

Minutes

Monthly Trustees Meeting Wednesday 14th October 2020

6.30 pm

Attendees Maria Moon (MM), David Osborne (DO) Carol Andrew (CA) Dave Moon (DM) Susan Moore(SM) Mark Moore (MAM), Chris Baldwin (CB) and Myra Underwood (MU)
Minute taker Natalie Wren (volunteer)

Agenda Item	Action
<p>1 Welcome by Chair DO welcomed all to the meeting Apologies received from Helen Whelan and Rebekah Miller.</p>	
<p>2 Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising DO proposed minutes from last meeting accurate, MM Seconded minutes accurate. No matters arising.</p>	
<p>3 Treasurer's report</p> <p>Thank you to DO for banking whilst I was away. The Natwest bank account is now closed. Carol has sent through some information for VISA card payments as people have been enquiring as to if VISA cards can be used.</p> <p>Water bill of >£4k has been paid.</p> <p>Work has begun on the budget for next year. It was suggested that the officers look at the budget and report back. If anyone has thoughts on the budget please let the officers know before they meet (date for meeting in November to be set).</p> <p>Vote of thanks to MU as not only a treasurer, but as a trustee who has gone above and beyond the call of duty to assist MRALGA.</p>	
<p>4 Secretary's report</p> <p>September has been an extremely busy month, with waiting list management, new tenants, letters and emails from tenants about their plots. The invoice run was completed with support of volunteers Matt, DO and Anne. We had a problem with the printer and needed to review the type of cartridge used. Glitch with Microsoft not being able to reprint within a range of plot numbers from the printer, we then needed to print some of</p>	

<p>the invoices one at a time. Currently looking at resolving the issues prior to next mail merge.</p> <p>We currently have a steady stream of tenants coming to pay their plot fees.</p> <p>We have a new availability rota for support on Thursdays and Saturdays 8 till 4ish. Please could we continue to communicate clearly when we are available, including time and add names to the list to support each other.</p> <p>A tenant queried the lack of minutes on the website and I explained Covid management issues etc. A copy of the communication noted in the manual file. The tenant also asked if back copies of minutes could be added to the website. We currently have ratified minutes going back to December 1998. I need to reply to the tenant's request for additional minutes. We always have copies in minutes file, kept in the office area and minutes are added to the site noticeboard once ratified. Proposal that enough minutes are already available on the website, but ask the tenant if there is a concern or query as to why this has been raised. It should be explained to the tenant why minutes dating back further are not uploaded. Action on CA to reply to the tenant.</p> <p>Please could all reports be emailed to all trustees in advance of meetings, including NW to enable her to cut and paste into the minutes template. This also enables us to consider and prepare for the meeting in advance enabling us to have succinct and effective meetings and manage our voluntary contribution. I am happy to organise printed copies of minutes and reports however this will rely on Trustees collecting the minutes and reports in advance of our next meeting and Covid safety management. Past use of Pidgeon holes has not worked and often paperwork was left lying around for others to tidy up.</p> <p>I aim to process completed tenancies after 72 hours of receipt (check data with current database, in put paid etc.) Tenancies are then filed and the ex-tenant's data is archived for 6 months and then shredded.</p> <p>When we reach 9/11/2020 we will write to any tenants who have not paid.</p> <p>An NAS spreadsheet will be collated with opt in for insurance at the end of November.</p> <p>I have asked RM to look at various AGM options for us to consider at our next meeting in November. It would be good to contact Jane Owen at CVS (Community Volunteer Service) for thoughts and guidance.</p> <p>I have supported the hut cleaning and Community Payback. Rotas and</p>	<p>CA</p> <p>All</p>
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<p>cleaning check lists are available for all to pitch in. Please note that I may be unavailable at times due to family health needs for the next few weeks. I will do my best to support the team. However, I am concerned that we do not use Rota's and checklists enough to plan and prioritize all the jobs that have to be done as well as the tasks/jobs that we find more enjoyable. As we move forward it would be good to develop trustee role guidelines / procedural documents (how to) in preference to job descriptions.</p> <p>NW to send on ratified minutes each month for upload to website</p>	<p>NW</p>
<p>5 Health and Safety</p> <p>A risk assessment (RA) has been completed by Helen and has been filed for the taking of monies for rent and tenancy agreement. Invitation to trustees to read the RA, and volunteers should read and follow the recommendations of the RA.</p> <p>The original risk assessment should cover for two people working behind the screened area, and for someone to be outside of the screened area at a distance of two desks from incoming tenants. There needs to be firm communication to tenants coming to pay their fees how they should behave in the hut.</p> <p>There needs to be a decision how to manage the paperwork - one person at the door checking that the paperwork is completed and that they have their invoice, one person at the screen processing paperwork and one person taking payments. This method will be trialled tomorrow to see if it is satisfactory. A notice should also be added on the gate and outside the hut reminding people to fill in paperwork and bring their invoice otherwise payment cannot be taken.</p> <p>It is suggested that reminder emails for payments include a message to say that they are being emailed because this is the address that they provided.</p> <p>Lit bonfires need to be put out before tenants go home. Community payback should ensure that bonfires are out before they leave. This is also to be written in the folder for reference. Maria to speak to Lewis C in the morning.</p>	
<p>6 MRALGA logbook update since last meeting</p> <p>Nothing further to update other than that cameras have been arranged after reports of vegetables being taken from plots. This will be discussed separately at the security section of the meeting.</p>	
<p>7 Maintenance (DM)</p> <p>One more tank to put in. Another load of crushed tarmac would be helpful for the tracks, but we are not buying any crushed tarmac as we need to be careful with expenditure and only purchase what is important for plots and tenants.</p>	

