



## TAMWORTH FARM ALLOTMENT SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 7.00pm, 5 February 2024

Attendees: Steffi Backhouse (SB), Anthony Redpath (AR), Katy Willison (KW), Rob Rudolf (RR), Beverley Stansfield (BS), Julie Mallett (JM), Elisabetta Constantini (EC), Jo Rodgers (JR), Cat Elliott (CE)

### Apologies

1. No apologies were received.

### Minutes and Actions

2. Minutes from the January meeting were agreed, with one clarification about the maintenance contract. RR reported that Phil Smith has agreed to do a compost demonstration as part of the March workday. Agreed to flag it up to get interest in advance. AR has explored options to switch water companies. Still work in progress, but next step is to seek a lower rate from Castle Water by entering into a fixed term contract. SB is investigating costs of replacing the RA noticeboard as it is likely beyond repair.
3. SB has met with HS plot holders. They have proposed an approach to limiting parties and gatherings, any music will end by 9pm, everyone will be off site by 10pm, with the car park monitored to reduce noise for neighbours. This is a very positive outcome. **SB will notify the local residents who expressed concern.**
4. JM clarified that the 2024 contract will be agreed with Garry in Feb/ March this year, this would clarify the position on strimming in May.

### Site Maintenance and Security

5. RR updated the Committee on site maintenance. Plot holders are now getting more active on site, so it would be helpful to remind them all about locking gates and allowed times for bonfires in the monthly email. There has been some damage to the gate and fence areas in the last couple of weeks from anti-social behaviour, also experienced by our college neighbours. This has been reported to the police. RR has developed a positive relationship with the site manager of the college next door, he is working with them on various projects, including pruning trees.
6. AR updated the Committee on the planning application to increase the height of the fence. Merton has asked for more detailed technical drawings, which AR will provide. Committee members made various offers of help if this proved more difficult than expected. Local Councillors are aware. We should expect a site visit at some point once all the information has been provided.

### Approach to Plot Inspection in 2024

7. KW updated the Committee on the proposed approach to plot inspections this year. Last year, the process went well, we had no complaints or concerns raised. KW/ AR proposed two small

changes, the first introducing some element of plot management for new plot holders who appear to show little or no commitment to their plots, and secondly, introducing some flexibility into the process for plot holders who are “repeat offenders” in successive years. JM noted that the wording in the policy for new plot holders could be stronger as we should reasonably expect them to show a reasonable commitment to their plots. The Committee agreed the proposals, with the amendment suggested. **KW/ AR will agree a form of words and then circulate it to plot holders at the beginning of the growing season.**

#### **Possible plant sale**

8. CE introduced her ideas for a plant sale. She has undertaken research into plant sales in other areas. Most are held in mid May, have lots of plants for sale, all offer tea and coffee and cake, some have additional stalls, like tool sharpening and art sales. She proposed a possible date of 11 or 18 May, a short event to create a busy environment, tea, coffee and cake for sale, seed swap for free to maintain accessibility, vegetable and plants available to buy. We would need plot holders to help by growing extra plants for sale. We could advertise the event, with schools, local media outlets and residents’ associations. Could hold a sister event at a school where we could provide plants to be sold (might go for a higher price?). We could create a survey asking members if they would attend and what they might buy, so we could target growing to order, and those who might bake cakes. Do we have portable card machines? She invited the Committee to consider what the main aim of a plant sale would be, raising revenue or community building? And whether they wished to set a funding target?
9. The Committee noted that there are benefits from engaging with the community, but the aim would be revenue raising, and this would be likely to be raised from external visitors, not plot holders. Plant stock would need to come from plot holders, we should appeal to their pride in providing good quality stock. A survey (or Whatsapp poll) could help us identify what people might buy and what they would be prepared to offer. General agreement that we should have a specific project (fence security, water capture projects) to give people an idea of where the money will be spent. Some concerns about security, we would need to manage access carefully to avoid having members of the public/ children moving freely about the site, but agreed that this was not a major barrier.
10. **CE will reflect on everything that was said and to put together three options in an email and we can agree a specific way forward.**

#### **AOB**

11. SB raised the idea of building connections between plot holders, learning about others’ growing habits, food and cultures. Committee discussed a variety of ideas for achieving this, 60 second questionnaires, on-line discussion groups, no specific action, for further deliberation
12. Rob to look into getting honeysuckles to screen nursery fence and plant a mulberry tree on the common.

## COMMUNICATIONS ACTION FOR FEBRUARY

To:	Format of communication:	Topic/Issue:	Action:	By:
All	Email	Reminder about locking gates and bonfire times	KW	
All	Email	March community day to have a composting demo		

Item	Action	Name	Target date/ Completed
14 Nov 2022	Investigate Rose Avenue handover terms and historic use of land	JR	May 2023
3 April 2023	Bring forward a proposal on using and letting the community shed	SB	May 2023
7 Aug	Make contingency plans for website	SB	Oct 23
2 Oct	Arrange removal of pallets	JR	Oct 23
4 Dec	Take a Committee group photo	ALL	Spring
20 Nov	Pursue cheaper water options with Castle Water.	AR	29 Feb
4 Dec	Consider options to repair/ renew RA notice board	SB/ RR	Dec 2023
4 Dec	Plan new planting for RA communal bed	BS/ JR	29 Feb
5 Feb	Notify residents of party agreement	SB	29 Feb
5 Feb	Agree 2024 contract with GM	JM/ RR	31 March
5 Feb	Circulate plot inspection rules to all plot holders	KW/ AR	30 April

### Dates for the Diary 2024

4 March 2024

8 April 2024

13 May 2024

3 June 2024

1 July 2024

5 August 2024

2 September 2024

7 October 2024

AGM Sunday 10 November 2024

11 November 2024

2 December 2024