

MINUTES OF UNITY GROVE ALLOTMENTS AGM
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14th NOVEMBER 2018 – 7.15pm

25 Members Present

APOLOGIES: Partrick & Sheila Boyle (Plot 27b), Fiona Somerville (Plot 35a), Frank Newburn (Plot 50a), Tony Cerqua (Plot 101a), John Melanaphy (Plot 108b).

MINUTES OF 2017 AGM: Agreed by all present. Proposed by Mick Roach, Seconded by John McLeod.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: To sum up, it has been a bit of a difficult year following the long hot summer and damage. The site suffered vandals in January/February 2018 which was nipped in the bud fairly quickly with the help of the local police and those on site at the time. There has been no reoccurrence for the rest of this year. We still have to be vigilant as to people wandering round site, and it has been noted that some gates are being left unlocked. The main gate only one to be left unlocked at weekends. We had a few working parties to clear some of the vacant plots. Harrogate in Bloom we came in at silver this year. However, it appears that the onus is falling on 2 or 3 people to do all the work on site. These are your allotments and we need your help, maybe as committee volunteers, to maintain what is the largest allotment site in Harrogate. We hope we all have a good winter and fruitful new year.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: This year has been both very interesting and busy. The Annual Allotment Show raised £500., donated to The Forest School, this year's designated Charity. The Produce Stall, which Unity run, raised £200., which was really excellent, considering the hot weather we had this year – actually we had much more produce than was expected and had to bring in another table, making 3 in all! Many thanks to everyone who contributed and helped in any way for making this such a success. Unity was awarded Silver in the Harrogate in Bloom competition and, once again, thanks to all the plottolders for helping keep the site tidy and in good condition. There were two trophy's won by Unity plottolders this year. The Arthur Taylor Trophy won by John Blackburn for Most Points Veg & Flowers, and Mrs. A.T. Medallion Trophy won by Alan Connell for 2nd Points Veg & Flower. There has been quite a bit of paperwork to do this year, keeping you all informed as much as possible and where necessary sending out correspondence, but this has been interesting and enjoyable and I have really enjoyed my first year as Secretary. I do also try to get onto the site to meet as many of you as I can – it's always good to meet you all.

Can I once again remind all the plottolders to keep me informed of any change of address, telephone number, or e-mail address, and particularly to let me have an e-mail address if you have not already done so, to keep both the records accurate and to help keep you all informed of everything going on with the site.

TREASURER'S REPORT: It has been generally a sort of average year. On the schedule handed out it shows the average figures. This year we have had the accounts checked by an independent accountant which has shown nothing untoward. The bank and accounts balance at the end of the year. Income hasn't gone up as much. The shop hasn't done as well this year either, roughly 48% down on last year. We have quite a large surplus of

compost left this year, which we hope will be sold in the spring. The rents tend to go up and down according to the number of plots, with about 24 whole plots and as these become vacant they are even being made into two half plots. We have used 60% more water this year. We have been unable to get Yorkshire Water to take a customer reading and therefore we owe them about £400. The figures on the schedule include the extra money for Yorkshire Water. Harrogate Council got round to increasing rents this year, it should have been for the last 5 years, but only gone back 4 years for us. The net rent will be 12% more next year than this year. This year's figure is a lot less than it should have been. They are not asking for any arrears. Next year the formula will apply properly IPI or 5%.

The site maintenance figures are a lot lower than last year. We had £700., expenditure in skips last year. We have opened a Deposit Account at HSBC and moved the deposit monies of £2,000., keys and new ploholders £25., together with £12,000., of our reserves. This account can only be used to move the monies back to the current account. Currently we have a balance of £17,500 - £2,000., deposit monies = £15,000..

Rents next year are going to be invoiced to all ploholders by post. We decided not to increase the rents, partly because we have a lot of money, which has given us a bit of a cushion. An increase of 10% would only bring in £600+ across the site. There were no questions on this report. Proposed by David Woolveridge and seconded by Lindsay Mitchell.

SITE MAINTENANCE: The site is being maintained by one or two individuals, cutting boundary hedge and grass paths. If we don't get volunteers to help, we will have to source out cutting hedge and grass to contractors. We have had two quotes, both around £800., mark. One ploholder asked whether the Council cut the boundary hedge – they only cut the Roberts Crescent side of that hedge. The bottom hedge is nothing to do with the school and is our responsibility. The committee feel we have two options, (1) to get a contractor in to do this work and pay for this to be done; or (2) ask for volunteers from the site to come and help. The bottom hedge is mixed and most of the hedges only need cutting once a year. Dave Allen used to do the hedge at the bottom, and this is why this has not been cut. The one against Osborne and the far side have been done in dribs and drabs by whoever did it. This is your money at the end of the day, we have some reserves but we do need to watch what we do with this. We do need to get contractors to do the hedge this year, lefthand – 100 yards long, righthand not quite as long and deep at the bottom. We asked the contractors to quote for cutting site currently. Northside ok – debris left in middle of site, quoting for what is there currently. John McLeod then said he knows a tree surgeon who may be able to give us a quote – he is going to see him and we asked that if he wants to quote this will have to be done quickly.