<p>A concerted effort is needed on the overgrown plot discussed at the last meeting. There is dangerous material on the site which could affect community payback working on the site. A grab-lorry may be more appropriate, but finances would need to be discussed. We would need to know a comparison of prices between G Moores and Cranfield and then to discuss this at the next trustees meeting.</p>	
<p>8 Security Report (MM)</p> <p>Cameras distributed around the site.</p>	
<p>9 Plots</p> <p>We continue to allocate plots. There won't be a real handle on the waiting list until Christmas time. We must continue with our policy of not allocating second plots until the waiting list is clear. Thanks to those who have given up plots but have left them in a good condition.</p> <p>It is very difficult to vet someone as to whether they can handle a plot. It takes time to allocate plots as the right size needs to be decided on. It is difficult to find time to show people around the plots adequately on a Saturday morning.</p>	
<p>10 Events and Publicity</p> <p>Options are being explored for a virtual AGM due to the pandemic.</p>	
<p>11 Shop Report</p> <p>My position as shop manager, as many of you know, began on the 1st October 2020. I have been working alongside DH for many weeks, but there has been very little change and I still seem to be 'under his wing' so to speak. I would like to thank DH for the support he has given me during this time.</p> <p>I know there is a lot to learn about ordering stock and where it comes from. However, the current frustration I have is that, if you are not brought into various agreements, on ordering items, it seems to me I will never know. This is something I want to improve within the coming weeks.</p> <p>There has been some improvement in the last week or two, but there has been a lack of communication between some trustees. Perhaps, on this point, things could be improved to make things easier...</p> <p>I know DH is perhaps going to be with us for some weeks now, before he moves to Liverpool, but I value my position as shop manager and look forward to finally taking full control.</p> <p>On a more positive note, here are some points to acknowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sales of onion sets, shallots and garlic nearly sold out - stock to be re-ordered. ● We have recently had a delivery from 'Growells' to stock the shop up for next spring, mainly compost and fertiliser. This is in preparation of any further 'lockdown' over the winter months ● Bamboo canes will be delivered in November 2020 ● Finally, some decision should be made at ordering seeds, as suppliers 	

