Meopham and District Allotment Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEOPHAM AND DISTRICT ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Meopham and District Allotment Association held at Meopham Village Hall on the 12th May 2019 at 5:45pm.

1. Apologies – Graeme Elton, Jo McTavish, Jill Pask, Robin & Marion Lee

Present 33 people in total – 25 plotholders – 7 committee members, 1 auditor

2. 2018 AGM minutes reviewed and accepted to be a true record of last year’s minutes. Proposed by Paul Rutland, Plot 7, Seconded by Geoff Shuttlewood 5A

3. The Committee Chair’s annual review and 2018/19 report – The Chair introduced all of the current committee members to the tenants and presented Theresa with a bunch of flowers to say Thank you for all the hard work and time she spent on Committee matters. Response; applause and thanks from the floor.

The Chair reported that a range of topics, many un-expected, had been dealt with throughout the year to include the subjects of Walk In Polytunnels, very large ponds, Data Protection and Rats! Julie invited allotment tenants to volunteer for the committee, assuring them all that we were a friendly group and were fundamentally there to represent the tenants.

4. The Committee Treasurer’s 2018 report of income and expenditure, and summary of the accounts for the year to date – Treasurer gave his Report for the year up to January 2019.

David presented the Report, beginning with thanking John Bushell for Auditing the Accounts, and to Lindy for arranging, for the second time for John to help the committee out with only the reward of a bottle of (very) good wine. David stressed that we do need to appoint an Auditor, to do at least three hours per annum- if anyone could assist we would be very grateful. He indicated that he would keep he records but we do need a Qualified Accountant to Audit the Accounts.

See separate Treasurer’s report and copy of Balance sheet for full details of our financial situation.

Questions from the Floor included:

* The observation that we had ten extra lettings after last year’s Open Day
* It was asked if the Manure, including transport was free - - confirmed yes
* Skip – are we going to have another? A working party was confirmed as a really good idea.
* The floor voted that a skip was not useful
* It was considered identifying the individuals bringing items such as toilets and microwaves to the site was more important that providing a skip for them to be taken away
* Someone asked what the process was for handing over plots was they were given up. It was confirmed by a committee member there was a process but tenants often just left and never responded to requests to clear the plot or give back the key.

£5.00 increase, raise of hands – passed, none against.

5. To receive and adopt the audited accounts for 2019/2020 – This was proposed by Roy Canning and seconded by Keri Hider.

6. Existing Committee members retired and election of the 2019/20 Chair and Committee members took place.

The following committee members retired and put forward for re-election and are willing to continue in office:

Julie Courtney – Chair

David Aspinall – Treasurer

Theresa Seeley – Secretary and Communications

 Robin Lee – Maintenance

 Peter Hughes – Lettings

 Mark Hill

 Lindy Webster

 Caroline Halfpenny

New nominations:

Geoff Shuttlewood

Proposed by Rhian Rutland 7A and seconded by Carol Hawkins 4H.

Nominations from the floor - none

7. Matters of interest and items requiring voting advised by way of Notice of Annual General Meeting

Matters of Interest, Theresa

The lease with MPC has been re-negotiated at £ 385 per annum – a rise in line with inflation. The only addition is an appendix to allow the loo to be put on the site every year without needing permission each time from MPC. The lease is for another 7 years to complete in 2026

It was noted that there is a condition in the lease enabling MPC to have the land back at any time.

Polytunnels (Walk In) Theresa explained the history behind having to add polytunnels to the lease agreement. This follows extensive discussions and communications with MPC and GBC. They are considered temporary structures and do not need planning permission, Theresa thanked committee members for the time and effort in discussing this emotive topic, especially Mark for all of his hard work.

Clarification on size was sought from the floor

Clarification on how we will clear abandoned polytunnels was sought from the floor.

Proposed a vote be taken on including Polytunnels in the tenancy agreement.

Mark indicated that he was in favour of polytunnels as he grew chillis.

Clarification of the term ‘Growing Season’ was discussed – confirmed as Start of Spring through to 31st October (when the water is turned off).

Query from floor – what is the height restriction? The agreement indicated 1.2m – this is confirmed in the details in the agreement for fencing but 2m for poly tunnels.

A tenant suggested a caveat – if anyone wants a Polytunnel they must go through the committee.

Another tenant made the observation that she thought the problem will be minimal due to the prohibitive cost of the structures. Someone else suggested a ‘Notice of Intent’ at the beginning of the year may be an alternative.

Vote – Passed by majority

John Bushell arrived late due to bad traffic. He was thanked for his help with the Accounts Audit.

Open Day – 14th July Sunday. 12AM Theresa suggested Splat the Rat and asked if anyone had a piece of drainpipe that could be used. Steve Shipway offered some pipe.

A Plot competition is suggested – Theresa asked if anyone knew someone who would be happy to judge otherwise it would have to be the committee.

Charity to support was pulled out of a very nice Fishing Hat belonging to Theresa’s husband by Lizzie Brooker– Molly McLaren Foundation. Theresa will contact them.

Coffee Morning – once a month at Instead Rise Community Centre – Theresa will arrange and let everyone know.

St Johns RC School, with Hannah Sexton (her husband has a plot) will be visiting the site again – Therese sought thoughts on this and no-one objected. She will be in touch and ask for volunteers nearer the time.

Mark then read out notes on RATS – 90% of the floor had seen one. He confirmed 13 had been removed, 9 in traps, 1 live and 4 others. See his written notes.

Lettings – Peter explained he was responsible for showing new tenants around and standards on the site. He told he always had very positive feedback about the site – last year 12 re-let with 7 on Open Day last year. Since January this year only 2 have been re-let.

The weed walks were to establish if plots were reasonably tidy but there must be evidence of cultivation. He stressed grass pathways must be maintained and health and safety standards needed to get better, especially with fencing and wire – netting hanging over a few paths.

9 vacant plots 2E, one on row 11, 13c, 15b and c, 16H, c and 19G

All of these plots are in very poor condition and will be extremely difficult to let.

It was decided that 3 will be a focus for re-letting.

A lady from the floor said she counted at least 30 plots that she felt were not worked and asked what we could do about them. A discussion followed.

It was confirmed that the weed walk identifies the WORST plots and they are given 30 days to improve and then asked to leave according to the tenancy agreement. David reminded people that we do not take the money from peoples bank accounts – they have to either send us a cheque or make a bank transfer.

Car Parking

Please report any parked cars in case tenants are using the site to park when going to work in London on the train.

Suggestions from the floor – mark empty plots with a sign. 6A was considered a specific problem. Someone from the floor offered a stake to make the empty plots.

Bonfires

Further to a complaint it was explained that bonfires must be supervised at all times and not left until they have died out or extinguished according to the tenancy agreement. If you need to leave the site, tell someone or phone a committee member. There are emergency numbers on the notice boards to inform the committee if you are worried. If you can, use either dirt or water from any water butt you can see to put it out. After a discussion, it was felt that it is not practicable to ban fires during the winter as well as the summer or turn the water on at different times of the year.

Kent Wildlife

Theresa would like to introduce more bees and is having a visitor from Kent Wildlife (Wild about Gardens) to the site to help her grow more appropriate plants. She is hoping to plan a talk in November, with proceeds going to the allotment fund for a special purchase to be decided.

Helen Pearce said that the U3A meet every other 3rd Tuesday of the month March to October at 1.30.

Clive from Meopham Gardeners invited us to show off our veg at their Show. Details to follow.

The meeting concluded without any further questions.

Meeting Closed 7.15 p.m. People stayed and had tea and cakes and a good natter!!!

 **Contact the committee on** **info@meopham-allotments.co.uk**