The grass cutting has been done by 1 or 2 this year, but don't know whether they will do it again next year. It would be a good idea if we could get one or two groups of 3/4 people to do this. It was put forward that we had a quote for cutting the grass from a contractor at the cost of £300. per time. This was a definite non-starter from the members. We then had a long discussion about the idea of groups of people to go ahead and do the grass cutting on a fairly regular basis, using our equipment. Committee quite happy to buy the equipment, mowers and strimmers, so that all the path edges can be strimmed. There are 3 paths to

the left hand side, 1 right hand side and the bottom section from the car park. There were quite a few volunteers came forward with this suggestion: Bob ?, Geoff Hudson, quite happy to do whatever. Myra Currie volunteered to carry on doing the bottom bit to the corner, Alan Day said he'd do first path on left, Louis to do the second path on left, Nik Mills to do third path on left, John McLeod volunteered David Smith to do the path on right hand side by Ian's plot. Can these volunteers please help with removing the trimmings also? Can't shred hedge cuttings, so these will be left in pile until can be burnt out of season.

The shed next to the shop has had another reprieve this year. May well get done next year. Someone suggested the hedge cuttings could be kept in there until time to burn them. The composting toilet has been put back together and repainted inside and out by Alan.

DRAINAGE We had some work done a couple of years ago from the top to the middle, which has solved the problem at the top. However, we now have big problems with the water running from the side to the centre and down the plots. We had a diviner in and he was very informative about where there could be some problems. We also had about 15 e-mails from Plotholders, showing how bad their plots were and where the water was on the plots. Alan Connell and Ian Seaward went round the site twice, once in the pouring rain, and noted that the land where the houses have been built is about 2ft higher than the allotments and most of the water is coming from there to the middle of the site. The ditch is all silted up and the water has nowhere to go.

We have had a visit from a drainage contractor, who has recommended that we pipe the ditch at the side all the way down to the boundary in the first instance. This should alleviate that problem. The contractor's quote for this is £2,300.. Keith Hullah, Contractor, has recently done work for Oatlands Allotments, the Showground and Pannal Golf Club, so he is quite experienced in these problems. We think that this has to be done and will be keeping all plotholders informed. Any disruption to plotholders whilst the work is being done, we will try and get this all put back. The water then goes from our site to the beck at the bottom of the site and on into the beck at New Park. When the new road was put in the drainage was done to John Mann's plot, but stops under his strawberry patch. It was put to the members that we go ahead with what has been discussed and see what happens. It was voted unanimously to go ahead.

HOSEPIPES: Due to the prolonged dry summer our water use is up by 40%. We usually pay about £340., this year it is up to £700.. This cost can be alleviated by the use of hosepipes. We are proposing a full ban on sprinklers and hosepipes only to be handheld. Hosepipes use a lot of water and only damp the soil. The Committee's proposals, to be added to the Rules are:

That in times of drought, where Yorkshire Water hasn't put out a ban, we have a set period, not exceeding 28 days, with a start and finish date. In extreme circumstances, we can reduce the supply to the site. Any new structure with a pent or apex roof must include water collection, i.e. drainpipes and water butts; Any existing structure has until February 2020 to install water butts/water collection system, polytunnels are not included and structures under a metre high. We will give exemptions to people with disabilities, particularly if they contact the Committee with regard to their problems straight away. Full

details of these proposals will be put out by e-mail and on the Notice Boards. If we can get water butts we will put the contacts on the Notice Boards for plotters to look at. We will be making some enquiries with regard to this, and maybe able to get maybe a dozen and put them in the shop. We held a vote on this and 19 were in favour.

UNITY CUP: This year the cup goes to Liam Milner, Plot 23b. Although he is only a young lad, he has worked very hard on his plot and produced some good produce.

COMPETITIONS: These have been well received this year and have attracted a lot of attention from the plotters. We will be running these again in 2019, scarecrow, sunflower and a couple of others. The Winners were: Scarecrow - Golightly family, Tallest Sunflower - John Mann at 3.20m and Children's Sunflower – Golightly girls 2.1m. Congratulations to you all.

ELECTIONS: There was just one nomination each for the following positions and these were:

Chairman - Ian Seaward

Secretary - Wendy Hudson

Treasurer - Alan Connell

Letting Manager – David Smith

Newsletter Editor – Margaret Smith

Shop Coordinator – Wendy Ridgeway

Web Site Manager – Frank Newburn

All duly elected.

There is no Vice Chairman as John Melanaphy has stepped down from this position; and no Site Manager as Philip Jarvis has stepped down from this position.

Terry Crosland has also given up as Shop Manager, but we now have 6 ladies who will be running the shop, with Wendy Ridgeway as the Shop Coordinator.

The only other point to be made is to ask all plotters to please GET YOUR PLOTS NUMBERED.

Meeting closed at 8.15pm