<p>may be short following record sales this spring and a light harvest</p> <p>Pre-orders are coming in well for King's Seeds and potatoes, the closing date is 14th November.</p> <p>At some instances, it has been offered that people will keep the shop open beyond 12. However, this confuses the tenants and volunteers as it is not clear what the professional working hours are.</p> <p>Should the shop close at 12 or stay open until 2? It should close at 12, only open beyond that on special event days. Due to the current conditions it is important that we focus on what is essential, and do not have capacity to do extra. The shop is open Saturday from 10-12 only at the moment, and closed every other day of the week (including Thursdays).</p> <p>There has been money found in the till from people buying stock from trustees informally during the week. This practice must stop. Sales should only take place when the shop is open. However, this could be an issue when tenants need to buy keys as an emergency, or they have run out of chicken food during the week. Money could be put through the till then onto a cash sheet? No, once the shop has cashed up, it is closed. This needs to be discussed with David tomorrow.</p> <p>Could the shop mark up from 20 to 25% be raised at the AGM? This would help with finances. This can be considered, however, we must remember that allotments are a service provision. We would need to be able to justify the increase as we account to charity standards. £2,720 was made from the shop last financial year.</p>	
<p>13 Creature Control</p> <p>Not much creature control has taken place as volunteers are needed to take on this role. Generally volunteering could be emphasised on the broadcast. Maria to speak to Rebekah about including creature control volunteers on the broadcast. Positive plot management should be celebrated in the broadcast as this helps with creature control.</p>	MM
<p>14 Community Payback work - log sheet</p> <p>The last two/three months have been outstanding. It has been a pleasure to work with them, we are very grateful for all their help. Achievements this month include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car park – sleeper repair to border by notice board Repair to hut ramp at rear – rails and post reinforced Over grown hedge by plot 604.2 cut back Management of communal bonfire Clearance of wood from plot 294 and transferred to communal burning site Brambles cut down by plot 604.2 Clearance of rubbish from plot 294 IBC moved from a water collection point to wood shed area Repair to wood shed - roof and sides reinforced, door made from scrap wood Mowed and strimmed far corner area of site by 615 Mowed paths around MRALGA poly and enviromesh tunnels. Scraped back woodchip 	

<p>from sides of the enviromesh tunnel. Lined floor of wood shed with pallets and filled wood shed with logs Front car park - cleared rubble from site of notice board repair Relocated wood pile to provide path/exit from marquee area Erected fence by new micro plot area Sanded and painted MRALGA benches Reinforced legs and added wheels to 3 x trading hut display benches Fixed hasp to polytunnel Fixed door handle to inside of hut front door Moved 15 bags of compost from shop to growing area Loaded shingle from front car park area into rubble bags and relocated to storage area Strimmed 2x vacant plots Painted fence rails by new micro plot with wood preserving paint Mowed orchard area Painted gazebo with wood preserving paint Re-attached pipe between IBCs near micro plots Weeded area around polytunnel Constructed a shelving unit in maintenance room Covered enviromesh tunnel poles with foam Painted toilet shed, rails by exit ramp, wood store shed, toilet compost fencing with wood preserving paint Removed weed suppressant sheets from a plot and covered new micro plot area Strimmed vacant plot C Vacant plot 198 - scrap metal removed and plot strimmed Vacant plot 304 - rubbish clearance</p>	
<p>15 A.O.B.</p> <p>Thanks needed for Jake Sale & Tony for repair to doors and sign and Tony. Thanks also to Enid Kent who supports the shop.</p> <p>Spoke to Ken about IBCs, they haven't been cleaned out yet.</p> <p>Community payback may need heating when they take their breaks, as it will be very cold through the winter, and we have a duty of care. Electric convection heaters cost £30 -£40 to buy, but the expense is more around the ongoing cost of electricity to run them. The current fires that MRALGA own could not be used due to H&S issues as the fronts are too hot - a convection heater would be better. The door would need to be shut if the heating is on. The room will be heated, and electricity expenditure will be reviewed monthly. If there are any concerns with the expense of this heating, this will need to be discussed, and they may need to move from their current room for taking breaks to the hut room. Suggested that a timer be bought to ensure that the heaters come on and off automatically. The heaters are then to be fixed on the wall. Wire will also need to be bought. We need to consult with Helen before these purchases are made.</p> <p>The cafe needs to be appropriately managed if it were to re-open. There needs to be appropriate thought given to seating and serving arrangements.</p>	

MRALGA

<p>After tenants have left the site, remaining property if not collected in a certain amount of time should be removed by MRALGA. There is an issue with an ex-tenant who has left property on the site, and there needs to be a letter sent. DO to deliver a letter stating that their items need to be removed.</p> <p>Thanks to DO for stepping into MM shoes whilst she was away.</p>	<p>DO</p>
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Meeting closed at 08:40

Next meeting on 4th November at 6.30pm