

Minutes of the TGAA Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at 8.00pm on 22 March 2016 at the St Margaret's Institute.

Present Tony Hollander (chairman); Neil McLennan (vice-chairman); Bob Crabtree (treasurer); Virginia Wallis, (secretary and lettings secretary); Carol Jarvis (lettings secretary); Peter Jarvis (pest control); Jonathan Clark (website, machinery and skips); Tim Halliday (shop); and 22 TGAA members.

Apologies from: Bee Hillier; David Lowe; Vibeke Mannion; Brian Pratt; Freddie Quartley; Liz Storrar.

Minutes of the 2015 AGM

These had been distributed by email and were approved at the meeting.

Matters arising

Drinks and nibbles As at the 2015 AGM drinks and nibbles were provided before the meeting began. Thanks to Sally and Neil for providing the refreshments and to everyone who helped with the washing up afterwards.

Port Meadow The Port Meadow Management Plan has resurrected the proposal to raise the path at the western end of the meadow where it floods.

Scottish and Southern Electricity (SSE) has now paid us £1,100 in compensation for the disruption caused by digging up our path to re-lay its cable

Chairman's Report

Since the last AGM, there had been two meetings of the committee in October 2015 and February 2016.

Allotment site David Haynes has done an excellent job of clearing the two ponds and has moved the diggings on to the new bee-friendly garden. A Virginia creeper has been added to the climbers next to the shop. The main equipment shed has been repaired and the Port Meadow notice board which had blown down is now attached to the allotment fence next to the shop.

Railway works Network Rail (NR) have had to change the position of the new ramps down from the new bridge to allow the free movement of cattle and other animals. All the ramps will be 1:12. The space on our southern path between the new ramp and the pond will be too narrow for the tractor. To create tractor access, the northern side of the pond will need to be built up. Hold-ups on work on the new railway bridge are expected to carry on well into autumn.

Phil & Jim school has offered us car-parking in the evenings and at week ends and an alternative route if we have problems accessing the railway crossing because of remediation work on school land.

Tractor deliveries When the ground is wet, tractor deliveries – e.g. of manure – should be avoided so that the main paths do not become badly rutted.

Mowing The grass collector on the new mower is proving invaluable for supplying grass cuttings to the communal compost and to individual compost bins – thanks to the plot holders who don't mind having grass deposits. The mowing team is unable to mow side paths between allotments which are the responsibility of the adjacent plot holders.

Harvest Supper Stuart and Gillian Skyte again organised a fabulous harvest supper in 2015 and have very kindly agreed to organise the harvest supper again this year. It will take place on Saturday 12th November 2016 at the St Margaret's Institute.

Treasurer's report

The accounts for 2015 were circulated. The Treasurer thanked Jim Moore for auditing the accounts. TGAA's main sources of income are fees of £4,660, proceeds of £1,530 from the plant sale, profit of £416.39 from the shop and this year a one-off payment of £1,100 from SSE (see above). As a result, TGAA has a very healthy bank balance so the Treasurer proposes to review fees next year. There are also plans to spend more on casual labour for communal work and possibly buy a new shredder.

Secretary's report

Seeds It is still possible to order seeds at a 50% discount from Dobies. Catalogues and order forms are available in the allotment shop.

Membership cards are not compulsory but are needed to benefit from discounts at Yarnton Nurseries and Burford Garden Company (although there have been problems using the card at Burford). Current membership cards expire on

1 May 2016. New cards will be available at the allotment shop and will be free if swapped for an old card but will cost £1 otherwise.

Plant sale Last year's sale made a record £1,530 largely down to the excellent pricing by Sally McLennan and Clare Hollander plus the sale of tools donated by Diane Ashby. It is unlikely that this year's plant sale – which will take place on Sunday 22nd May 2016 – will do quite as well. As well as needing donations of plants, seedlings, jams and pickles, cookery and gardening books, volunteers will be needed to help manage the plant sale both before, during and after the event. More details will follow later in April.

Lettings Secretaries report

This was Carol's last report as lettings secretary as she is standing down after ten highly enjoyable years in the role. There are now 42 whole plots, 148 half plots and 11 quarter plots. Since the last AGM, we have welcomed 13 new plot holders. Last spring's plot inspection found 19 plots in dire need of attention and so 19 warning letters to plot holders. This year, the site was in a much better state with letters being sent to only three plot holders. The waiting list is low but vacant plots are being processed and offered to plot holders wishing to expand if appropriate.

Website and machinery

Website The TGAA website has a great deal of useful information that people may not know about. Let Jonathan know if you have any suggestions for improving it.

Shared equipment Members were reminded that, after being shown how to use it - they can borrow any of the shared equipment which includes a rotivator, tiller, strimmers and mowers including a new self-propelled mower. There is also now a petrol-fuelled electric generator for members to use as well as an electric grinder mounted on a collapsible work bench. Faye Pring will donate long arm pruning shears and the committee will purchase a three-legged pruning ladder for shared use.

Pest Control

The rabbit population is reduced thanks largely to the foxes, and deer are kept out by the stock fence. If you need a rabbit trap, ask Pete Jarvis. Badgers continue to be a problem but we just have to live with them. Pete also has rat bait and rat boxes.

Communal compost and bonfire

The communal compost and bonfires are hugely popular and very much valued waste disposal facility. The resulting compost is also popular and appreciated but it is quite rough. It could be improved if we had a better shredder which both shreds and then throws the shredded material. This type costs around £7,000 new so a second-hand option is being investigated. It was suggested that a local tree person such as Mr Timms might be persuaded to use their chipping equipment to process our compost. There are also plans to get Brian Haynes to turn the compost once month to improve its quality.

Allotment shop

Tim Halliday has taken over running the shop from Vibeke and has ensured that it is now stocked with a plentiful supply of manure, seed potatoes and all the other usual stock. The shop is staffed by a band of eight volunteers who open the shop from 11.00 to 12.00 on Saturdays and from 3.00 until 4.00 on Sundays.

Election of the Committee Tim Halliday and Roger Mumby-Croft were elected to the committee and the remaining committee members were re-elected from the floor for the committee's work.

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm