett**

**The Committee Meeting was held virtually by Zoom.**

The Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 27th September 2020 were agreed and adopted. In Les’s initial absence Mike agreed to adopt and sign minutes.

1. **Mike Stinchcomb** – **Should the Committee consider the purchase of a defibrillator**

The issue had been raised by a Plot Holder. Mike advised everyone that at the present time there is no charitable or Government funding available to enable us to purchase a Defribrillator. There would also be an ongoing yearly maintenance cost of currently, £80. Concerns were also expressed about where it could be safely placed on site and still be accessible for use. Also, training of committee members and plot holders would need to take place to ensure the safe deployment of a defibrillator. After discussion the Committee unanimously voted not to purchase a Defribrillator. It was agreed that posters would be placed at the Allotment site advising Plot Holders that should a situation arise, they should immediately call 999 and, most importantly, OPEN THE MAIN GATE to allow ambulance access.

1. **Derek Howell – Fund Raising by the Committee**

Derek asked whether, as previously had been the case, there should be a separate “fundraising sub-committee” responsible for fundraising events that currently take place and are organised by the Committee. This would enable the Committee to wholly focus on management of the Allotment Site. Doug felt that two Committee’s may prove to be conflicting. He also expressed a very optimistic view that as the Society as a whole moves forward this year with its new and younger members and with the virus situation over enabling us all to meet again, there will be a greater energy and commitment from plot holders. Terry felt we should ask plot holders for volunteer help. Mike advised that we do do this before each of the four events we hold, but it is still often a struggle to successfully organise and run the events, particularly during the summer holiday season. It was agreed that the situation with the virus will be ongoing for some time yet and that many of the events we run, particularly the seed day and Easter Egg Hunt, will not take place again this year. Les advised that Patchway Town Council hoped to hold Patchway Festival Event during September this year. There was agreement that we should monitor the situation and if it goes ahead, make the Festival day our first event.

3. **Doug Blackwell** – a) **Obtaining a waste skip to clear the area of “fly tipped” rubbish on site** b) **Should members found/seen “fly tipping” be immediately asked to leave their plots** c) **Should a letter be sent to PTC explaining that whilst we will remove allotment site rubbish this will not include household waste .**

Doug advised that most of the allotment site rubbish has now been cleared. What was considered to be household rubbish, ie., a bath, shower screen and building rubble has not been cleared. Les will talk to ground staff regarding its removal. Plot Holders have also been made aware that if they are seen or found to be “fly Tipping” they will be immediately asked to leave their plots.

4 **Doug Blackwell/Mike Stinchcomb – Update on the proposed development adjacent to the Allotment Site**

The Committee was advised that in order for the developers to submit a formal planning application boundaries have to be established. In the first instance, this will necessitate surveying the area by the fence and pegging out a line to establish the boundary and then re-site the current fence. In order to undertake this work some initial ground clearing of the fence line will need to take place. At a later date the developers would eventually clear all the scrub area. Whilst this is an issue to be resolved between South Gloucestershire Council and Patchway Town Council, the Committee are very concerned that a) that the area may be grubbed out without prior warning, b) the perimeter fence will be removed and not subsequently be replaced in its new position, leaving the site “open to the public” and c) Considerable concern was expressed that any ground work undertaken now would affect the wild life currently hibernating in and around the proposed area. Also, in the longer term, any disruption to wild life would ultimately have an effect on the whole Allotment Sites eco system. There was concern that it appears that neither Council has considered, or put in place, an Environmental Impact Study. After much discussion the Committee was of the view and agreed that it was the Societies responsibility to maintain and look after the Allotment Site environment. Les will contact Avon Wild Life Trust to ask if they will come and do a site visit. The Committee will do its best to establish if, due consideration to an environmental Impact Assessment and Environment statement from the Developer is or will be undertaken carried out urgently by PTC. Mike agreed to draft a formal letter, to be agreed by the Committee and then sent to PTC expressing our concerns regarding 1.) the lengthy delay in the progression of the proposed work and 2.) our concerns that there appears to be some apparent lack of regard by PTC to undertake an Environmental Impact Study and our request is that this be undertaken as a matter of urgency and prior to any ground work taking place.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. As Garden Centres and Public Toilets are now open Derek asked whether we should consider opening the shop/toilets. Following discussion it was agreed that the shop and toilets would remain closed until the end of January. The Committee will review the situation then.
2. Terry asked whether there was a case, in order to protect plot holders, for placing hand sanitizer stations at the gate entrances. Whilst we do provide a sanitizer station by the toilets, it was felt that plot holders do need to take some responsibility for their own safety. Should touching the gate padlock and opening the gate be a cause of concern for them, they should ensure they carry sanitizers/gloves to protect themselves.
3. Doug welcomed and thanked Alex for her input to the meeting. He asked whether Alex could be co-opted onto the Committee to fill the vacancy. Terry advised that under the Constitution Alex could become a full Committee Member and proposed Alex’s election, Mike seconded this proposal. We all welcomed Alex as a full Committee Member.
4. Derek asked whether we had obtained the new gate lock and keys. Mike advised that the shop premises in Thornbury was having a major refit and as yet he was unsure whether they were up and running again.

**Date of next Meeting Saturday 13th February 2021, 10.30 a.m. The Meeting will again be a virtual Zoom Meeting.**