

Alresford Allotment Society

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Thursday 8th August 2024 in the Committee Room at NATC.

Present: Tony Mott (Chairman), Nigel Webb (Secretary), Dawn Othen (Treasurer), Tim Dicker, Russ Waterton, Cllr Johnny Dakin and Co-opted Member Tim Dodd.

Apologies: None

Item No	Minutes	Action
1.	The Chairman advised the Meeting that Mike Symons had decided to step down from the Committee. On behalf of the Committee he wished to extended his thanks to Mike for all his hard work.	
2.	The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 th June 2024 were agreed.	
3.	There were no matters arising from the Minutes not covered by an Agenda Item in this Meeting.	
4.	The Treasurer presented her Report. The current Bank balance stood at £1,039.32. Since the last Meeting she had paid out £287.14 to NW for expenses he had incurred in putting up the new Allotment Society shed as previously minuted. We had received a sponsorship donation of £100.00 from Prospect Fencing. The Treasurer again drew the Committee's attention to the fact that we had paid out £300.00 for manure and had only received payments totalling £229.75 to date. She asked that any outstanding payments due from plot holders were made as soon as possible. In view of the shortfall it was agreed that from next year the price per barrow load would be increased from £1.25 to £1.50 It was further agreed to highlight this in the Autumn Newsletter.	

5.	The new Allotment Shed was officially opened by Charmian Jones, a Trustee of the Alresford Show, on 6th July. Also in attendance at the ceremony were Cllr Johnny Dakin, the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. A photograph was published in the Hampshire Chronicle on 18th July.	
6.	The first, of two, annual inspection of all plots holders sites was carried out by Cllr Johnny Dakin on behalf of the Council on 28th June. The Chairman and Secretary attended representing their Member's. The overall standard was regarded as being good however, some plots were identified as requiring improvement. Particular attention was given to the provision of water butts on each allotment. Tim Dicker made the point that in view of the current change to our climate it was prudent to encourage all plot holders to preserve this resource and no longer take it for granted. It was agreed to highlight this in our Autumn Newsletter. In all, out of 69 plots the Council wrote to 11 plot holders requesting them to attend to particular matters raised during the course of the inspection. A number of responses have been received by the Council which they were reviewing. One plot holder subsequently decided to give up their tenancy. Cllr Dakin confirmed it was his intention to carry out a follow up inspection in the next 2/4 weeks. Again, The Chairman and Secretary will attend.	
7.	A discussion took place regarding the Annual Levy Members pay to the Society, currently £3.00 per Member, collected on behalf of the Society by the Council. This is effectively an annual subscription paid by each Member in September. It has been at the current level for at least 10 to 15 years. It was agreed that a proposal would be put to the Membership at the AGM in November to increase the levy to £8.00 per Member in two instalments, namely an increase to £5.00 from September 2025 and a further increase to £8.00 from September 2026. In return from 1st January 2025 the Society would enrol as a Member of the National Allotment Society (NAS) giving all Society Members the benefit of free liability insurance and access to many other services and benefits offered by the NAS. If agreement was reached it would need to be sanctioned by the Council. The Committee would appreciate feedback from Members on this proposal.	

8.	Membership of the National Allotment Society. This has been covered in the previous Agenda Item.	The Committee
9.	The forthcoming Autumn Newsletter was discussed. The Chairman asked Tim Dodd to thank his partner for offering to help in producing the next Newsletter for which he was very grateful. It was agreed that any local firm sponsoring us would be mentioned and thanked in each edition with the Membership being asked to support them. A Member had kindly volunteered to be the interviewee. The copy date deadline was agreed as the 7th September with online publication in the first half of October.	
10.	During the Council's inspection it was apparent that it was impossible to identify who was responsible for a number of compost bins, and a few sheds, not sited on an actual plot. It was believed that some previous plot holders may have left them when they vacated their plot making ownership difficult to ascertain. The Secretary asked the Committee if there was a way of marking these items, in a tidy manner. It was proposed to try and find a way of marking and then ask all plot holders to put their plot number on any compost bin or shed not on their plot. In due course any unmarked bins would be emptied and offered to Members.	
11.	Cllr Dakin brought the Meeting up to date with the progress being made on the new allotments. New Contractors had started this week on preparing the site which was expected to take approximately 3 weeks to complete. A water supply was being laid from the existing site. It had been agreed to install a couple of new water taps in the northwest corner during the course of this work. Once the ground had been prepared the new allotments would need to be marked out, taps positioned and wood chipping paths laid. The Council were shortly going to offer the opportunity for any current allotment holder to move to the new site.	
12.	The Chairman advised that having received the blessing of the Council to seek suitable sponsorship he had approached a number of local businesses for support. He confirmed he had been successful with Prospect Fencing and The Alresford Hearing Studio who had kindly agreed to donate £100.00 each. He had approached three other businesses but had not heard back from them.	

	Our Sponsors names will appear in all future Newsletters and a sign will be put on the lane side of the Members Notice Board thanking them for their support.	
13.	The Chairman said the Society prepares a display of produce from the allotments for the Horticultural Tent at the Alresford Show every year. He confirmed we had located the display board with the Society's name on it, which in future would be kept in the Allotment Shed. He asked, that as the Show had been so generous to us we could ask Members to make a special effort this year. The Chairman asked if there was a Committee Member prepared to head this up which DO kindly agreed to do. It was also agreed to highlight in the Minutes a request for Members to volunteer to do a one hour spell manning the display in the tent on Show Day to explain the benefits of having an allotment and encouraging people to put their name down for one with the Council. Tim Dodd kindly agreed to collect any produce from Members between 4pm and 5pm in the car park on Friday 6th September and take it to the Show Ground. Likewise, Tim Dicker volunteered to bring all display items back to the site after the Show.	DO TD/TD
14.	DO confirmed that Members were using the Society's Facebook page. Tim Dicker suggested we used it to ask for volunteers to man our display at the Show which DO agreed to do.	DO
15.	DO advised that she had not yet had an opportunity to contact the Winchester Allotments but hoped to do so shortly. The Chairman advise that he and the Secretary had an appointment to meet the Chairman and Secretary of the Bishops Waltham Allotment Society at the end of the month and would report back to the Committee at the next Meeting.	DO
16.	The Chairman thanked Tim Dicker for reviewing the current Rule Book and reporting his findings. He asked Cllr Dakin if the Council could undertake the same exercise and then compare our thoughts. Cllr Dakin thought this was a good idea and agreed to take this forward.	

17.	NW confirmed that, as agreed, he had forwarded the up dated Constitution to the previous Committee Members for their comments and asked that these should be given to him by the end of the month. It was agreed by the Committee that where a vote was called for each plot holder was entitled to one vote even if a plot holder was registered to more than one plot. If the tenancy of a plot was in joint names only one tenant was eligible to cast a vote. It was agreed for an annual subscription of £45.00 to become Affiliated Members of the Royal Horticultural Society. There are a number of benefits available including free access to one RHS Garden for up to 50 members once a year. It was felt this should be included as part of the additional benefits from the increased annual Members Levy. Date of next Meeting, Thursday 10th October 2024 at 7pm. There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.20pm. NKLW 09.08.24	NW
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