EWAA Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday 14 January 2016, 7.30pm

Chair: Julian Stern

Minutes: Meryl Wilford

Present: Clare Ferguson, John Butler, Antoine Flett, Stewart Young, Chris Parker, Jon Willis, George Murray, Peter Corcutt, Sarah Pollard,

Apologies: Josie Powell, Helen Edwards, Jane NS, Jane Millar, Pat Mansfield

1. **Minutes of last meeting** (14-11-15): approved.
2. **Matters arising**: Peter has mended guttering.
3. **Treasurer update**

* Expenditure on the gate was slightly more than expected costing c.£1000 (£750 grant).
* Expenditure on plaque for Neville.
* George / Jon say we could apply for further grant money through "Awards for All" but we need to decide on specific projects and approximate costings.

*Action point* 🡺 committee (?) list possible projects that might be eligible for grant funding

1. **Membership Sec update**

* No changes since rent day except that tenure of Plot 85 resolved.
* George suggests an inspection on weekend after Easter i.e. weekend of 2nd/3rd April as some new members haven’t actually done any work at all on plots yet.
* George & Stewart to continue to work on plot boundaries esp. on Road 3.

*Action point* 🡺 Give plenty of notice of plot inspection via website and posters (by mid-March?)

1. **Work Parties**

Concern that the work parties are currently an obligatory part of membership responsibilities but that participation is very low and most members are not fulfilling this obligation.

Discussion points:

* Communication: Possibly more publicity and explanation is required so that people understand that the work is needed and valuable to the life of the allotment.
* No shows: Although some members sign up, they do not necessarily attend on the day (Jane has spreadsheet with names of those attending.)
* Charge for non-attendance: Should members who do not participate in a work party be asked to pay an extra £5 or £10 on top of membership charge? This could be paid in September on the basis of non-attendance on the previous year.
* Revenue: George modelled possible costs of having non-attendance levy. Assuming 20% of membership do work parties, the rest could pay £15 for avoiding work party. This would generate about £1750 (which could be used to pay for grass cutting)

*Action point* 🡺 Further discussion at next Committee Meeting.

1. **Tasks for Work Party**

Agreed tasks:

* Tidying Boundary Brook path and adding some chippings to reduce mud.
* Clear waste wood from around hazels at the rear of the play area (notify people to come and collect pea sticks / bean poles)
* Finish strimming the “small plots” area, and cover with Mypex
* Car park B – tidy litter and push back chippings pile
* Possibly tidy plot 1
* Wigwams in preparation for bonfire burning

1. **Other major maintenance jobs (how & when)**

* New water butts

One quote has been received from A G Jacobson for 3 x new standpipes at total cost of £300 (this includes the cost of digging out.)

Should we do this work ourselves or pay someone to do it?

We could apply for grant (see Treasurer’s update above “Awards for All” ) but it would take about 4months from start of application process.

*Action point* 🡺 George to model possible costs for contractor to come with digger.

* Machine shed roof

There is already have a quote of £850 to mend roof and add slope for improved drainage. Discussion about what priority this job should be given.

*Action point* 🡺 Julian and Jon to confirm costing

* Main gate / kerb issues

How this is to be resolved tbc at future meeting.

* Fencing along Cricket Road path

Security grants from council are available; perhaps this is the way forward.

* Further renovation of shop (kitchen)

Broken window discussed.

*Action point* 🡺 Jon, Peter and John B to purchase putty, glass and mend.

1. **White House update**

* Ian Thompson is new Allotments Officer for Oxford Council.
* No developments on White House area.

1. **OUWG liaison (a)**

Schedule for maintenance can now be discussed for the following:

*Hazel hedges*

Cutting: 1 x year / in winter. The cut-back is very harsh. Rd 1 and Rd 2

So far this winter, the hedge on the shop row has been cut, and the other rows will be done when it is dry enough.

*Buffer zone mowing*

As required schedule, dependent upon growth and weather. Historically this hasn’t been as good as it could be. Can we agree a minimum?

What should this be e.g. every 2 months

Main issues here are plots 27, 55 and 112.

*Trimming of paths*

Dependent upon growth, and this can be extremely fast in the summer. We need to agree what is an acceptable standard or level of maintenance (bearing in mind OUWG resources on site.)

How to define minimum acceptable level? 2 m width with bi monthly trim. We could offer to put down chippings

*Silver birch*

There is an ongoing thinning programme, but as this is a wooded area, there will always be some shading at certain times to the plots nearest the OUWG.

-Plot 97 has been taken out of action due to shading. Where are the other problem areas?

They will thin birch but

1. **OUWG liaison (b)**

* Visitors bringing children onto EWAA site.

There are a couple of teachers who are members of both OUWG and of EWAA, who have been bringing groups of school parties onto the site. Alan has been actively discouraging this, and these people are now aware that it is a problem. Even if this happens those plotholders are bound by EWAA Rule 18 (*Children & Dogs)*, and Point 3 of the Joint Management Agreement.

* Dumping in OUWG area

Chris P has cleared significant quantities of rubbish that have been dumped by EWAA members in the OUWG area. Signs have now been put up and email sent out. Concerned that people dump in skip.

* Toilets.

OUWG say that we agreed in the past that we would provide toilet access to OUWG visitors, so long as they are accompanied, and provide toilet paper.

*Action point* 🡺 Does the Joint Management Agreement need to be amended?

1. **Communications**

* Discussion about whether the “Fortnightly Focus” is perhaps a bit ambitious and could be monthly (and could be repeated from year to year.) Posters are attractive!
* Website forum – work needed?
* 22/02/ delivery of potato and onions. Seed catalogue

**AOB**

Reminder: Oxford City Council and ODFAA Allotment Association Liaison:

Tuesday 26th January 2016, Court Room Oxford Town Hall

(on behalf of Ian Thompson, Oxford City Council & Wendy Skinner-Smith, ODFAA