

KVLGA

Minutes of the first Committee Meeting held on Saturday February 6th 2021 (Zoom)

Alison Forrester kindly agreed to host this first meeting. Once everyone had signed in she handed the meeting to Jim Hunt to chair.

Present Jim Hunt, Alison Forrester, Bill Trimble, John Nowak, Johnny Bouchier, Dorothy Cromwell, Jason Dean, Mehran Moiri, Sean McCormack, John Foley, Wes Henzell, Bobby Sisodiya, Sammy Wiseman

Apologies None

Introductions JH welcomed everyone to this first meeting inviting people to introduce themselves briefly. SMC expressed his wish for change for the good.

Matters arising JH said that the last meeting was the AGM and the minutes had been sent out.

Chairman JH said how he had always tried to do his best for the Association from when he first became Chairman. He expressed his hope for harmony with people working together.

Vice-Chair DC agreed with JH in wishing for peace and quiet. She wished to express thanks to past committee members especially Wendy Langhorne who has put so much work into the Association during her time as Secretary.

Secretary JN explained that the agenda for this first meeting was simply for people to say hello and to see what roles might be outstanding. Whilst these had served the Association well in the past, this committee was free to review and/or modify as it saw fit.

Regarding future agendas, there would be a place for committee members to speak about their items on the agenda. Item headings would be requested in time for inclusion at the next meeting.

Treasurer BT published the audited accounts for 2020 which were sent out to the Membership prior to the AGM. He expects to deliver financial updates at future meetings.

BT took the opportunity to outline the situation regarding water. The meter was read on Jan 15th as part of a regular routine.

Treasurer (cont.)

BT explained that we currently do not pay for water as we are in credit. He expects this credit to expire sometime during 2021 after which our monthly bill might be around £130 per month.

BT's immediate action will be to obtain an up to date statement from Castle Water in order to better predict our water costs for the next period.

No recent income was reported with recent expenditure listed below:

- NAS membership renewed £174.00.
- Annual rent to RBK £734. Note that the original bill was for £975, however BT reminded RBK of the rent holiday granted to all voluntary groups due to Covid.
- Insurance renewed in December £84

- BT pointed out that we receive 4 copies of the NAS Allotment magazine.
- Regarding the recent quiz, there was no cost to the Association as all prizes were donated.
- Keya Ashraf (plot 41) contacted BT regarding an offer of assistance with fundraising. As no large expenditure is planned, BT sought committee agreement to decline the offer for the time being.
- Colin Hunt had asked a question at the very end of the AGM. BT has emailed him to check his query and is waiting for a reply.
- Ben Ibeson's honorarium for auditing our accounts amounts to a bottle of whisky. The committee agreed a sum of £35 to cover this and BT will deal with it. The committee offered thanks to Ben.

Health & Safety This was the first role to be discussed and MM informed the committee as to his wealth of experience in this field. He felt he could make a good contribution and was clear that his aim would be to make H&S everybody's business.

JH asked the committee for approval. BT asked if it was common for allotment sites to have H&S reps.

JH replied that the role was becoming increasingly common. He also stated that any H&S report written by the rep would be for internal use only.

DC said that it was good to see new people stepping up. However, she felt that due to MM's lack of allotment experience, he would be better off working with JH. AF did not agree given MM's wealth of experience. DC maintained that it would be in the interest of the Association for MM to at least start off with JH.

SMcC disagreed with DC stating that he wished to see the allotments go forward. BT intervened to make clear that DC was not being negative. He also made the point that others on the committee might be interested in the H&S role.

JH asked the committee if anybody else wished to perform the role. There were no takers.

JF asked why we were looking at an H&S role when we had not had one before.

JN reiterated that the roles on the agenda were for discussion and implementation or otherwise according to the needs of the Association.

Health & Safety (cont.)

JH said that H&S is becoming a significant issue, certainly with the Allotments Regeneration Initiative as well as among the committees of the 23 RBK sites. While this role could be held over to another committee meeting, he would like to see it dealt with. The committee agreed unanimously that MM should take on the role.

