



## TAMWORTH FARM ALLOTMENT SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 7.00pm, 2 October 2023

Attendees: Steffi Backhouse (SB), Jo Rodgers (JR), Anthony Redpath (AR), Katy Willison (KW), Julie Mallett (JM), Rob Rudfelt (RR), Beverley Stansfield (BS), Elisabetta Constantini (joined at 8pm)

### Apologies

1. Apologies were accepted from Walli Taylor.

### Minutes and Actions

2. Minutes from September meeting were agreed. KW noted that the final monthly report had been received and the budget outturn was very close to planned expenditure, demonstrating good financial control. JR reported back on diseases and confirmed that action should only be taken if these were notifiable. Tree pruning planned for January/ February 2024. Food donations now being made to Tooting Kitchen, AR will contact Merton Fridge to let them know that donations are going to Wandsworth for now. A Christmas collection for Merton Fridge would be considered and included in the monthly email.

### Site Maintenance and Security

3. Committee members noted the site maintenance report. RR has asked for the green waste bay to be emptied by Merton. Water use continues to be low due to wet weather. All locks maintained and working. RR to meet GS to discuss priority water project. RR noted need for spend on metal spikes and wooden posts to support taps. Committee agreed this and further spend on spare water parts to allow swift repairs to water infrastructure. RR to work with GM on making this happen and share potential costs with SB and KW. **Action: RR**

### AGM prep and Audit Arrangements 2023/24

4. SB noted that we are well on track with preparations for the AGM. She has designed a poster to go in monthly email. She is assembling required documents, Eileen is preparing annual accounts.
5. AR presented a short paper setting out options for the vote at the next AGM on audit arrangements. He recommended that we alert members early to the opportunity to examine our financial arrangements if anyone is interested.
6. The Committee noted that there were very tight arrangements in place to ensure that all payments are authorised before they are made and monthly checks to ensure that all payments are receipted. Our bookkeeper also provides detailed monthly reports which are available for other Committee members and our annual accounts are circulated to all plot

holders. KW noted that she had secured one quote for an audit which would cost £900. On that basis, the Committee agreed that the recommendation to AGM should be that our financial arrangements are in good order with strong protections against fraud in place, and so no external audit is required. AR will present this at the AGM and ensure that the options are presented fairly to all TFAS members.

7. SB noted that WT will be stepping down from the TFAS Committee. Committee members noted how enormously helpful her contribution had been and expressed to thank her for all her hard work. All other Committee members noted that they would stand again as members.

### **Plot Management**

8. KW updated the Committee on the results of the recent September plot inspection. One NCN had been issued on Rose Avenue. KW and AR sought advice on what action to take on a Farm plot where the requirements of an NCN had not been met. Some work had been carried out, but the plot continued to be largely covered by weeds and no crops had been harvested. The weeds included bindweed and mare's tail which were growing in profusion and no efforts had been made to remove them. A further year of unchecked growth would make the plot virtually unlettable due to nature of the weeds. The Committee decided that we should proceed with an eviction notice due to non compliance. **AR/ KW to action**

### **Maintenance Contract**

9. RR and JM noted how effectively the contract had worked this year and how grateful he was to be able to call upon GS rather than seek favours from plot holders. GS has proved extremely effective and often identifies problems early. He has been helpful and flexible about fixing leaks and ad hoc jobs. Agreed we should proceed to relet the contract with GS. **RR to let GS know that the paths do need to be mowed in May this year**, the Committee to make sure this is included in April monthly email so that plot holders are aware.

### **Fence security options**

10. AR reported back on options to heighten the fence. He and RR had surveyed the existing fence to identify most vulnerable areas and had made a rough estimate of how much it would cost to heighten those areas in the same way as had been carried out already in the corner of the Horseshoe. He estimated this would be £1,000 to £2,000 in materials, labour not included. He invited the Committee to consider whether to pursue this and how to approach it with plot holders, the wider community and Merton Council. The Committee were keen to pursue this. Next step would be for us to approach Alan Trumper at Merton to discuss a financial contribution and what permissions might be needed. We would need to manage risks around the appearance of the fence and also about liability if someone was hurt trying to climb over it. **Action: AR/ RR to email Merton.**

### **Risk from treated pallets**

11. KW updated the Committee on the concerns of a plot holder about the risk of untreated pallets. The Committee agreed that, following desk based research, the risk of contamination was extremely low. However, to reassure plot holders, it was agreed that it would be sensible to get the relevant area of soil tested for contamination. **KW to arrange for appropriate soil testing and keep plot holders informed as necessary.**

**AOB**

12. Roy Vickery is visiting the site with colleagues on Sunday. JR to go along.

13. AR to stake out boundaries of plot 20 on the Farm for new tenants.

**COMMUNICATIONS ACTION FOR OCTOBER**

To:	Format of communication:	Topic/Issue:	Action:	By:
All	Email	Tooting Kitchen reminder, plus Xmas donation to Merton Fridge.	KW	6 Oct
All	Email	AGM poster	KW	6 Oct
All	Email	PHD student information and other learning opportunities	KW	6 Oct

Item	Action	Name	Target date/ Completed
14 Nov 2022	Complete digitalisation of papers	JR	30 May 2023
14 Nov 2022	Investigate Rose Avenue handover terms and historic use of land	JR	30 May 2023
5 Dec 2022	Upload existing Garry paperwork to Dropbox Agree new contract with Garry before the end of Feb. (SB to share strimming maps with JM – complete)	JM	30 May
3 April	Bring forward a proposal on using and letting the community shed	SB	30 May 2023
3 April	Circulate costs of re-decking the Horseshoe shed with new decking material	RR	30 May 2023
5 June	Book Capital Growth speaker for September compost master class	EC	3 July 2023
5 June	AR/ KW to consider next year's cultivation guidelines including action on cumulative non cultivators	AR/ KW	Feb 2024
7 Aug	Make contingency plans for website	SB	Oct 23
2 Oct	Contact Merton Fridge	AR	31 Oct 23
2 Oct	RR to agree planned expenditure on water repairs with GS and share with SB/ KW	RR	31 Oct 23
2 Oct	Eviction Notice to be sent	AR/ KW	6 Oct 23
2 Oct	New contract to be agreed with GM, to include clarity over May mowing plans	RR/ JM	31 Oct 23
2 Oct	Email Merton about fence proposals	AR	31 Oct 23
2 Oct	Arrange appropriate soil testing and arrange removal of pallets	KW/ JR	31 Oct

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**Dates for the Diary**

AGM Sunday 12 November

Monday 13 November

Monday 4 December