

COTTONMILL AND NUNNERY ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Committee Meeting on Thursday 16th May 2022 Held at the The White Lion, Sopwell Lane, St Albans.

PRESENT:

Keith Reynolds (Chairman)
Terry Beckett (Treasurer)
Janet Wyatt (Secretary)
Michelle Mackenzie (Facebook Administrator)
Margaret Harris (Cottonmill Plot Officer)
Erica Weindorf (Project Officer)
Paul Littlewood (Assistant Plot Officer, Cottonmill)
Louise Wiseman (Newsletter Editor)

1. APOLOGIES:

Jane Ridge (Nunnery 2 Plot Officer)
Clare Norman (Sopwell Mill Plot Officer)

2. The minutes of the meeting on 27th January 2022 were agreed as an accurate record. These will now be placed on the CNAA website.

3. ACTION UPDATE and MATTERS ARISING

- Is JR receiving web messages. **Action:** JW to check this out.
- Bank repair-**Action:** KR to send contact details of Environment Agency to MH.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT AND MEMBERSHIP

The Treasurer's report is attached and was agreed by the meeting. Net income to date is £1150. Current membership is 90 (Cottonmill=49; Nunnery 1=14; Nunnery 2=19; Sopwell Mill =10).

At the AGM a member asked if some of the Affinity Water donation could be used for a new communal shed on Cottonmill. It has already been agreed that £300 from this donation is available as matched funding to the St Albans Civic Centre Grant and some of the remainder is in reserve for fuel and maintenance on the pump that will be needed in the event of re-flooding. The remaining funding would not provide a decent shed. Furthermore, it was debated at the meeting whether a communal shed was required and the Committee agreed that it would look for the optimal solution

to store tools for communal use. **Action:** Committee to consider some options.

5. SITE REPORTS

Cottonmill

Waiting list -53 with 15 vacancies and 24 NCOs going out after the last visit from Phil Bruce-Green. One plot is to be de-commissioned.

There is a major issue with letting plots and PB-G is only sending out 4 offers at a time. PL/MH reported that of 4 invitations sent out only half will contact them to request a viewing and then only one will accept. With potentially 39 vacant plots this is not moving fast enough and many of the sites are deteriorating. The Committee discussed a number of options to try to make plots more attractive. MH has approached him but PB-G will not supply a contractor to strim vacant plots nor will he send out more than 4 invitations at a time. The number of unlet plots is now so concerning that it was agreed KR should send a firmly worded letter to PB-G to register our deep concern and asking that he contacts everyone on the list asking if they are still interested and also sends out a lot more invitations at a time. **Action:** EW to draft and circulate to Committee and KR to sign off/send final version.

There was a discussion on using volunteer groups to clear plots prior to viewing which it seems is the norm at other St Albans allotment sites, and this may need the purchase or hire of tools. Before doing this the insurance policy will require us to prepare a risk assessment and risk management policy. We would also need to set out our policy on volunteering and H&S training. **Action:**JW to do first draft of policies and to provide a template for risk assessments.

The fence in the corner of Cottonmill needs replacement and PB-G has measured this but says he has no budget for the work to be carried out. **Action:** EW to draft a letter to SADC Councillors/Sandy Walkington asking if discretionary budget funding can be released to cover this security measure.

Nunnery 1

Waiting list – 27 with one vacant plot. One offer about to expire and one plot recently let. 5 NCOs have been issued. Problem with dumping of rotten wood where items of use for others are left and Brian Gilson has put up notices to make it clear this is not acceptable, only useful items are welcome to offer to others.

Nunnery 2

Waiting list -37 with 1 vacant plot. 3 NCOs are to be issued

Sopwell

No report available.

6. COMMUNICATIONS.

Facebook-Summary of AGM and Bioblitz will be promoted with a flyer being prepared by LW that will also be laminated and displayed at sites by MH and sent out by email to members. **Action:** LW/MH.

A flyer to promote membership of CNAA is to be prepared by MM and laminated to be put up at all sites. **Action** MM.

Website - Minutes of January 2022 meeting to be posted. **Action:**JR

7. BIOBLITZ AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

MH has purchased 100 packets of seeds to be distributed to plot holders wishing to plant a square metre for pollinators. These will be offered to plot holders either by informal walk-around or letting plot holders know that JW or another Committee member is on site and has some. Mats have been placed down on common ground or where plot holders have volunteered to have them in place. A few people will be needed to bait small mammal traps and return to identify what has been trapped and release them. MH is waiting for the list of recorders who will lead groups and will chair the second planning meeting on 23 May with a sub-group of volunteers. Public Liability Insurance will be covered through the Council's overarching policy and this was confirmed verbally by PB-G to TB.

There is to be a project to introduce environmental improvement measures under this grant and KR/EW have offered to lead on this project.

8. JOINT ALLOTMENT GROUP

KR and CN attended a meeting of the Joint Allotment Group to represent CNAA. This is a re-launched group involving representatives from all of the allotment sites in St Albans and from the Council (PB-G and a Finance Officer). Slow turn-around of plots is a common problem and it is apparent that the communication within SADC is poor, for example PB-G doesn't know who has paid their fees and who has not. KR/CN sent out a more detailed email now circulated to the Committee.

9. SUMMER SHOW – 4th September 2022

At the AGM John Boden announced that he would be unable to be the judge at the Summer Show and was thanked for his many years of support for the Show. Aylett's is to be approached to see if it is able to become more involved with the Show by offering a member of staff to judge

it, maybe contribute a few prizes and also allow for the use of the cup.
Action JW to make the first contact and offer for Keth to go down to speak to Adam Wigglesworth.

Categories are to be reviewed and the strategy for prizes to be expanded to reflect category winners rather than just the overall winner. **Action:** JW circulate previous documentation e.g. checklist, category list (TB to send to JW).

Check what material is stored **Action** MM to do an inventory of the supplies in the shed.

Meeting to discuss Summer Show to be held in August. **Action:** JW to find a date

10. AOB

MH is putting up the wildlife camera on Cottonmill and asked if there were any particularly useful spots to choose.

KR wishes to arrange an open evening for the Affinity Water Engineer, Ilias Karapanos, to make a presentation to plot holders and maybe open it to interested locals. **Action:** KR

Pumpkin Festival – it was agreed that this would be good to hold and MM's suggestion to combine with Grow Community Sopwell would be a good way to get involved with a local group with similar objectives. MM offered to explore this with her contact. **Action:**MM

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

TBA

Action Summary

Website	Check take over monitoring emails received through website-chase	JW	On-going
Website	Post January 2022 minutes	JR	
Bank repair	EA contact details to be sent to MH	KR	On-going
Tool storage on Cottonmill	Consider solutions for communal tools	All	
Plot turn-over	Letter to PB-G setting out concerns-draft to committee and final for KR to sign/send	EW	
Fence repair Cottonmill	Letter to Councillor and Sandy Walkington asking for funding	EW	
Risk assessment, risk policy, volunteering policy	First draft to circulate to Committee	JW	
Communications	Flyer to promote Bioblitz and send brief report on a AGM	LW, MH,MM,JW	
Communications	Flyer to promote CNAA membership	MM	
Summer Show	Contact Aylett's about cup, prizes and judging	JW	
Summer Show	Circulate documentation to see if categories need changing and to review checklist.	JW	
Summer Show	Inventory of supplies in Cottonmill shed	MM	
Summer Show	Committee meeting in August, date to be finalised	JW	
Pumpkin Festival	Join with Grow Community Sopwell?	MM	
Affinity Water presentation	Arrange an open evening for the Affinity Water Engineer, Ilias Karapanos, to make a presentation	KR	