

ROSEDALE ROAD & BULL MEADOW ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

MEETING 8th March 2024

1. Present: A Klecha (Chair), S Walsh (Secretary), S Cheeseman (Membership Secretary), C Cheeseman (Committee), D Smith (Committee), M Brand, K Walsh, S Simmonds, A Davison, C Davison, C Robertson, A Osborn, J Bishop, J Alabaster, B Alabaster, A Collins, L Dartnell, J Stephens (18 total)
2. Apologies: J Fielder, S Klecha, G Ashurst, K Fisher, T Whiberley, K Stephens (6 total)
3. Minutes from 9th February 24: agreed
4. Matters Arising:
 - a) Smith's Garden Centre discount cards – SW has chased this and been advised an email will be sent when they are ready for collection
 - b) Tool bank – some committee members and site managers met on 4th March. Productive meeting with initial actions agreed including tool audit (what we have where, age, cost to replace, training/intro needed before plotholder use, protective equipment/clothing that needs to be worn), a form to record who uses what etc and the need to check insurance requirements. Further updates will be given at future meetings.
5. Rosedale Road Report (Alan Collins):
 - a) Site in good nick.
 - b) Scrap metal collection raised £84, this will go into the scalpings payment pot. However, a plot-holder had left two old beer barrels (9kg & 11kg), AC & CR took with the load to the dealership where they were told it is an offence to try and scrap beer barrels. They belong to the brewery and, if the police had been present at the dealership, questions would have been asked as an offence would have occurred. AC has managed to negotiate with Chadwell Club's suppliers to take the barrels away. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES CAN BEER BARRELS, OR GAS CANISTERS, BE LEFT FOR THE SCRAP METAL COLLECTION.**
 - c) Plumbing upgraded, water leak fixed. JS offered lagging for pipework if AC would find it useful. Water will be turned back on 1st April.
 - d) Blackcurrant bushes that had been removed from a plot had been left near manure/chippings piles. Presumably for anyone to help themselves if wanted for their plot. If that was the case, please check a few days after you leave such items – if they are still there then it is up to you to dispose of them – perhaps composting, or burning if the material is dry. Please be aware of neighbours, wind levels and direction if that is what you choose to do.
 - e) Scalpings will be organised soon as better weather should allow for this to happen. AC will let users know when the car park at RR will not be available; he will also organise the helping hands.
 - f) CR asked permission to arrange a service for the lawnmower; AK agreed.
 - g) The working party held on 17th February had a record turnout, at least 15 came along to help. Please see our Facebook page or website for photos. Well done and thank you to all who participated – it was very much appreciated.
6. Bull Meadow Report (Les Dartnell):
 - a) Manure on site, some wood chips.
 - b) AK has cleared most of the vacant plot 29A, just need to spray the brambles and it will be ready for new plotholders.
 - c) The working party held on 3rd March had a good turnout, special thanks to Ade who helped at both RR and BM! It was a good session with a lot of work completed – photos on Facebook page and website.

7. Treasurer's Report:

- a) Apologies given by Treasurer unable to attend meeting as on holiday.

8. Membership Secretary's Report (Sheila Cheeseman):

- a) 19 on waiting list. One plot on BM let to new plot-holders. One vacant plot on BM – nearly ready for letting.
- b) Please can any plot-holder thinking of reducing their plot size, leaving the site, or trying to move plots/sites contact the Membership Secretary in the first instance. RRBMAA operate a waiting list system, which can only work properly if SC is kept informed.

9. Any Other Business:

- a) **Raffle** raised £18 – thanks to Sheila & Clive for organising
- b) The **overhanging trees** from the cemetery at RR site are causing some plotholders problems with shade etc; AK will speak to his contact at Thurrock Council with regard to trimming etc.
- c) AC raised that at the **RR entrance** – the large vehicle often parked at the Keep Clear sign continues to cause difficulties for access too often. The meeting was reminded that the sign, although painted by Thurrock Council, is advisory and so not enforceable. AK will check if that is still the case.
- d) **Thurrock Allotment Steering Group**
- CR and AK attended the most recent meeting. An old painting of the Globe Works allotment site has recently come to light at Thurrock Museum, this will be the focus point of an exhibition celebrating Thurrock allotments to be held at the Town Hall in Grays sometime in the Autumn. More information will be shared as to how we get involved.
 - CR, as chair of TASG, has been asked to help sort out a complaint at another allotment site in Thurrock. There was some discussion of the role TASG have in such situations, specially as they are named in our Thurrock Council contract as a point of appeal for unresolved complaints and are named as such in RRBMAA's Complaints Policy and Procedures.
 - Whitehall Lane Allotments are hosting their second Open Day/Plant Swap on Saturday 18th May
 - Next meeting of TASG is on 6th May
- e) **Veg Talk** –
- Potatoes – JS asked why his second earlies were chitting more quickly than first earlies. Answer was as they had been kept in the dark the chits had got long and leggy rather the short, stronger, green purplish chits that would grow if potatoes placed in a light position. Can plant out early/now but be wary of ground frosts up to end May; won't kill the plants but will knock them back to a later and smaller crop. Pink Fir Apple potatoes have a long growing season, 26 weeks harvesting late September/October. They are prone to blight, but do store very well, don't sprout as much as other main crop potatoes, do like a lot of water if not you will get small individuals rather than larger spuds.
- Raspberry Canes Summer fruiting cut the canes that have fruited and turned brown. Autumn fruiting cut in autumn/winter when crop finished.
- Blackcurrant/Redcurrant if growing as cordons need to be started from scratch. Redcurrants should have new growth pruned to 2/3 buds in summer or November. Blackcurrants prune in winter taking one third of darkest wood out.

10. Next Meeting: 7.30pm Friday 12th April 2024 at Tyrells Hall Club