

# Camberwell and District Allotment Society

## Gunsite Section

The Annual General Meeting was held at 10.00 on Sunday November 5, 2017 in the Scout HQ.

### MINUTES

Forty-seven members signed in: the meeting was therefore quorate.

#### 1. To note apologies for absence

Received from Brendan Byrne, Kathy Heeps, Claire Lloyd, Jennifer Milner, Eleanor Mitchiner, Dwight Pile-Gray, Crispin and Jane Tuckley.

#### 2. To approve the minutes of meeting held on November 6 2016

With regard to the suggestion that a net might be erected along the boundary with the golf club, to prevent balls being hit on to the site and possible personal injury, it was pointed out that it should be the club that took responsibility for this, not Gunsite. The committee would be asked to consider this matter further at its next meeting.

ACTION: Secretary (agenda for Jan 6)

With this exception, the minutes were agreed to be a correct record.

#### 3. Matters arising and other topical issues

a. Potholes The Chairman (Philip Milner, PM) reported that we were still awaiting a response from The Dulwich Estate but had said that Simon Hoare (Estate Surveyor) had indicated that the Estate was reviewing the state of all its roads. PM thanked those members who had helped with filling potholes on the part of the track for which we are responsible. Also relating to the access road, PM reported that he had alerted Adrian Hill (AH, Chairman CDAS) of the potential obstruction to emergency access from cars parking on both sides of Grange Lane.

b. Drainage PM reported that there had been an excellent response from plot-holders to the implementation of the drainage scheme drawn up by David Stacey and Alex Hamilton, and the paths had remained in good condition throughout the winter (albeit there had been less rain). David and Alex were thanked for their professional input to this matter, including a recommendation that a JCB be hired to dig a ditch along part of the southern boundary of the site to retain water and allow it to flow only slowly across the site.

c. Theft of bees There had been no further incident.

d. Polytunnel The committee had discussed the possible installation of a communal polytunnel but had decided not to pursue the matter, primarily on the grounds of practicality.

e. Mentoring No one had yet availed themselves of this scheme.

f. List of plotholders and data protection Eugene O'Donnell and Kathy Heeps would reviewing how the list should be maintained and privacy ensured in the light of the revised Data Protection Act (due to be published in May 2018).

g. Inspections PM reported that the inspectors had found a considerable improvement in the standard of plot cultivation and tidiness in comparison with 2016. He thanked all plotholders for their co-operation and the work of the inspection team, led by Jane Taylor. As part of a later item, the meeting AGREED that it would be better if the inspections were conducted other than by the Site Officers although those individuals should be part of the inspection teams in an advisory capacity. Several people offered to help with this, their names being noted by Jane Taylor. It was also agreed that a standard pro-forma should be emailed to everyone about their plots, whether they required work or not.

h. Windfall apples The meeting agreed that fruit falling on to the inter-plot paths might be picked up by anyone, but in general not fruit falling on to plots. Individuals happy to allow the retrieval of windfalls from their plot could erect a notice to that effect, and apples etc. could be placed on the Project Well/swaps table on the shop forecourt.

i. Foodbank There was no report on the operation of the food bank but PM thanked all those who contributed to it, whether from their surplus produce or tins etc. bought for the purpose.

j. Security Several members reported a usually low level of petty theft from their plots, with more occurring from plots nearest to the entrance gate. Various solutions to this problem were advanced, including installation of CCTV and/or a self-locking gate. Potential obstacles included the use of the site by the Estate's contractors and Southwark Council vehicles, and the need to maintain emergency access. Chris Fines offered to set up a short-term working party to consider this matter in detail and report back. Potential volunteers were asked to contact Chris after the meeting.

ACTION: All

l. Pesticide and herbicide use This item engendered a lively discussion following which it was AGREED that the shop would discontinue the sale of blue metaldehyde slug pellets but continue to stock glyphosate. The Secretary pointed out that the latter was the only effective treatment for Japanese knotweed, and is also effective against mares tail and Himalayan balsam. The first and third of these are noxious weeds and it is illegal to allow them to grow on one's land.

m. Shelter A plot-holder asked if access could be provided to the hut for all plot-holders, to allow them to shelter from rain, eat food etc. It was AGREED that this was a good idea and the Chairman undertook to purchase a key safe to be placed by the door of the hut to facilitate this.

ACTION: PM

n. Overhanging trees This continued to be a problem; discussion was ongoing with The Dulwich Estate.

