

# **Romsey Allotment Holders Association**

Minutes of Annual General Meeting at the Comrades Club: 16.10.2013

## **1. Present**

Chairman, Estates Manager, Treasurer, 7 Committee Members and 52 Members

## **2. Apologies**

Erica Coutable, Mike Mason, Kate Allen, George Bailey, Frank Hilltout, Peter Winfield, Sharon Cross, Robin Farthing, Trevor Palmer, Dorothy Thompson, Lesley Baker, Trevor O’Gorman, Astri Ablitt, Chris Dennis, Ruth Evans, Julie Gilbert, Diane Kingston, Colin Dennis, Su Whitlock, Paul Eldridge

## **3. Minutes of last Meeting**

The Minutes of the AGM held on 17 October 2012 were agreed

## **4. Matters Arising**

Item 12 (d): Surplus produce/wastage. Kate Allen & Sarah Holmes had talks with Transition Town Romsey for them to pick fruit etc but TTR are not geared up for it yet so we will continue to talk to them and look for other options/opportunities

## **5. Secretary’s Report**

In Erica Coutable’s absence the Chairman read her report. We now have 172 Members and all plots have been let through the year with the Waiting List now numbering 27. Great news as it means allotments are as popular as ever.

Diane Kingston, Richard Howlett and Kate Allen ran a successful and enjoyable Quiz evening for us in February and there is the possibility of another early next year. We were at the Green Fair in May at the Crosfield Hall. The stall was organised by Ian Todhunter and well manned by volunteers with Sarah Holmes creating an attractive display of vegetables and herbs. There was a lot of interest from those who came but it clashed with other events in the area on the same day so not as many visitors as hoped.

It was different at Romsey Show with so many visitors to the stand which, unlike the previous year, was brimming with fresh produce and we won a Gold Medal. It attracted a lot of attention with people stopping to look at the produce, ask questions and, of course, to sample the chutneys and courgette cake. We received a huge number of kind donations for recipes; produce etc which covered the cost of the stand and extra tickets for volunteers. The rest of the money collected was donated to Naomi House. Denise Audoire with her team and all their hard work made this such a successful one for us. It creates much publicity for the allotments in the Romsey area which is so important with the threat of future developments in Romsey.

I would like to take this opportunity to particularly thank Denise and all the other volunteers that helped make these three events enjoyable and successful. Finally, if anyone received their AGM notice by letter but has an email address, or access to one, please let us have it as it is cheaper, quicker and easier to keep you informed this way.

## 6. Estates Manager's Report

The Chairman also read this report to save Pete Thompson's voice.

Because we had such an exceptional growing period this year, plots that haven't been worked, for whatever reason, have quickly over-grown which has upset many. Committee members check their allocated plots and report to me if any plot is not being worked regularly. This does work as problem plots can be identified earlier and dealt with effectively.

Bonfires – help please! Rule 9f states “Members must make every effort to compost allotment waste. Members may NOT burn any material other than dry allotment waste. Members burning waste must not cause any inconvenience to other plot holders, road users or neighbouring houses.” Unfortunately, we have had a number of complaints from neighbouring houses, concerning foul smelling smoke, so can we please respect this rule and use Common Sense when planning a bonfire. Offenders have been warned not to repeat their mistakes.

In response to a request from the Members present a vote was taken on whether bonfires should be banned completely but was not successful and the status quo will continue but with the Committee actively monitoring this activity.

We have been trialling a one-way system to combat near misses reported by people leaving the allotments at the Rapids Gate. Therefore, the entrance to the site will only be at the Rapids gate end and exit only at Knatchbull gate end. Signs will be displayed soonest. May I thank all members for closing the gates at dusk, may this continue/improve through the coming year.

We increased the number of water pumps by installing 4 new ones across the site, but that programme is now done. Pump washers are still available through me with a helping hand to install if required. This year saw the roads stand up much better to regular traffic, with less money needed for repairs but this coming year a working party is required for improvements to all road tracks. The strimmer and rotavator have been used extensively and if you wish to use either please contact me in the normal way.

