

Royal Paddock Allotment Committee Meeting minutes

16 January 2019, The Railway, Teddington, 7.45 pm

Present:

David Harnden (Chair)	Dylan Baxendale	Jenny Bourne
Gill Hiley	David Lainchbury	Karen Saywell
Martin Scotton	Andrew Stanley (Treasurer)	Christine Thorpe
Anne Wingrove		David Laughrin (Secretary)

Apologies: Nick Baylis ; Theo Christophers

1.	<p>Minutes of Last Committee Meetings and Matters Arising.</p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting on 15 November 2018 were approved. The minutes of the meeting on 16 October 2018 were also approved subject to it being made clear that the sub-group dealing with roads were to seek ways of bringing the cost down, not a reduction in specification, and that the remedial work on other roads was not currently a priority rather than not needed at all.</p>
2	<p>Treasurer's Report</p> <p>Andrew Stanley reported that the handover to him was almost complete and arrangements were in hand to provide for appropriate authority and third party scrutiny of payments made. The funds in hand were approximately £40,000 with some rents still due to be transferred from Paypal. Karen Saywell had kindly agreed to update the financial plan to take account of changes since the last iteration, but the financial position remained sound and there was sufficient contingency to meet unexpected demands. At the suggestion of Dylan Baxendale, it was agreed that a specific contingency reserve of £10,000 should be identified in the plan.</p> <p>Nick Baylis had suggested that a procedure based on RIBA guidelines should be adopted for authorising payment to project contractors, on certification that stages of the work had been completed satisfactorily, and this was agreed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Karen Saywell/Nick Baylis</p>

<p>3</p>	<p>Tracks Project</p> <p>Gill Hiley reported back on further discussions that had taken place with the selected contractor about the work that needed to be done on the tracks around the allotments. In the event, no significant potential for cost reduction had been identified, but the proposal, including a contingency reserve, was within the budget envisaged in the financial plan so the discussions had focussed on achieving an early start on the first stage of the work and ensuring that there was appropriate communication with plotholders. All would be affected by road closures while the work was done.</p> <p>Plotholders had been invited to make suggestions through a blog on the website, but in discussion it was agreed that the plan and cost proposed was acceptable to the Committee who had authority to approve the project. There was no reason to delay the start of work and every reason to press on with it without delay. The Committee was content for Gill and Nick, in consultation with John Hourigan, Gray Rigge and David Harnden, to be given authority to commence the project work as soon as the contractual details had been signed and the contractor was ready. The aim should be to begin work on the site as soon as practical without further Committee discussion. Any queries could be cleared by email. The project team were asked to alert David Harnden to the likely start date as soon as it was agreed so that he could send round a general notice.</p> <p>It was also agreed that once the work near the entrance had been done some improvement should be made for the containment of the manure deliveries. This might be the focus of a work party.</p> <p>The Committee expressed thanks to Gill and Nick for the detailed and helpful work done so far and looked forward to the satisfactory completion of the project.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Gill Hiley, Nick Baylis and David Harnden</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Replacement of Incinerator Project</p> <p>David Harnden said he had received a report from Theo Christophers who was overseeing the incinerator project, but who could not be present at the meeting. No planning permission was required for the equipment as it was not fixed to the ground. The site of the current incinerator would need to be cleared and the standing made good. Then the new incinerator could be delivered within a month of the go ahead. In discussion, the option of clearing the site using work parties or contractors was discussed. The preference of the Committee was to use contractors provided the cost was not excessive and the Committee invited Theo to seek quotes. The Committee also noted that there would need to be a plan in place to develop the necessary health and safety screening and operating advice for the new incinerator.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that the target should be to get the new incinerator installed and in operation by August.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action : Theo Christophers</p>

