



TAMWORTH FARM ALLOTMENT SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 7pm, 5 June 2023

Attendees: Steffi Backhouse (SB), Jo Rodgers (JR), Bev Stansfield (BS), Elisabetta Costantini (EC), Rob Rudolf (RR), Walli Taylor (WT). Anthony Redpath (AR), Katy Willison (KW), Julie Mallett (JM)

Apologies

1. No apologies.

Minutes

2. Minutes from May meeting were agreed. SB went through actions: **JM to upload Garry contract and papers onto Dropbox.** Community shed guidelines, use is happening organically, need to fix decking first, priority is to finish boundary fence first. JM queried issue of plots with excessive stuff on them. **AR offered to identify how many such plots there are.**

Site Maintenance

3. AR had completed reinstatement of the path between plots 34 and 35 on the Farm. Reports of dog faeces on Rose Avenue, note to be included in monthly email. Discussion about No Mow May. Committee considered that in future years, we should cut the grass in May, access is important for plot holders and safety. Plus grass tends to grow excessively at that time of year.
4. Longer term debate about whether we could manage without grass cutting. Consensus is that for now we should continue to undertake grass cutting; asking members to take care their paths would be likely to result in significant additional chasing and hassling of members which was undesirable.

Plot Management and Lettings

5. KW updated the Committee on the results of the recent May plot inspection. She noted that ten Improvement Notices had been sent out. It's possible that some may need to progress to Non Cultivation Notices next month, although it was clear that many of the plot holders had been spurred into action. SB noted that it was always helpful when people talked to us and told us about any difficulties as then we could ensure that we don't hassle people unreasonably.
6. Lettings: JM updated the Committee. Plot 37 has been relet. 37B on the Farm remains. AR and JM to meet to discuss plot size and access of 37A and B. 21 people currently on the waiting list.

Budget Position

7. KW updated on the budget. We had received a substantial rebate from Castle Water for waste water costs. This was helpful as we had incurred high costs for sorting out the water leak and the water survey which were unexpected and so not budgeted for. Other than that, we were largely on track, but with relatively little spare. We could progress spending on fencing for the common area and for the compost workshop but would need to control costs carefully beyond that.
8. Compost workshop: Elisabetta updated, current cost is £180, Committee agreed to go ahead on 10 September. Agreed to consider best way to publicise this, poster could remind people that they can save money by making your own compost and that the Capital Growth speaker would be well regarded. Publicity targeted well could encourage attendance and possibly a financial contribution.
EC will arrange a September date with Capital Growth speaker.

Water update

9. AR presented a short paper on water. He noted that we have successfully improved our communications on water. Last year, we focussed on costs; this year the focus has more been on the problems with leaks. People appear to be beginning to understand that leaks cost money and have been informing the Committee when they see issues, which is good progress. Now the water supply is back on, we should renew messages about how much we are spending on water each month. Members are cost sensitive, so are responsive to this. Alongside that, we should develop resources about how people can do their own water capture. We do still have to remind people about rules of water use. He recommended that, once the current water misuse case has been concluded, we should send a note round reminding people what it is OK and what isn't. We need a constant flow of information to members to keep them conscious about water use.
10. He then updated the Committee on the borehole concept. Now that the new rules have been agreed, we have the financial headroom we need to borrow money if we wished to. It has been hard to find grants that might help. The only real possibility is the City Bridge Trust, but they have a moratorium on applying for grants when you've already received one. Next date we can apply is June 2024. We have learnt from a site in Ealing where they have drilled a borehole but can't yet connect it up to their system. We would need to have a better understanding of our water system to ensure we could make it work. This would require a contractor who would spend a lot of upfront time working with us to ensure it can work and which they would only be likely to do if we pay upfront.
11. AR has concluded from this that in the short term we should focus on water capture. A site visit to another allotment helped him appreciate that there is a lot of scope to do more on this, both on individual plots and community projects. The latter would cost a fraction of what a borehole would cost. We could explore low-cost pilots with some enthusiastic plot holders. AR recommended that we focus on that this year and, in the longer term, revisit the idea of applying for a grant from CBT and check in on Ealing position. The Committee endorsed this approach as the best way forward.
12. JR asked about how we can map the water system. AR said now very hard with plastic pipes.
13. JM suggested someone talk to Richard (as very longstanding member) about what he knows about the water system. She recommended we consider the path at the back of the fence on

Rose Avenue for water capture tanks. There would be space for that. All agreed that there is a lot of scope on individual plots to do more. RR suggested a small working group on water capture, inviting those with an interest to join. **AR to convene a group.**

Toilet Survey

14. AR informed the Committee that the City Bridge Trust requires a report from us on how the project they funded – the toilet – went. We intend to do a survey, based on the one we did before, but benchmarking use one year on. This needs to be sent out in June and report back in July. It's hoped it will demonstrate good usage and support. **JM and AR will work together on sending it out before the end of June.**

AOB

15. *Water misuse case:* We have received an appeal so the Appeals Sub Committee will need to meet to consider their case. Hazel, as Chair of the Appeals Sub Committee, will collate evidence and be in touch with the appropriate Committee members to arrange a meeting.
16. *Wonderful Weeds talk:* Actions agreed on refreshments and on a TFAS Committee member "hosting" each talk. We will also host a weed walkabout in October which will contribute to wider national knowledge.
17. *RA green waste bay* is full, needs to be covered up and new bay opened. **JM, EC and WT to meet this weekend and sort this**, using weed suppressant material which is more robust than tarpaulin.
18. JR noted *a bee identification free seminar*, agreed to go in monthly email and link in Whatsapp groups.
19. AR noted that KW and he are meeting to *Melbury College campus* next week to discuss common issues and manage the relationship.
20. RR noted that he would be out of action for four to six weeks for health reasons. He noted that he would handover water plan to Garry and ensure that measures were in place to ensure that action could be taken, if needed, in his absence. The Committee wished him well and hoped for a good recovery.

COMMUNICATIONS ACTION FOR JUNE

To:	Format of communication:	Topic/Issue:	Action:	By:
All	Email	Dog faeces	KW	10 June
All	Email/ Whatsapp	Bee identification seminar	KW	10 June
All	Email/ Whatsapp	Green waste bay tidy up	KW	10 June

Item	Action	Name	Target date/ Completed
14 Nov 2022	Complete digitalisation of papers	JR	30 May 2023
14 Nov 2022	Consider best way to invite plot holders to initiate and run new projects	EC	
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	Identify plots with excessive stuff on them	AR	30 June 2023
5 June	Convene a water capture working group	AR	3 July 2023
5 June	Book Capital Growth speaker for September compost master class	EC	3 July 2023
5 June	Send out one year on toilet survey	AR/ JM	30 June 2023
5 June	Sort out green waste bay on RA	WT/ EC/ JM	12 June 2023

Dates for the Diary

Agreed Committee meetings for the year ahead:

Monday 3 July
 Monday 7 August (if needed)
 Monday 4 September
 Monday 2 October
 AGM Sunday 12 November
 Monday 13 November
 Monday 4 December