There is a skip booked for 26<sup>th</sup> October at the Rapids end car park, so please make sure you read and digest what the exclusions are. I note from the ever growing mound of rubbish that is already there, you have been forward Planning earlier this time.

Our first Summer Show on 10<sup>th</sup> August went down “well” with all that entered/attended. Fran Clifton, Head Gardener at Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, judged the 13 categories helped by Mick Corden, Competition Steward from Old Winton Allotments Andover. We will be holding another Show next year introducing more “Family” categories and it will be staged later in August

That's shallot.

## **7 Treasurer's Report**

Babs Ward circulated the RAHA Annual Accounts as at 30.9.2013, showing a balance of £2,874.54 available to the Association. We also hold £1,160 in Members Deposits.

Dobies orders were down this year and overall Income was slightly down despite contributions from Quiz Night, RAHA Show and Romsey Show. Less spent on roads and only one skip (another due next week) this year but insurance and hedge trimming went up and web hosting etc was renewed for 5 years. An invoice has been received from Broadlands for this year's Rent at the same level as previous years.

Question asked when Deposits may be used by the Association and if we should spend more of the funds held. Deposits are only ours to use when forfeited but Committee are always happy to receive and consider suggestions on how best to improve our facilities, although a suggestion for toilets may be a step too far.

The Accounts were accepted.

## **8. Election of Officers and Committee**

Babs Ward (Treasurer), Keith Parker, Albert Dutfield, and Rod Hoyle are standing down from the Committee and the Chairman thanked them all for their work for the Association over several years, with Keith having been involved it seems since before records began.

The following Officers and Committee members were elected or re-elected:

- a. Chairman: John Blackmore
- b. Members Secretary: Erica Coutable
- c. Estates Manager: Pete Thompson
- d. Treasurer : Robert Le Grice
- e. Committee: Denise Audoire, Mike Mason, John Rigby, Ian Todhunter, Alan Heasman , Louise Renny, Colin Forrest Charde, Bill Chandler

## **9. Subscriptions and Rent**

The Committee recommended no change to Subscriptions (£5 per year) or Rent (£1 per Rod) but the Deposit for those taking on new plots would become £30 per plot.

The recommendation was agreed

## **10. Honoraria**

The Committee recommended £150 each for the Estates Manager and the Treasurer with £75 for the Members Secretary who took over mid year

The recommendation was agreed

## 11. Any Other Business

- a. Phil Evans, who retired as Secretary in October 2011 but had missed the last two AGM's, thanked all Members for the gifts they contributed to on that occasion
- b. The procedure for those not working their plots was queried. Explained that Pete Thompson follows up with Member to check no problems, illness etc and offers help, if appropriate, otherwise Member is given warning to rectify the plot or lose it and 2 plots have been recovered this way plus others where the person has moved away without informing us.
- c. Asked what degree of risk for allotments while TVBC development strategy not totally finalised. Nothing certain but current strategies/plans do not include the allotments. However, there is opposition to Whitenap development which if it fails or goes ahead on smaller scale could conceivably bring interest in developing the allotments back to the table. The Committee will continue to monitor the situation and ensure people know that we feel the allotments are an integral part of Romsey and should be seen as an asset worth preserving. Good publicity helps.
- d. With the new one way system it was asked who should now close the Rapids gate at nights. Last one in rather than last one out is easy answer but Committee will look to see if this can be improved.
- e. Steve Shorter volunteered to drop off a truck load of pallets for those wanting to construct compost bins and a large number of Members indicated they would like to have some.
- f. A final reminder that the Dobies bulk order scheme will run again this year and Denise Audoire has catalogues available now for those interested in securing 50% discount on seeds.(Orders to be returned by 2<sup>nd</sup> December).

21.10.2013