Site Officer & Water

JN explained that traditionally the role has been Site Officer and Water. However, it may well be better split as BT has a grasp on all things water. The Site Officer's role remains of great importance. JH went on to outline the Site Officer's role mentioning among other things the need to ensure that plots do not encroach onto paths or adjacent plots. Ensuring general tidiness and informing the committee of any developments. JN said that this had included reporting disputes between ploholders. SMcC stated that in his opinion over 50% of plots were not being kept properly. JH said that this could be part of the Site Officer remit as it had when he had been Site Officer himself. SMcC believed it was time to address the problem seriously. JH agreed and asked if there was anyone who might wish to take the job on. SMcC said that the Chairman, VC and Secretary had been aware of the problem for 20 years. He didn't think that one person would be strong enough to deal with the issues. JN felt that the existing rules could do with some change and/or modification. The purpose of the meeting was not to be bumped into electing a site supremo but rather to see how the committee could develop this role. DC felt that comments should be accurate and that she had not been a committee member for 20 years. SMcC continued to complain that nothing had been done, repeating that the job was not for one person. JN intervened to say that not everyone would agree with him but there were issues that needed to be dealt with and this meeting would hopefully evolve a group to take this on. DC stated that there had been incidents of vandalism and theft within recent weeks as well as arson in the past which had been reported to the police. JH cautioned about going back into the past and DC agreed with the need to move forward. He went on to remind SmcC that when he had been Site Officer during the time of Dudley, the site was run correctly and voted 3rd best kept in the Borough. We now needed a person to perform the role and report back to the committee. JB also felt that it wasn't a job for one person as JH had himself fallen foul of certain members at past AGMs. It should be for a group of people and on a regular basis. JF did not see why we were voting and attempting to fill roles that were not defined and felt that there was duplication and overlap. We had filled the H&S position, yet one of the Site Officer's responsibilities was to keep the site safe. The roles should first be defined and then voted on once they were clear. JH felt that most people who had used allotments over the years had a good knowledge of what these jobs were.

Site Officer & Water (cont.)

JF asked who the current Site Officer was. JH said that he had been covering this role.

JF then asked why a Lettings Officer was in the Constitution but a Site Officer was not. JH replied that Dudley had removed it either by accident or design and although it had been mentioned at AGMs, there had been no reinstatement.

JF said that it wasn't enough to trust what the role entailed 20 years ago and it did not make sense.

WH said that the job was bigger than one person and there should perhaps be a sub committee with roles being defined after people are in them to include members both old and new and then put the roles into the Constitution. To aid this we should be looking to document what happens on other sites.

JH was clear that we need a Site Officer(s) and asked if this was something that should be dealt with at the next meeting.

AF wished to note that the Site Officer role could become very contentious and therefore decisions made (by them) should have committee backing rather than leaving the Site Officer exposed.

JN thought that we were really talking about a system of plot inspection. The Site Officer would be looking out for anything untoward on a day to day basis not to be confused with H&S. However, the important thing is to decide whether more than one person is required. Plot inspections are now paused but there will come a time when they need to be done, so perhaps this item should be held over to give people time to think about role requirements.

JH thought it might be best to deal with this at the next meeting.

SMcC demanded action and said that JH had evicted people in the past.

JH reminded SMcC that he had never broken the rules.

DC felt that SMcC was speaking in generalities and that as someone who had recently broken the rules, it was perhaps unwise to tell others about rule-breaking.

JF wished to see progress and supported JN's suggestion that these roles should go to the next meeting. He wished for the committee to take some time to examine the roles.

AF thought it might help if we had a list of job responsibilities so that people could be clear as to what would be expected of them.

SMcC said that no more officers should be elected and that someone should take photographs of the allotments and bring the evidence to the committee.

JH moved on to Bio-diversity.

Bio-diversity and Environment JH explained that this was the Council's way of preserving the well-being of the site.

BT said that since this had been defined by RBK it would be in writing and could JH present it so that he could decide whether to apply for this role.

JH agreed to do this

JB asked if there was anything in the RBK document regarding plastic.

JF asked the same regarding slug pellets.

JH replied that there was nothing on plastic but something on more 'friendly' slug pellets. He agreed to circulate this information asap.