5	<p>Social Activities Plan for 2019</p> <p>Jenny Bourne outlined the Social Committee's plan for five events in 2019 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plotolders' Question Time: 27 January at 12.30• Seedy Sunday : 24 February• Quiz : 17 March• Plant Sale: 5 May• Autumn Social: 15 September <p>The Committee welcomed the plan and thanked Jenny and her Committee for all their efforts. In response to a question about how more contributions to the Plant sale could be secured, it was suggested that Chapmans and other garden centres might be invited to take part or contribute.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Jenny Bourne</p>
6	<p>Christmas Café Review</p> <p>Anne Wingrove reported on the very successful Christmas café which thanks to the efforts of a range of hardworking volunteers had raised just over £300 for RPA funds. Extra contributions such as mistletoe bunches and seasoning mix sales had been much appreciated. The only change proposed for 2019 was to run the Christmas Café for the normal rather than extended opening hours as that seemed to match customer demand. The Committee thanked Anne and her team for their much appreciated contribution and agreed the proposal.</p>

<p>7</p>	<p>Charges for Plottolders applying for an extra half plot</p> <p>Karen Saywell introduced a further discussion of the level of charges that should be imposed, if any, when someone who already had a half plot upgraded to a full plot or took on an additional half plot. The debate at the earlier Committee meeting in October 2018 had not led to an agreed conclusion acceptable to a sufficient majority and it had been agreed to look at the issues again.</p> <p>It was common ground that the factors that needed to be considered were fairness to those upgrading their holdings, the need for some test that people making an application were committed to taking on the extra work, and the desirability of there being some contribution to RPA funds to allow for the effort of the Lettings Secretary and the Plot Inspection team in vetting applications and administering the upgrades.</p> <p>In discussion, various proposals were fully debated and it was noted that the number of such upgrades was small and therefore the financial implications were not large. It was generally agreed that the charge of a further £24 application fee to those upgrading, on top of the application and membership fee they had already paid for their first half plot, could be perceived as unfair. But it was also felt right that some application fee should be levied for upgrades and that a sum of £10 would be an appropriate sum in future as a demonstration of commitment and a reflection of the administrative work. It was also suggested that at a future Committee meeting there should be some review of whether an initial membership and application fee of £25 rather than £24 might also now be justified and appropriate.</p> <p>A clear majority of the Committee agreed that the Lettings Secretary should adjust the guidance in the Committee box and that the reduced fee upgrade arrangement should be introduced with immediate effect but no retrospection. The possible change to the initial application and membership fee should be reviewed during the year</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Gill Hiley</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Work Parties</p> <p>David Harnden outlined his plans for a series of work parties in 2019 dealing with work on the shed by the entrance gate, the dead hedge, the Seed Store maintenance and decoration, the incinerator site, the manure area and the sinking and documentation of an additional pump. Any further ideas about tasks that needed to be done would be welcome as would volunteers to contribute to, organise and to lead work parties. In addition, he wanted to record his thanks to Jem Negus and Andrew Saunders for the work planned for the next weekend on completing the perimeter hedge.</p>

<p>9.</p>	<p>Review of Outstanding Actions</p> <p>David Laughrin gave a brief review of significant outstanding actions from previous meetings and this was noted by the Committee. It was agreed that further review should be presented at the next meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: David Laughrin</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Other Business</p> <p>(a) Vice Chair</p> <p>Karen Saywell agreed to be nominated as Vice Chair for another year and her election was agreed unanimously.</p> <p>(b) Vehicle Gate: it was noted that the vehicle gate needed priority attention when the tracks project got under way and that the notice on the gate needed some updating. Some hazard tape should also be put on the post supports to minimise a trip hazard.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Action: Gill Hiley, Jenny Bourne and David Laughrin.</p> <p>(c) Pump signs : Gill reported receipt of an additional quote for pump signs from a local firm which looked preferable to the original quote. Some wording still needed to be finalised and Jenny Bourne offered to help negotiate this.</p> <p>(d) Dog waste: Some bagged dog waste had been seen left on site and if repeated might necessitate a suitable warning notice.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Next Meetings</p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting should be held at the Railway in Teddington and should take place on 13 March at 7.45pm. When the weather improved the aim would be to hold some meetings in the garden at the Lion, Hampton Wick.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 9.45 pm</p>