ACTION: Chairman to contact AH

#### 4. Chairman's report

PM proposed a vote of thanks to Nelly Tee (NT), who was standing down as Site Manager after 40 years of involvement with the management of the site. This was carried with acclamation.

#### 5. Treasurer's report

The Treasurer had sent her apologies so PM spoke briefly to the report (attached). In summary the balance at year end (September 30) before commitments was £10,341 (2016, £8156). Committed spending was £600. There was a possibility that we might receive a rebate for overcharging for water. The 2017-2018 budget showed a surplus of £283 (2016 actual £2185 vs budget surplus £521. Budget assumptions included similar shop trading, additional expenditure on site maintenance and two member events. PM thanked Kathy for her expertise and diligence in the oversight of the section's finances. There had been no large compost order this year to ensure fresher compost.

#### 6. Site Officer's report

NT reported that the following people had agreed to take on responsibility for the various activities for which she had become responsible as Site Officer.

a. Site supervision, lettings rent collection, pastoral care: Jane Taylor, Liz Brunton, Nigel Reynolds.

b. Mowing: No change

c. Hiring of strimmer : John Boreham and Nigel Thorpe (contactable by telephone, numbers to be put on the notice board. They would also be responsible for buying petrol.

Nina Walsh reported that she had a telescopic tree lopper that she would be pleased to lend to plot-holders.

d. Website: Eugene O'Donnell; Eugene would also repair/replace taps as required and turn the water supply on and off.

e. Waiting list: Liz Brunton

f. Stable manure: Rob Holden

g. Skip hire and management: Patrick McCabe

h. Shop rota: Ann Revell

NT thanked these individuals for taking on these jobs. It was AGREED that their telephone numbers be put on the notice board.

ACTION: Incoming Secretary

#### 7. Shop report

PM (in his role as shop manager) explained that ordering was now in house, and in consequence we had more control on what was ordered and how much. He had thanked Dave Cordell for his input to the shop in previous years. The shop continued to trade successfully; the target profit was 11% over cost of goods. PM thanked George Kyprianou for his work in the shop but pointed out that it would be prudent to have two members of the committee in the shop when he was away on holiday.

## **8. Changes to rules**

A new version of the rules had been drafted by KH. PM explained that the changes were aimed at improving the arrangement of topics, and did not include any substantive changes. Thus for example the features of plots that would be appraised by the inspection teams had been brought together.

This item generated a wide-reaching discussion, including the strictness with which rules were applied and, in particular, matters relating to trees (variety – only fruit trees permitted) and height (limited to 8 feet (2.44 metres) given that pruning trees had to be carried out at particular times of year so that pruning shortly before the inspection might be harmful. One member pointed out that the rules were in the main devised for the benefit of the community, rather than of individuals, and several members expressed their agreement with this sentiment.

After extensive discussion, the meeting AGREED that the revised rules should stand for the present, but that a short-term working group be convened to consider further the question of trees and advise the committee accordingly. The following volunteered to join this: Greg Becker, Richard Mabey, Ann Revell, Anne Stanesby, Nina Walsh, Armorel Weston.

ACTION: Armorel Weston and others.

## **9. Election of committee 2017-2018**

Existing members of the committee WERE ELECTED *en bloc*, with the exception of James Burr, who wished to stand down (and was thanked by PM for his input to the committee's deliberations and practical assistance with maintenance of the site over his period of service.

The following new members WERE ELECTED: Helen Adkin, Lucy Lloyd-Davis, Gavin Hamilton, Maggie Jarman, Gabriella La Grazie, Dwight Pile-Gray. Eugene O'Donnell would be asked to add their names to the committee email list.

ACTION: Outgoing Secretary

## **10. Any other competent business**

Lucy Lloyd-Davis gave a presentation, having been criticised by the inspection team for the large number of plastic bags containing compost that were often present on her site. Lucy was at pains to explain that her use of compost to improve her soil condition is in line with accepted practice. She was congratulated on the quality of her produce but asked to try to keep her use of bags to a minimum and to keep them neatly. Lucy's presentation generated a lively discussion, the conclusion of which was that we should all try to minimise our use of plastic. PM thanked Lucy for her helpful presentation.

The Secretary then proposed a vote of thanks to PM for his considerable input to the Gunsite over four years, and this was carried enthusiastically.

There being no other business, PM thanked all those attending and closed the meeting at 11.50 h.

**9. Date of next meeting:** November 4 2018

William Marshall

Outgoing Secretary 6.x.2017