SMcC complained about plastic on a particular member's plot and asked for photographs once again.

Bio-diversity and Environment (cont.)

JH disagreed with SMcC regarding the plotholder and stated the need for people to be appointed.

JN said that subject to more information, people might.

Lettings JH had undertaken lettings in past years with the then Secretary. However, due to frequent unavailability the handbook had been changed to allow for the Chairman and any other committee member to deal with Lettings.

AF expressed an interest in the role as had JB.

JH said that he wanted to continue in partnership with another.

JB asked why JH would wish to take on another officer role as he was already Chairman.

JH replied that lettings was not an officer role. As Chairman he was legally responsible for lettings paperwork and would wish to retain his lettings duties along with another committee member.

JB asked JH to confirm that he had all the letting agreements. JH confirmed that this was the case and that these had to be available for Council inspection.

JB added that JN could get the data from these as he had done. JH said that JN's requirements were different but what he (JH) needed was a membership list that was not in read only form. JB said that JH had the letting agreements. JH repeated that he needed a membership list and reminded the meeting that both AF and JB had put their names forward.

AF asked if it needed to be the Chairman or could it be JH or BT as trustees with one other and was there anything specific.

JH stated that the letting agreement named the Chairman and Treasurer as the then Secretary did not wish to be involved in lettings.

JB said that JH had changed it, JH made it clear that this was with the agreement of BT and at the instruction of RBK.

DC requested that the meeting got back to the Lettings Officer role. In previous years the Chairman had also been Lettings Officer. While having more than one person is not a bad thing, signing the agreement is a different matter. We need to stay on lettings for now.

BT was unaware that his name is on the lettings forms. His name is solely on the lease unless he was mistaken.

JH assured him that his name was on the letting agreement.

DC suggested that JH and BT get together to clarify the position.

SMcC strongly objected to JH being the only one to sign the lettings documents. He wanted to see lettings officers doing the job and since JB had taken charge of lettings there was a list on the notice board.

JH reminded SMcC that JB does not have charge of lettings and had put the membership list on to a computer. JH had access to this for a time but this has since been denied. RBK has said that the Chairman must sign the documents.

SMcC accused JH of not running lettings honestly for the last 5 years. JH denied this.

WH had not seen anything in the documents of other RBK sites that said the Chairman must be the Lettings Officer. We have people offering to do the job notwithstanding that the Chairman would still sign the lettings document. Also anything disputatious could be referred to the committee.

Lettings (cont.)

JH said that the committee should vote to see if AF and JB would be Lettings Officers.

JN thought that we were probably not in a position to vote because this meeting was primarily to discuss the roles together with their implications. He rejected SMcC's statement regarding the membership list and pointed out that since Dudley's time there had always been a membership list displayed on the notice board. He felt that the meeting was being clouded by personal sniping some of which had led to the meeting overrunning and that the remaining roles should be researched for the next meeting. The lettings role was not a job for one person as it can be very onerous. It was time to get on with the agenda to what common goals could be achieved.

While JH agreed, MM felt that too many decisions had been deferred. As two people had shown interest in the Lettings role there should be a vote.

WH said that other roles needed to be defined but he felt that lettings should be dealt with at this meeting.

JH called for a vote for AF and JB to be responsible for lettings. It was supported by a majority.

Website JH asked if the website should be discussed as we were short of time. JB said that it shouldn't be a committee role. JN thought that there should be some continuity.

Security JH had added an item to the agenda regarding SMcC as site security person. This nomination had been held over from a previous list prepared for the AGM that did not take place due to Covid. SMcC was happy to stand and was supported by a majority.

AOB JF reminded JH that he was going to contact RBK regarding a safety mirror at the site entrance.

JH reported that RBK had redirected him to TFL who are looking to arrange a date for a site survey.

JB had an issue with the administration of data. He was concerned with who should have access to this.

JF suggested that names should not be mentioned, JB said that he would deal with this privately.

Date and time of the next full Committee meeting After some discussion it was agreed that the next meeting would be in 2 weeks on Saturday February 20th at 10.00am.

Agenda to follow.