

Minutes for EWAA AGM, 29 April 2004

Present – 11

Apologies – Kath Frisby, John Pannell(?), Jo Sephton

1. Minutes of AGM of 24 April 2003

We could not find a copy of last year's minutes, although we had the agenda.

2. Matters arising

None.

3. Chair's report

There have been more personnel changes at the Council in the past year. Bob Staig has moved on to another post and Melody Mobus has also left. As a result, there has been a delay in processing grant applications and the lease negotiation has stalled. We are in the process of signing a 20 year lease, but this needs to be amended as the Urban Wildlife Group has taken over part of the plot. This means that we will be paying less rent.

On the plus side, recruitment of plot holders over the past year has been very good, with the majority of plots now taken.

But we do need more committee members and officers to share out the work. After the break-in and theft of machinery from the shed, we have replaced several items. However, there have been problems with the machinery – the suggestion was raised that we perhaps need a mechanic as an officer in charge of the machinery.

Concern was raised about access to the site if the building work continues at the Howard Street end.

Stewart announced that he will be standing down as President, to travel. He has very kindly agreed to continue in the post temporarily until a new President is found (until September at the latest).

4. Treasurer's report

Firstly, a very big thank you to Stewart for all his hard work as President and to Andy as Secretary.

Claire noted that the increase in plot holders has been helped by putting black plastic over vacant plots, as people are far more willing to take on a plot that is covered in black plastic to hide the weeds.

The grant for play equipment has now been returned as the plan has been abandoned due to legal requirements to have someone "on duty" all the time. Instead we are planning a willow structure, which will be done in the autumn. About £1k in the deposit account is grant money left over from the gates. It was suggested that we could perhaps spend this money on securing the gates or return it.

In total we have about £4k in the allotment account that belongs to us.

We have applied to Oxford City Council for a grant of £800 for pollarding the willows along the cycle track, as they are dangerous. A tree surgeon plot holder has quoted for doing the work.

We did not have a rent increase last year. This issue has not been pressing of late as membership has been so high this year.

Very many thanks to Claire for all her hard work over the last 12 months.

5. Election of Officers for 2004-2005
We need 4 officers minimum.
Chair – Stewart Young till 30/09/04 (latest)
Vice-Chair – none. It was wryly pointed out that the Vice-Chair would effectively be the Chair due to Stewart's imminent departure.
Treasurer – Claire Stentiford
Secretary – Jane Nimmo-Smith

6. Election of Committee for 2004-2005
Andy Henson
Jane Miller
Angela and Christian
John Pannell(?)
David Tucker
Chris and Emma Michael?
Shop helper - Edward Pope

7. Shop duty rota
It was decided to only open the shop 3 weeks per month as we only have three officers and one officer needs to be on duty each time.
The shop will be open the 1st, 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.
This should serve as a warning shot to plot holders that we are short of committee members and officers and hopefully encourage more participation.

8. Work parties
We need a tidy up of the site.
It was decided to have a work party on 16th May 10-12 – a skip to be arranged.
Future work party suggestions were made for: the path, securing the gates and heeling in the willow.

9. Plot rents
It was proposed to increase plot rents to £15 a year.
£10 for concessions.
£7.50 / £5 for a half plot.
Motion carried as the majority felt that the current rents were too cheap and undervalued the allotment. However there was concern from some members that we needed to have specific plans for using the money to present to plot holders to justify the need for an increase.

10. Any other business

The rotivator is broken. It would cost £40 to find out if it is repairable – it could be easy to fix it, or it could be a more major and costly problem.

It was proposed that we spend the £40, and if it turns out to be cheaply repairable, then get it repaired. Otherwise rethink whether it's worth it.

Motion carried.

It was felt it was time for another edition of the newsletter – suggestions for inclusion were the President's comments, new arrivals, and to include another warning not to leave the gates open and a reminder of water tank etiquette.

The issue of taking plots back from absent plot holders was discussed but it was felt that we should only consider this once there is a waiting list, and then only after discussion.

The next committee meeting was arranged for Thursday June 17 at 7.30pm

11. Date of next AGM

Thursday 28 April 2005