

# **Hummersknott Gardeners' Association**

## **AGM 14th March 2018**

### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of last meeting
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Secretary's Report
7. Election of Officers: Chairman; Treasurer; Secretary; Committee
8. Working Party
9. Vermin
10. AOB

### **1. Apologies for absence**

Helen Evens, Brian Durham, David Rose, John Woolway, William Richardson, Julia Brown, David Davies, Lesley Brown, Kendra Ulliyart, Matthew Snedker, Catronia McConnachie, John Howlett, Tony Harper, David Milnes, Gill Haigh, David Till, Ed Midcalf.

### **2. Minutes of last meeting**

Accepted.

### **3. Matters Arising**

None

### **4. Chairman's Report**

Special thanks first of all to Mel Whitehouse who supported our efforts to raise funds for the lock replacement with a financial contribution, this was gratefully received so once again; thanks Mel.

Your committee does a lot of unseen work but I would like to thank each and everyone for their valued contribution and support during the past year.

As I alluded to earlier, the lock change was a logistical problem trying to ensure that everybody had the new keys and that we had an accurate record of who has what. The specific changeover days were manned by the Committee members and all went really well despite our initial misgivings. David is holding the surplus keys and Robert is maintaining the database, additional keys can be obtained from David with the usual deposit of £15. These keys are on a restricted suite so cannot be copied as was the case with the previous keys.

We now have the new lease which we have signed and will send back to the Council shortly.

I would like to make one plea to all plot holders, please be aware of the Rules and Policies that apply to your tenancy agreement, in particular to the cultivation of plots. Section 5 of the "Rules and Policies" requires you "To keep at least 75% of the allotment garden; clean, free from weeds, well manured and maintained in a good state of cultivation" We have had a number of plots which have been returned in an un-cultivated state, we have had to expend time in making them more acceptable to new tenants. We carry out monthly inspections to try to maintain the overall site in accordance with our obligations under the lease. If you are struggling; please advise the Committee and we will endeavour to assist by either attempting to find an allotment buddy/share or if suitable relocate.

One of the major problems of the past year has been rats. Ripening vegetables have been eaten or spoiled and there is always the added danger of Weils disease. See the notice boards for details. The committee have purchased 4 poison bait boxes which have been spread around site. There is an item on the agenda later on to further cover these problems and future actions we are looking at.

In conclusion I wish you all a good growing season and hope you get as much pleasure from your gardening and the interaction with your fellow allotmentees as I do.

## **5. Treasurer's Report**

- The accounts have been sent out to all members (e-mail or post). These have since been audited.
- The annual (12 month) rent has been increased from £35 to £40 for a full plot – but as we are running a 9 month 'year' rent is £30 for a full plot.
- This 9 month long 'year' will affect the cash flow but we don't foresee any issues.
- The funds in the reserves are mainly to cover the cost of repairs to the water pipes.
- Water costs are going up – can we use the taps carefully.
- The association has taken out Employers liability insurance. This is required to cover anyone working at the request (whether paid or not) of the committee.

## **6. Secretary's Report**

Firstly lettings; we had 8 plots change hands last year and we have just split another as the next people on the waiting list wanted half plots. We currently have one plot left to re-let. The waiting list stands at 33 with the person at the top of the list having applied back in October 2016 – 18 months ago.

We usually get a couple of plots becoming available around this time of the year. If anyone would like to change plots – up-size or down-size - please let us know before the end of March. We tend to do internal shuffles first; then go to the waiting list.

Last October we had an Extra General Meeting to alter the allotment rent year. It used to run from 1st April to 31st March. It now runs from 1st January to 31st December. The rent you have just paid (or are about to pay) is for the 9 months up to the end of December. We'll be after the rent for 2019 this December. The financial year will remain as it is now and the AGM will remain in early March. Thanks to the 30 or so people who turned up on the day and others who offered their support. I don't think anyone expressed any negative comments.

Su Greenacre has continued operating as our social secretary and has been the main organiser for the refreshments for the 5 coffee mornings we have had along with the Open and Apple days. As a result of these we were able to donate £400 to Macmillan Cancer Support. Thanks Su for your efforts, to everyone who provided the cakes for us to sell and to all those who handed over their cash.

And with a plug for the future; the next coffee morning - which includes the Easter egg hunt - is on Easter Monday. This runs from 11 until 2 and the bacon buttie team will be in action. We'll communicate the full details shortly.

The water should be back on around Good Friday; it's needed on the Monday.

The Dobies scheme seems to be ticking over nicely and enough of us have used it to ensure we get the full discount. There are still some catalogues in one of the polytunnels.

There was no Committee organised MrMuck manure delivery last year. But, as Su wanted some, so she organised a private purchase which many people joined in with.

## **7. Election of officers**

- Chairman - Malcolm Harding has agreed to stand again. Proposed and seconded from the floor. Elected uncontested.
- Treasurer – David Noddings has agreed to stand again. Proposed and seconded from the floor. Elected uncontested.
- Secretary – Robert Watson has agreed to stand again. Proposed and seconded from the floor. Elected uncontested.
- Committee – Ken Haigh and John Watson have decided not to stand for re-election this year. The remaining members of the current committee (Su Greenacre, Greg Bowman, Steve Salmon and Ann Harding) have agreed to stand. Proposed and seconded from the floor without any dissent and were elected en mass.

## **8. Working Party**

We are still trying to form a Working Party to help with general jobs and maintenance. Would anyone willing to help out, write their name on the sheet at the back of the hall. Note:- anyone not at the meeting can volunteer, just let one of the committee know.

## **9. Vermin**

As stated in the Chairman's Report, rats have been a problem in the last year. We have obtained a quote to do a 'clear out' and 'maintain' a clean site. These are for £984 and £1614 respectively. The quote noted "On initial survey most of the rat activity was found around areas where hens were present and around composting areas".

## **10. AOB**

### **Brambles**

These need to be managed better this coming year. Too many of them are spreading over the paths. They create a danger to adults and children.

### **Fences**

Quite a few fences are succumbing to old age and need repairs.

### **Carpets**

We would like to discourage plot holders from bringing old carpets onto site. As they rot down, various unwelcome chemicals leech into the soil.

### **Skip/Metal collection**

A skip will be ordered for one day - 24th of March. The usual restrictions will apply as to what can be put in it e.g. no glass, tyres etc.

The metal collection area in the main car park will be available until just after the skip has been removed at which time it will be emptied and shut down for the rest of the year.

### **Fly tipping**

Please don't dump waste material on the common areas of the site.

### **Spare Keys**

We have recently had a health incident which has highlighted one of the downsides of tending a plot within a locked site.

In light of this, the committee would encourage all plot holders to have at least 2 keys and that one key is given to the person that the plot holder would contact should they require assistance.

You can pick up an additional key from the Treasurer; David Noddings, 14 Breck Road, Darlington, DL3 8NH. Please phone him on 01325 462658 to arrange a collection time. The deposit for this key is the standard £15.

### **Thanks for Ken and John**

Ken Haigh and John Watson were thanked for their contribution to the allotments and the committee over the years. This was endorsed by the meeting.