

Minutes of the TGAA Committee meeting held at 5.30 pm on Wednesday 12 October 2011 at 23 Chalfont Road, Oxford.

Present: Tony Hollander (chairman); Neil MacLennan (deputy chairman); Virginia Wallis (secretary); Bob Crabtree (treasurer); Carol Jarvis (lettings secretary); Pete Jarvis (pest control); Jonathan Clark (website and machinery); Vibeke Mannion (shop); Stuart Skyte (social and website).

Agenda

1 Communal orchards

It was agreed that Ian Salisbury would be allowed to go ahead with his proposal to plant more fruit trees – including medlars, figs, quince, crab apple and mirabelle – by the old pond. It was also agreed that although any fruit grown on communal land – including the orchards planted by Neil and John Porter - is communal, that the people responsible for planting fruit trees would be given the first pick with any surplus produce being sold at the shop. Next year, fruit and other surplus produce will also be sold to the general public outside the Port Meadow gate. The sleeper benches will be moved to under the apple tree by the shop as they are more likely to be used there.

2 Badgers and other pests

Badgers We are fighting a losing battle against the badgers as whatever we do, they keep getting in. We can either admit defeat or spend money on an electric fence but this proposal would need to be put to the AGM. The idea of having a communal sweetcorn plot with electric fence was also mooted.

Rats Although rat control is now done on a commercial basis, the council still has an obligation to deal with rats on the allotments because it is city land. The new rat control person will be laying traps in November and will operate on a rolling six-week tour.

Rabbits Pete will wait for crops to die down before setting rabbit traps and will buy a third trap to replace the one which was stolen.

3 Skips

People have been asking about skips so JC will arrange for a skip towards the end of October. It was agreed that to save money on skips, members would be encouraged to deposit rubble – such as stones and broken bricks glass and china – into bags situated by the fence by the shop so that it can be used as hardcore for filling in ruts on the path. JC will do notices on best skip-filling practice.

4 Trustees

Trustees are responsible only for any debts run up by the allotment association. They are not held responsible for accidents which is covered by the insurance that the council provides.

5 Committee responsibilities

It was agreed that the committee would meet to undertake a risk assessment. This is one of the responsibilities detailed in the allotment charter recently drawn up by the council to provide an overview of the responsibilities of plotholder, committee and council. JC has pro forma risk assessment forms. VW will arrange the meeting. The allotment charter will form part of the material given to new plotholders.

6 Equipment

The push mower has had to be repaired by Meadhams who will also undertake the servicing of the Toro this year and address all the problem areas that have been identified. If the problems can't be fixed, we may need to get a new machine. However, it was noted that even getting a new machine is not going to solve the problem of the bearings getting clogged with plastic etc. Any new machine should be no bigger than the Toro and it was agreed that we would need to shop around – possibly with help from the Parks department.

The cheap strimmer has been replaced by another 2-stroke machine donated by Vibeke.

7 Access

We are still waiting for a decision on the level crossing. Until then, members should be reminded to cross safely.

8 Oxford Federation

Because all allotment leases are up for renewal, the Federation is trying to ensure that everyone has a copy of their current lease. It is inevitable that the council will increase rents but the federation is pressing for a common charging structure. It was pointed out that because of issues about access to our site, we do not actually have a lease.

9 Harvest supper

The room is booked, the quiz is sorted and there have been six entries for the photo competition.

AOB

Committee elections It was agreed that we ought actively to ask if people want to stand for election to the committee but that it must be for a particular post with a specific job, Advance information on the make-up of the committee – together with nomination forms – will be circulated six weeks in advance of the AGM.

Radio Oxford Stuart now has a regular monthly slot on the Sunday lunchtime gardening programme on Radio Oxford which will be handy for advertising the plant sale next year.

Newsletter Contributions will be as follows: Stuart - Radio Oxford; Jonathan – equipment and bees; Carol – leek moth; Tony – Chiltern, skip and new rubble collection; Ginny – seeds and membership card reminder.

The meeting ended at 7.35pm