

Tring Allotment Association

Minutes of AGM
Thursday 11th October 2018
7.30-8.30pm Nora Grace Hall

Chairman's Welcome

Ian Brownell welcomed all to the meeting and introduced himself and the committee members. In addition to the committee of six, fourteen Allotment Association members attended, a little down on last year, perhaps due to the inclement weather.

Notes of last meeting - were distributed. All agreed they were accurate.

Election of Chair - Ian Brownell is prepared to remain.

Election of vice-chairperson - Mary Lynn Moxon is prepared to remain.

Election of Treasurer - Rob Jones is prepared to remain.

Other committee members - John Williams, Brian Paske and Mike Minchinton are all happy to remain.

Vote - On continuation of current committee members, there was an approving show of hands, no objections.

Treasurer's Report - Rob said the we try to spend our income on ourselves, leaving some, amounting to nearly £1000, in reserve. This year there were two new expenditures shown, for the hire of a skip at £98 and for a TAA banner at £65. Regarding our Membership of the National Allotment Society we must pay them £3.00 for each TAA member out of the £5.00 annual subscription, which does seem expensive, but for this we get benefits such as - discount on Kings seeds (from which we earned a commission of £120.97 last year) Liability Insurance, a supportive regional network, initial legal advice and access to the NAS website.

The plant sale this year was incredibly successful, our best ever, raising £265.

At the Summer Show and BBQ, donations towards the cost of food and drink amounted to £45.88. Estimated expenditure and income for 2018/2019 was put at £558 and £570 respectively.

We will again be ordering 6 loads of manure to be placed strategically around the site. We will let members know when it is due to be delivered. Rob asked for ideas from members as to what we should be spending money on, suggesting that members email the committee and it will be considered at a future meeting. One person suggested, joking I think, that the TAA funds drinks twice a year and not just at Christmas.

Update on Council Matters - Ian explained that we attend Tring Town Council meetings 4 times a year, where we are able to raise issues. As a consequence we have managed to extend the bonfire season which was 1st October - 31st March to 1st September - 30th April. Eventually we hope the council will lift these restrictions completely. Now that a past complainant has moved we are less likely to receive objections. However, we must not abuse our privileges otherwise we will lose them. When lighting bonfires the wind direction should be our biggest consideration. John asked about the top gate, close to the graveyard, which needs repair. Ian thought that because it is a public right of way there should, strictly speaking, not be a gate there. So there is little chance that any council money will be spent on it. Another person asked about the main gate to the car park and felt this should be closable. According to Ian this gate is now part of the hedge. It is not practical to have a gate in this position - it would need to be moved inside the site, near the community garden, for safety reasons. As for the Duckmore Lane allotments becoming a closed site, we would never be able to justify the cost. 106 funding could be applied for but whatever Tring Council thought, it is the Dacorum Council who are the planning authority and they are most unlikely to approve on cost grounds

Rob mentioned potholes that need filling in the car park. Perhaps if the council has surplus tarmac, they could be approached to fill in some holes?

Ian expressed the view that Tring Town Council would like us to accept Management of the whole site, but felt we do not have the resources to do so. Admin would be a nightmare not to mention the insurance implications.

Report on events and issues during the year

The Plant Sale was a great success according to Ian. Mary Lynn thought that a bit more variety from donors would improve sales further.

Ian felt our 3rd Summer Show was the best ever. He thanked the Judges, local businesses for contributing the prizes, those who helped on the day and those who attended in support. Brian's excellent Paella was a highlight for Mike.

Future Events - The following was agreed

Christmas drinks will be held at the Kings Arms on Thursday 13th December at 7.15pm.

The Plant Sale in 2019 will be held on 1st or 8th June. Ian to check out the availability of Church Square.

Summer Show and BBQ will be held on Saturday 17th August 2019, during the NAS Allotments Week

Any Other Business

Someone asked whatever happened to the windsock. It blew away was the reply. Ian thought we did not need a replacement as we are all capable of judging wind direction.

Eamon reported seeing rats and said the wood chips at the community gardens did not help. Nobody else seemed to be concerned or to have seen any. It was emphasised that our leases do not permit the use of poisons. We should tell the council if we need action taken against pests.

One person said he could not access the TAA website. Brian replied that the gentleman was the only person who has had this trouble. He acknowledged that he had been somewhat remiss in updating the website. It was agreed that a separate meeting should be held regarding this and to discuss making the site available to all for posting photographs, comments etc. If anyone has any ideas on the subject they should email Ian or another committee member.

Someone asked about the the number of vacant plots. Mary Lynn thought it was just 7.

One lady spoke to sing the praises of root trainers. Fran had given her some runner beans grown in them and they performed very well. Someone suggested using toilet roll tubes instead. Others felt these do not work as well, they disintegrated upon watering and didn't permit air root pruning.

Ian commented that it was a challenging growing year due to the long hot, dry period.

Someone complained that plot 48(?) was a mess with abandoned furniture, chicken coop etc. Are the council responsible for clearing rubbish? Mike mentioned that there are old compost bins without lids or doors and broken plastic chairs on plot 15a. He did intend throwing them into the rented skip this year but it was full by 9:30am

Ian will raise the provision of a skip again in 2019 at the next council meeting, as they contributed towards the cost this year.

The problem of leaking water troughs was raised. Mike Hicks will let Ian know where the main stop cock is located in case of a future bad leak on the metered supply. Work is being planned for the water supply generally this year, which although costly will save money in the long run.

Regarding theft, we have comparatively little problem with this. Over the past 2 years only a few onions, pumpkins and peas have been stolen.

Renewal of Membership and Kings Seeds Orders - before the meeting ended, some members gave their seed orders to Ian and others paid their TAA membership fees to Rob.

The deadline for seed orders is 5th November 2018.