

# Sheet & Tilmore Allotment Association

## 41<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, 13th November, 2018

The Half Moon, Sheet at 7:30 PM

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1. The Chairman, Tim Dilks, welcomed everybody to the meeting.
2. Apologies were received from Gordon Churchill and Keith Oakley
3. Minutes of STAA AGM, Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2017, were approved.

#### 4. Matters Arising

The position of the main gate at Tilmore is to be moved to provide a flat parking area on the road side.

#### 5. Chairman's Report – Tim Dilks

Tim welcomed everyone again and reported that there had been a number of committee meetings in the past year.

He commented on the difficult growing conditions of the season, starting with snow in March and a visit by the Beast from the East, followed by a scorching, dry summer meaning that watering was very necessary.

Failures: autumn onion sets bolted; eating apples were very poor over various varieties; early potatoes were low in yield and small; autumn raspberries.

Successes: cooking apples and blackberries; sweetcorn basking in South American sunshine; parsnips.

However, after rain – brassicas recovered and the club root resistant cauliflowers, broccoli, sprouts, and cabbages are now doing well.

Tomatoes and main crop potatoes have no blight, thanks to the dry conditions.

Tim recommended Cara potatoes for baking but warned that they are useless for boiling, as they disintegrate.

Tim informed the meeting that the shed is in need of repair and that the committee have agreed that the estimate received from a local professional was too high and we could tackle it ourselves but help will be needed; volunteers welcome.

NB Members Steve and John Elliott, Laura Keiser and Luke Thompson offered to repair the shed; this offer was gratefully accepted.

#### 6. Treasurer's Report – Alison Carling

Alison preceded her report by explaining that new data protection regulations had delayed the Best Newcomer judging to a point where it was considered unfair to the new plot holders, who were expecting the judging to be at the beginning of July. She said that this year's beginners would be included in next year's competition.

Alison reported that her accounts needed not a single alteration or correction and that she had been awarded a GOLD STAR by the accountant. The accounts are soon to be signed off and will be available via the website.

Balances: Current Account £1193 Savings: £693.91. There are some pending expenses in the free manure to members' event and the repairs to the roof.

## **7. Trading Report – Abi Grute**

Abi underlined the need for prompt repairs to the shed in order to avoid damage to stock. She said that the shed was a non-profit making concern which had sold £880 worth of stock in the form of 2000 potatoes, 1500 m of bamboo canes and 4000 litres of compost. Stock is purchased from Warwick's but Abi is interested in any alternative supplier, as some the popular lines are not always available. She is trying to source new products to improve the range; one such are chestnut fence posts which have sold like hotcakes.

The shed will reopen on 3<sup>rd</sup> March and will be open every fortnight from 10-11 AM for eight weeks. Opening on:

March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>

April 7<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>

May 5<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>

June 2<sup>nd</sup>

Abi would like to increase opening times but would need a volunteer to allow this. There has been no wastage this year and £14 profit.

**8. Web report** – there is access to the site on line.

## **9. Potato orders – Abi Grute**

Abi ran through the varieties available on the order form, including some new lines particularly Accord first early. Orders must be placed by Friday 16<sup>th</sup> November can be left at Richard Arnold Optician's reception.

## **Seed orders – Ros Smith**

Ros reported that last year 300 different varieties of vegetable and herb seeds and 123 varieties of flower seeds were ordered. All in all, 721 different types of plants were grown, which is a huge variety.

Ros provided King's catalogues for next season. The yellow sheet stapled to the front explains how to place the order and where to take it to. It is worth having a look at the King's order form in the front of the catalogue before completing it as it is a little complicated.

The seed collections in the front of the catalogue are excellent value, as they are already discounted and then have a further 50% member's discount.

The closing date for seed orders is January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

## **10. Committee Report – Vanessa Harvey**

Vanessa thanked the committee members for all their hard work over the past year. An appeal was made for new committee members which was answered by Steve Elliott, who was welcomed onto the committee.

## **11. Presentation of Prizes – Chair of Grounds Committee, Councillor Lesley Fowler**

Tilmore: First - Andy Smith (plot 5)

Second – Paul & Dot Barton (plot 18a)

Third – David Petche (plot 22)

Sheet: First – Patricia Woodridge (plots 32/33/35)

Second – David Mogg

Third – Lynne Burge

Highly Commended – David Mellor and Lily

Councillor Farrow made a short speech, explaining that the council have taken the maintenance contract in-house and all work on the allotments, parks and Heath are now carried out by a team led by Dugg Budd. There are now apprentices taken on from Sparsholt College, who will go on to be offered employment. Services are offered to other parishes and, so far, over £40,000 has been saved. The appearance and condition of the grounds has improved immensely as a result.

Lesley admitted that her favourite plant is the thistle and that she cannot bear to be mean to slugs and snails. As a result, her cabbages have suffered, particularly as she forgot to leave her beer traps out!

The meeting expressed their appreciation of the work of the grounds team and thanked Councillor Farrow for attending.

#### **10. A.O.B.**

10.1 Padlock: the padlock on the main gate is small, fiddly and difficult to read. It is often twisted and upside down. Secretary to email Lesley Fowler; the padlock will be changed promptly.

10.2 It was suggested that when the gate is moved at Tilmore, the latch could be sited more conveniently as currently it is difficult to get at from the outside.

10.3 It was suggested that, if there is no prohibition to profit-making in the constitution, then the shed making a profit could subsidise its upkeep and repairs. A counter point made was that it was important that prices were lower than retail to attract custom. A fine line needs to be drawn.

10.4 It was mentioned that the public liability insurance looks out of date on the website. It was confirmed that the insurance is up to date and that the website needs to be amended.

10.5 It was suggested that an annual produce show could be held. Tim explained that there was an annual show held at Herne Farm Community Centre but this was not well supported and took an enormous amount of organisation. It was pointed out that Sheet Produce Show, held at Bedales, is open to all-comers.

Councillor Farrow suggested that there could be a council prize for best ongoing plot at Tilmore; this could be judged via the monthly inspections.

The date for plot judging was thought to be early in the season by some members.

10.6 The RHS membership cards entitle STAA members half-price entry. These are available from Robin Warman or Alison Carling, on request.

10.7 Maintenance at Sheet. Members were unhappy with the standard of maintenance of the paths etc at Sheet. It was suggested that they may approach the parish council and suggest that PTC grounds services would be a better alternative.

The meeting closed at 8:30 PM