

1. ATTENDING:

Tim Dilks - Chair
Alison Carling - Treasurer
Abi Grute - Trading Secretary
Steve Elliott - Sheet Rep
David Mogg - Membership Secretary and Webmaster
Georgie Thurlby - Association Secretary
Margaret Davis - Committee Member
Slaney Hopkins - Tilmore Rep
Jerry and June - Tilmore Rep

2. APOLOGIES:

None

3. MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING

A brief update was provided on the actions from the last meeting, which had all been completed.

The committee approved the minutes of the last meeting.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer provided a brief update as follows:

Since last meeting:

IN		OUT	
£25	memberships	£270	shed stock
£5	donation – J Hakeman		
£27	shed sales		
£15.81	seed order balance		
As at 29/09/2021:			
	Balance Community (current) a/c:	£1163.73	
	Balance Deposit a/c:	£646.54	

Slaney asked what the association's money is spent on. The majority is working capital for the shed stock and also covers prize money for the competition we run - best newcomer (£20) and 2nd (£20) and 3rd (£10) prize for best plot. Previously we have also run a BBQ but not last year because of Covid.

5. TRADING SHED UPDATE

The Trading Secretary provided a brief update. The painting of the shed is well underway and we are all set to go with our new supplier for the 2022 season.

Currently we have £312 of stock (as of last stock check) which is the least we've ever had, thanks to excellent promotion and sales tactics from the shed team.

The committee agreed that the vouchers given for prizes at the competition would be given an expiry date of 1 year from now on.

Action: David to produce vouchers accordingly.

6. NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The new committee members were introduced, with contact details as follows:

- Slaney Hopkins Slaney.hopkins@gmail.com 07920 058701
- Jerry and June germay@hotmail.co.uk

It was confirmed that both would fulfil the role of Tilmore rep.

Action: David to update Tilmore rep details on the website.

Action: Georgie to forward minutes from last meeting, survey results etc to new committee members for their information.

7. KINGS SEED ORDER

Confirmed that the 50% discount will be offered via a website ordering link this year rather than being centrally coordinated. David has been communicating with Hugo at Kings Seeds to find out how they can stop any non-members from using the discount and the link has been tested successfully by several committee members. Confirmed that paper catalogues can still be used to gain the discount but that most members would be encouraged to order using the website. A significant benefit is that members will be able to use the website link to order seeds all year round, rather than just once a year.

Agreed that a communication would be sent out to all members to make them aware that the way we do the order will be changing.

Action: David to communicate with all members about the new procedure for ordering seeds from Kings.

8. MEMBER SURVEY

Georgie had previously circulated the results of the survey responses received so far. A brief summary:

Of the 13 respondents, 10 are members and 3 are not

The most popular reason for joining the association was the 50% discount with Kings (9 respondents), followed closely by public liability insurance (8 respondents) and access to the Shed (8 respondents). More than half of respondents (7) also selected newsletters, social events and talks, and liaison with PTC/SPC as important benefits of their membership. The most popular answers for things we could do more of were: seed and plant swaps (9), social events (8) and liaising with the councils (7). We also had a suggestion that we could arrange a knife/tool sharpening visit (apparently there is a woman in Winchester who visits allotment sites)

There was a decent amount of interest in talks - top rated subjects were soil biology (8), biodiversity and wildlife (7), composting (7), and medicinal plants and herbs (7)

Confirmed that Jenny has not yet sent out the link to the Sheet members.

Action: Steve to remind Jenny about sending out to Sheet members.

Action: Georgie to monitor responses to the survey and feed back once the Sheet membership has had a chance to respond.

Communications strategy

The committee discussed the most recent draft of the communications strategy circulated by Abi, including the relative benefits and drawbacks of having more of a presence on social media. It was agreed that Instagram would probably not be a viable platform given the limited audience, the mode of content that tends to be shared and the demographics of ploholders, however it would be worth setting up a Facebook group which ploholders would be encouraged to join.

This would facilitate plant and seed swapping, sharing of knowledge and tips, sharing updates specific to the allotment sites (lost and found, reminding people to shut the gate etc) and any news from the committee.

Action: Georgie to set up a Facebook group for STAA and confirm administrator duties.

Agreed that responsibility for updating the communication channels with relevant messages would be assigned as follows:

- Tilmore noticeboard - Abi
- Sheet noticeboard - Steve
- Social media - Georgie
- Website - David

Action: Abi to approach PTC about getting a new noticeboard installed at Tilmore.

9. PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE - CURRENT OFFER, ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS (QUOTES) AND HOW TO ADVERTISE TO PLOT HOLDERS (LIAISON WITH PTC/SPC TO SIGNPOST TO US)

The committee discussed the possibility of using our insurance offer to increase membership. Currently both councils' terms and conditions which are sent to new ploholders include a reference to an insurance scheme offered by SWCAA and no mention of the STAA offer (public liability insurance included as part of the £5 annual membership fee). We know from the member survey that this is considered one of the key benefits of membership by the current members, so it could be a good way to encourage non members to join. Though some councils and allotment associations (where these are responsible for running sites) do mandate the holding of public liability insurance, ours do not - the agreement states that plot holders will indemnify the council against any claims and that public liability insurance is recommended but not required.

Action: David to speak to Jenny at SPC and Kathryn/Angela at PTC to confirm the councils' requirements for public liability insurance and to ask that, in the case that they are not willing to mandate that ploholders hold this, they amend the terms and conditions to inform new plot holders about the STAA insurance offer.

10. PREPARATION FOR AGM ON 10TH NOVEMBER

The committee discussed the arrangements for the AGM on the 10th November and agreed that it would be useful to have a further meeting the week before to go through the running order and make sure the meeting runs smoothly.

Action: Georgie to arrange a pre-meeting the week before the AGM

Action: Georgie to edit AGM agenda to add names for each item to assist with running order.

Action: Georgie to extend invitation to Cllr Robin Forrest and Jenny (clerk) from SPC and Cllr Peter Clist and Kathryn/Angela (clerk) from PTC so that they could present the prizes.

Action: Alison to track down the cups for Tilmore and Steve to track down the cups for Sheet and to pass to Georgie.

Action: Georgie to get cups engraved in time for AGM.

The possibility of increasing the membership fee (currently £5) was discussed. We are in a stronger financial position than previously, however for us to continue to offer the benefits that we do, as well as the additional offerings that the member survey suggests there is demand for, the committee agreed that there would be reasonable justification to increase the fee from next year's AGM onwards.

Agreed that membership fee will go up to £7 from 2022-23 onwards.

Action: Georgie to add membership fee increase to AGM agenda to explain to members how and why the fee would be increasing from next year onwards.

11. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (LAST UPDATED IN 2017)

The committee discussed the documents on the website, which have not been updated for four years. Agreed that it would be worth reviewing these and making sure they are accurate and cover all the different responsibilities that the committee has as these roles may have evolved since the descriptions were written. This will also help in communication and liaison with members - i.e. making sure they understand who is the best point of contact for various issues.

Action: all committee members to review their own role descriptions and feed back to David if amendments are required to the documents on the website.

Also discussed how although the liaison between the Sheet members of the committee and Sheet Parish Council is fairly streamlined (Steve is usually the main point of contact), this is not quite as co-ordinated at Tilmore. Discussed whether it should be the Tilmore rep who is the main point of contact with the council, or the Chair, or a combination - a decision was not reached on this as it may be quite a large workload and the Tilmore rep position has only just been filled. Slaney and Jerry/June would work together and discuss.

Action: Steve and David to write a description for the Sheet rep.

Action: Slaney and Jerry/June to write a description for the Tilmore rep.

Once the role descriptions have been reviewed and updated, we can look at the terms of reference for the committee to make sure this is aligned.

Action: Georgie to add to agenda for next normal committee meeting (post AGM).

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Competition judging - Sheet Parish Council have requested that since they provide the £50 prize for the best kept plot, they would like all association members to be automatically entered into the competition, rather than just those who enter themselves. Alison explained that this would require a larger time commitment for the judges - the current system where plot holders must enter themselves into the competition in order to be judged was set up to avoid the judging taking all day. The committee agreed that it should be possible to ascertain quite quickly which plots were well maintained enough to be contenders for the prizes and that full, thorough scoring would therefore not necessarily be required for every single plot on both sites. The committee also agreed that individual feedback about competition results would not necessarily be guaranteed to all ploholders, in order to reduce the burden on the judges.

Confirmed that Tim is happy to continue judging the competition despite his intention to stand down as Chair at the AGM.

The meeting was closed at 9.30pm.

Date of next meeting: 7.30pm, Wednesday 3rd November (pre-AGM meeting)