

Old Marston Mill Lane Allotment Association

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Friday 1 November 2019, 7.00 pm at church rooms, Elsfield Road

Present: Masha Unkowskaya (in the Chair), Dana Vlad (Treasurer), Chris Mitchell (Secretary), Walter Towner, Hazel Rugg, Bill Agent, Dot West, Rob Bryant, David Bullock, Dave Fisher, Darren Beavan, Jim Head, Tim Cann (Clerk Marston Parish Council), Duncan Hatfield (Chair of Marston Parish Council)

Apologies: Paul King, Andrew Mitchell, Paula Bisicchia

Minutes of meeting held on 9 November 2018: The minutes were approved with no matters arising

Chair's report:

In November 2018 Jim Head weed-sprayed seven of our vacant plots and these were rotavated in January, ready to be rented. A small working party tidied up the vacant plots, filling a skip with rubbish.

We currently have 17 full and 11 half plots rented out, with a further 8 full and 7 half plots vacant. Despite advertising in Daily Info, Marston Times, Marston FB page and Neighbourhood Alert, we only managed to rent out one further full plot and three half plots. However, the lack of take-up appears to be the same across the city. Agreed that we will write an article for the January edition of Marston Times, which goes to all households and put a sign on our gates again with contact details.

ACTION: CM to write article for Marston Times

The weeds on the rotavated plots have all grown back and we need to cover these with weed suppressant foil.

The waterpipes by the troughs are all leaking again and it was agreed at a previous meeting to employ a plumber to replace the pipes. Bill Agent suggested that we could do without waterpipes using rain harvesting and watering cans to water our plots instead. It was agreed that we're one of very few allotment sites to have water pipes and lucky to have them. **ACTION:** RB to chase plumber

Bill Agent suggested that according to 1991 planning laws we should not have had to pay for planning permission for our lock-up. Masha said that it was the County Council who chased us and asked that we apply for retrospective planning permission. Jim Head suggested that we should not have paid, and Masha replied that she was told that planning laws had been changed. The fee paid is a one-off fee and will not have to be paid again.

Work carried out since last AGM:

As well as weed spraying and rotavating vacant plots, we engaged a tree surgeon to cut down a tree on the boundary of the allotment site which was overshadowing some of the static caravans. The tree surgeon left us a load of bark for plot holders to use, this is currently on plot number 3.

Dot West has offered us two of her metal fence panels and the committee bought a metal gate. This will shortly be erected on the broken boundary wall by the caravan park in an attempt to stop burglars removing heavy equipment.

Site maintenance remains patchy, as we have nobody who regularly mows the grass or keeps weeds down around vacant plots. Nobody at the meeting was agreeable to taking on the responsibility of site manager.

Treasurer's Report:

The accounts for 2019 have not yet been audited as the auditor was slow in responding and has since been on holiday. Audited reports will be available by mid-November.

In 2019 expenditure was higher than income, due to skip hire (£216.00), planning permission for lock-up (£234.00), ploughing of vacant plots (£250.00) and higher insurance costs ((£99.00). Despite this we still have a bank balance of £3293.73.

The Treasurer thanked the Marston Parish Council, who has again given us a grant for £300.00.

Expenses for 2020 will include the cost of the tree surgeon, metal gate and plumber, so another expensive year.

Agreed that subs will be increased to £25.00 per annum for a full plot and £12.50 for half plot. Although percentage-wise this is a substantial increase, ours are still the lowest prices in the city and it was agreed that the new cost should not deter new members from taking a plot.

Election of committee:

| Name | Position | Proposed | seconded |
|---------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Dr Masha Unkovskaya | Chair | Chris Mitchell | David Bullock |
| Dr Dana Vlad | Treasurer | Masha Unkovskaya | Hazel Rugg |
| Mrs C Mitchell | Secretary | David Bullock | Masha Unkovskaya |
| Dr Rob Bryant | Co-opted | Chris Mitchell | Masha Unkovskaya |
| Dr David Bullock | Co-opted | Masha Unkovskaya | Chris Mitchell |
| Ms Hazel Rugg | Co-opted | Masha Unkovskaya | David Bullock |
| Mr James Head | Co-opted | Masha Unkovskaya | Hazel Rugg |

Any other business

1. CM asked on behalf of a plot holder what the difference is between NASLG and ODFA insurance.
ACTION Jim Head to enquire and report back.
Feedback from Jim Head
*"The ODFAA insurance covers the association site and committee only. It DOES NOT cover individual plot holders.
The NSALG insurance DOES NOT replace the ODFAA Public liability insurance it enhances it by giving cover to association plot holders. However, the association secretary needs to ask for this on the application form giving full details of all plot holders requiring the individual cover.
The question then for the committee is, "do we as an association want our individual members to be covered or not?"*
2. Jim Head asked on behalf of a plot holder whether all plot holders could be given a key to the lock-up. Not having one, when one has equipment stored makes plot maintenance difficult. MU was of the opinion that only committee members and long-standing plot holders should be given keys, as this was agreed at a committee meeting when the association acquired the lock-up. Other plot holders can contact any key-holder. Jim Head requested that the request be put on the agenda for next year's AGM.
3. Equipment in the lock-up: The lock-up is overflowing. Agreed that everyone needs to label their tools as some might belong to previous plot holders and are therefore redundant. No date has been set for this, but this should be carried out before the start of the next season.

4. Equipment maintenance: The allotment committee own a rotavator, strimmer and lawn mower. Dave Fisher has offered to check these on a regular basis and service them where necessary.