

Romsey Allotment Holders Association

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting at The Comrades Club: 19 October 2011

1. Present

Chairman, John Blackmore, Vice Chairman, Stuart Aiken, Treasurer, Babs Ward, Committee Members, Denise Audoire, Albert Duffield, Alan Heasman, Rod Hoyle, Keith Parker, Mike Mason and 37 members

2. Apologies

Pete Thompson, Phil Evans, Alex McArdle, Kate Allen, Sarah Holmes, Julia Gilbert, Cathy Richards, Frank Hilltout.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the AGM held on 13 October 2010 were agreed as published

4. Matters arising

i. Item 14a, State of roadway: Work has been done on the roadway at the Southampton Road entrance, digging up, refilling and rolling. However, the Committee recognise that this has not been entirely satisfactory and more work needs to be done

ii. Item 14c, Dog walkers. The Committee reviewed the matter and did not feel that a sign was necessary, since when no member was present dog walkers could be a useful deterrent to vandals. If a member considered a dog walker was acting inappropriately, then they should challenge the dog walker

5. Secretary's Report

In his absence, John Blackmore read out Phil Evans' report

'I am sorry that I cannot be with you this evening, but wish you well for the future as after 19 years I am relinquishing the reins

We now have 201 plots and 177 members. Most of the plots are in good state and anyone not doing their plot has had it taken away. 24 plots have been let during the year. No vacant plots at present and 16 on waiting list. Tree surgery work will be undertaken in

the autumn underneath the pylons. Thanks to Pete Thompson for arranging the installation of 8 more boreholes. Several community projects have been undertaken including the Scats Easter Weekend, Romsey Green Fair in May, donations to Abbey School Allotments, the Romsey Food Festival and the Romsey Show in September where a Gold Medal and a £50 prize was won for the display of produce and food tasting. Many thanks to all those who donated produce and those who took part

A Quiz took place in February organised by Kate Allen, Diane Kingston and Richard Howlett and Denise Audoire set up and ran the Dobies bulk seed scheme which worked very well.

Thanks finally to all those who have helped me over the last 19 years'

John Blackmore made some additional comments

This was a year of 'firsts' for the Association and a significant 'last'. To start with the 'last'; the retirement of Phil Evans as Secretary after 19 years. I would like the meeting to endorse a vote of thanks for Phil for all his hard work and efforts for the Association his years in office

The meeting unanimously agreed a vote of thanks for Phil

Among the firsts, we were selected in January by Waitrose for their Community Matters scheme and received a cheque for over £300. Our first ever Quiz was very successful and the proceeds were shared between the Association and Naomi House.

Diane Kingston has set up a Friends of Romsey Allotments page on Facebook where ideas and recipes can be exchanged

The Dobies Seeds Bulk Order, giving a 50% cost reduction on seed orders is being run again this year

Some tree surgery work is to be carried out by Southern Electric to protect the high voltage lines running from the pylons. The Association also plans to survey all trees on the site so that best advice can be given about pruning or other work

The Committee are planning to provide a skip for some of the waste glass, metal, etc around the site. This is expensive about £200 and is seen as an experiment. It will be for one day only, with the skip being attended at all times to ensure that only appropriate allotment material (no asbestos, brick or rubble) is deposited

Test Valley Borough Council will finally issue their Local Development Framework in November for Public Consultation in January/February next year. The Committee will be

looking at it carefully to see if there are any threats to the continuation of the Allotments where we are

6. Treasurer's Report

The Statement of Accounts as at September 30th 2011 was circulated. Babs Ward commented that the main item of expenditure was the road (£410.00) and that Rent payable to Broadlands has remained the same. There is a healthy cash balance which is slightly higher than last year. At present, the main item of expenditure other than rent is for the skip.

7. Election of Officers

The Committee has decided to split the Office of Secretary in two, a Membership Secretary, dealing with administration and waiting lists, and an Estates Manager dealing with issues at the allotments

Chairman: John Blackmore

Membership Secretary: Stuart Aiken

Estates Manager: Pete Thompson

Treasurer: Babs Ward

Committee Members: Denise Audoire, Albert Duffield, Rod Hoyle, Mike Mason, Keith Parker, Alan Heasman. Erica Coutable and Ian Todhunter join the Committee to fill existing vacancies and John Rigby was co-opted onto the Committee

Website: Ruth Evans

8. Subscriptions and Rents

To remain unchanged, £5 Membership Fee and £1 per rod

9. Honoraria

Secretary: Exceptionally, to reflect Phil's work for the Association, it was agreed to set Secretary's Honorarium at £350.00. Treasurer's Honorarium: £105.00

10. Any Other Business

i. Bonfires: John Blackmore said there had been two recent problems with bonfires; one where a smoking bonfire burning compostable material had been left unattended and one where a smoking bonfire had caused protests from a neighbouring house. Members

were reminded about the damage that complaints by our neighbours can do to the Association's standing in the Town. The Committee will consider what action should be taken against members who do not conform to Rule 9f

Comments were made about bonfires on the Town Council Allotments and it was suggested that where this happens, a complaint should be made to the Town Clerk

ii. There was discussion about the danger to pedestrians and cyclists from cars leaving the allotments on to Southampton Road since not all cars were complying with the 'Sound Horn' sign

Suggestions were made:-

Cut down the hedge on either side of the exit – this was not generally welcomed

Make a one way system; entry at Southampton Road and exit at Knatchbull Close, though this would not be practical for non allotment vehicles using this access

Put up a sign warning outside the allotments warning pedestrians/cyclists

Put up a mirror to help visibility of pedestrians/cyclists

Contact HCC Highways Department for advice

The Committee will follow this matter up at the next meeting in November

iii. It was pointed out that the Southampton Road Gate was not always closed – this is the responsibility of all members to ensure that it is closed when there are no members on the allotments