

Minutes of the TGAA Committee meeting held at 10.30 am on Tuesday 3rd March 2015 at 18 Hayfield 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).

Apologies: Michael Wheale (compost).

1 Railway updates

It is likely to be another year before Network Rail (NR) can undertake work on its new railway bridge as well as mitigation works for the closure of the crossing as their planning application has been rejected. NR has, however, been able to put up its new fence but has failed to give the allotments the extra land it promised so that we could widen the eastern path. The new NR fence also has a big gap at the bottom so we need to keep the allotment fence to keep vermin out. It was agreed that we would ask NR to build up land to fill the gap but that it was not worth bothering trying to widen the eastern path. We have still not received any financial compensation for the disruption caused by Scottish and Southern Electricity (SSE) when re-laying their cable. In response to a written request for compensation given how cooperative we were, SSE offered £500.

Action: JC to chase SSE for payment.

2 Trees

The Oxford Tree Company has done a really good job on the various trees within the allotment site. The work produced lots of logs and chippings. The council's tree team have undertaken very thorough pollarding next to the apiary and will continue other pollarding outside the nesting season. Its aim is to pollard every fifth tree on the western boundary fully every five years. They have also produced a mass of chippings on the plot destined to become the bee- and butterfly-friendly garden which needs a plan for how it will be created.

Action: CJ, VW and JC to formulate a plan of work on the bee-friendly garden for a working party when undertaking the spring plot inspection.

3 Plot boundaries, numbers and posts

It was agreed that, where necessary, plot boundary posts – painted with plot numbers - will be installed during the spring plot inspection.

4 Compost-making and bonfires

In response to MW's report on the communal compost and bonfire, it was agreed that we could afford to continue employing Stuart to do the hard labour needed to move material from the compost pile to the compost bins. It was agreed that MW's proposal for a 'green' and 'brown' bin to help plot holders sort compost material would be a good idea. It was also agreed that it would be helpful to have a separate bay for potato and tomato waste in order to keep it out of the compost. MW's request for help with the composting will be added to the spring newsletter and AGM agenda. JC and VM volunteered to help with the communal bonfire.

5 Well security

MW and JC have mended the well identified as needing repair in the last committee meeting.

Action: JC to identify further wells in need of repair or filling in during the plot inspection.

6 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The AGM will take place at 8.00 on Tuesday 17th March 2015 at the St Margaret's Institute. Drinks and nibbles will be available from 7.45. VM very kindly volunteered to supply water, soft drinks, plastic cups and napkins while NM will provide wine and nibbles. The agenda will include reports from the chairman, treasurer, secretary, lettings secretary, pest control and compost and bonfires. An invitation to members to stand for the committee will be included in the spring newsletter (as last year). It was also agreed at the last committee meeting that the agenda should include the 'three consecutive letters and you are out' rule change for errant plot holders.

7 Spring newsletter

The spring newsletter will include an introduction and update on the railway works (TH), notice of the AGM, plant sale and harvest supper, and shared equipment. VW to provide copy on reminders about plot numbers and paths, plot inspection and problem plots, seed scheme and dates for plot holders' diaries. MW to provide compost and bonfire copy and PJ copy about pest control. JC to provide copy on the Harvest supper and photo competition.

8 Finance

Despite buying a new mower this year, the finances are in a healthy state and we have a balance of just over £8,600. It was agreed that we could spend more on bits for the new mower including a cutting deck and a mulching deck if necessary. It was agreed that as we have enough money to cover our expenditure, we would not apply for a grant from the council.

Action: JC to talk to Turneys about suitable parts.

9 Plant sale

The plant sale will take place on Sunday 17th May 2015 and we will have the institute from 4.00 on Saturday 16th which has been agreed with Brian Wardley although TH may need to remind Brian of our arrangement nearer the time. The plant sale itself will be organised in much the same way as last year which seemed to work well although we perhaps need to be more aggressive in the pricing.

10. AOB

JC will order a skip and VW will send a note to members asking if they know people prepared to do digging and labouring work such as shifting rubble.

The meeting ended at 12.20pm