

# **Gertie Gale Allotment Committee Meeting.**

## **August 8th 2017**

### **Present**

John Cottrell – Chair, Andrew Arnold – Vice Chair, Bob Sheppard – Treasurer, Judith Arnold – Secretary, Les Curwood – Site Liaison Officer, Stuart Armstrong – Site Manager, Ian Cameron – Media Officer, Chris Sanders, Alan Harrison – Committee Members

Ann Cameron, Yvette Lester, Peter Lester, Evelyn Grounsell, Martin Dawkins, Annette Lennard – Allotment Holders

### **Apologies**

Roger Howard – Committee member  
Peter Burden – Councillor  
Deb Herbert – Allotment holder

**Minutes approved and signed** by John, the Chair.

### **Victorian Christmas Market**

On December 15th this year 2017.

Chris submitted a report on :-

- what went well last year – edible stuff, hyacinths, Christmas bunting, old gardening books, pre-loved ceramic pots.
- What could be improved this year – set up earlier this year, more people to set up. Need to get hold of generator for stall for lighting.
- Discussion over whether to invest in a banner for the Association – to use on such events and also as publicity on the site fence. To be costed up. Chris to send out an email beginning of September to rally people along with produce for the stall.

### **Publicity report**

- John reported that we can use the town council boards and other boards to put up poster – Ann Cameron volunteered to make a poster for this purpose.
- Letter to local paper - John volunteered to write a letter to local paper in such a way as to include information about vacant plots. Also decided to use :-
- Hello Portishead Facebook page to advertise vacancies and news – as done by North Weston group.
- Stuart reported that someone has asked to set up a Facebook page to publicise our allotment group. Ian Cameron reported on the dangers of libel and deformation of character resulting from the use of social media. Definition of libel changed in 2014 – lots of little rules and regulations that we need to be aware of. Need to decide whether an individual sets it up in their name or a group name as GG. Questions were raised as to whom would moderate the page and whether Facebook would reach a different audience.
- Agreed to use Hello Portishead Facebook page initially to publicise ourselves – Stuart to submit postings for this

## **Letting of Plots**

- Les reported that there had been 9 or 10 enquiries with some people taking up the plots.
- Inspection completed on 1st July resulting in 2 plots being given up, and one still being chased. A further inspection on August 7th showed the site being generally well maintained and busy. 20 sites could be better maintained and 4 showed very little progress, but have reasons/excuses.
- 3 vacant full plots now.
- Annette reported on her plot 2Hb and the message sent out regarding available raspberry canes. However Plot 2Ha has had blackberry bush removed and a mess made of plot. Annette asked whether we knew anything about this – Judith to send message out regarding the issue. It was suggested to make the dividing line more obvious between the two plots.
- Renting of additional plots - people have asked if they can take on another full plot. Premise is that initial constitution said this was not to be the case – only one plot per household. But now there are vacant plots; in the past, committee suggested flexibility on this so that all plots are worked and kept tidy. Agree that people can have second plot while no waiting list as long as both are kept in good working order.

## **Finance report.**

Bob gave a historical review on the finances and the cost of grass cutting having caused a shortfall in finances. In order to get back into a surplus, rents were put up slightly and the grass cutting tackled by ourselves.

At present running at surplus of £558, with a predicted end of year surplus around £328. Investment we have made in the mowers and brush cutter seems to have been worthwhile.

Evelyn put forward a Nailsea group (Shedders) who would be prepared to sharpen blades for nothing. Look into this.

## **Portishead in Bloom report**

John reported back on the South Westerly judging – great site, suggestions were made concerning fruit canes on the bank, more fruit trees. (But we need to balance this with the ease of maintaining the bank)

Judith reported on the National judging – again all very positive, liked swap table, amount of produce grown, lovely location. Asked about mowing and water and liked the community aspect and environmental aspects of our responses to these issues.

## **Site Maintenance**

- Grass cutting and brush cutter see earlier.
- Shed repairs still outstanding – Stuart to set date for work to be done. Alan put forward his ideas on propping up shed. Bob said to contact Dave as need someone to take a lead on this who knows what he is doing.
- John to sort water tank on his own.
- Hedges next thing to tackle – Stuart approached NSC about this in hope that they would tackle front and cemetery side.

- Report on compost toilet – cost prohibitive at £1600. Possible council contribution - more investigation needed on financing this by Stuart.
- John has had chippings delivered and there are several people to collect manure – need to hire trailers to do this – John to pursue
- Mini poly tunnels of 6ft or less allowed, but only one per plot. These need to be used for growing purposes only and removable at the end of the growing season.

**Dates and venue of next meeting** : At The Albion November 14th 7.45

### **AOB**

- Bob has announced he is stepping down after 3 years as Treasurer. He went over what his position entails and what knowledge is needed. Will continue as a named committee member. Names to John or Judith for volunteers.
- Evelyn suggested we put in entrants to the Portishead show.
- Woodland Trust to be approached to donate saplings to place around site, particularly in view of loss of major oak tree at bottom. Evelyn to pursue this idea and seek landholders permission to plant trees on the land.
- Les asked how the plot holders list can be maintained. Stuart and Les to look after list, particularly in light of Bob's resignation.

**MEETING CLOSED AT 21.39**