

ROSEDALE ROAD & BULL MEADOW ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

MEETING 14th June 2024

1. Present: A Klecha (Chair), S Walsh (Secretary), S Cheeseman (Membership Secretary), J Fielder (Treasurer), K Walsh, A Davison, C Davison, C Robertson, J Bishop, J Alabaster, B Alabaster, A Collins, J Stephens (13 total)
2. Apologies: C Cheeseman, S Carter, S Klecha, S Simmonds, L Dartnell
3. Minutes from 12th April 24: agreed
4. Matters Arising:
 - a) **Tool bank** –tool loan form at both sites, please cooperate with site managers with this new system it is set up to help all plotholders' health and safety
 - b) **RR entrance** – signage – Thurrock Council have repainted Keep Clear. It has been noted that the vehicle owner is parking more considerately as another plotholder discussed with them possible need for emergency vehicle access.
 - c) **Plot inspections** were conducted on Thursday 13th June across both sites. Overall many plots looked great, with a good range of veg and fruit being grown. However, there were plots on both sites that need to be weeded, tidied and cultivated – emails and letters will go out next week.
Also noted on inspection - several plots on RR have **POTATO BLIGHT**, this is much earlier than expected, probably caused by the wet/warm/cold weather we have experienced so far this season. Deep black spots first appear on leaves and the blackness then spreads to the stems. See Veg Talk section for advice.
 - d) **Open Day Saturday 17th August** all donations welcome on the day, including vegetables, fruit, jams, chutneys, pickles and cakes. CR & JF to liaise with regard to leaflets 300/400 needed to be delivered in immediate area around RR. A planning meeting to be arranged for all who want to help on the day, or beforehand. See Any Other Business for more information.
5. Rosedale Road Report (Alan Collins & Clive Robertson):
 - a) Site mostly good but some plots need attention.
 - b) Wood chips on site; no manure at the moment the next delivery will be to the north end car park area.
 - c) 12 bags of Gro Organic available – please speak to CR.
 - d) CR has cut all the grass on the main paths – thank you!
 - e) Scrap metal collection raised £108 and took two trips – thank you for the very useful donations
 - f) Scalpings will be organised soon, probably on a Tuesday in the next couple of weeks. Cars will not be able to access the site for at least 6 hours. AC will let SW know so an email can be sent as to when the car park at RR will not be available; he will also organise the helping hands. To be paid for from the scrap money.
 - g) Any scrap metal money left over will be spent on new wheelbarrows, servicing the Honda rotavator and purchase plumbing spare parts for the water system. Thank you to Alan for dealing with the scrap metal!
 - h) CR has updated the sign at the south end of the site – please DO NOT dump cuttings, shrubs etc – this is to keep the area tidy as it is in use as a general storage area for RR.
 - i) Slime algae warning for those with ponds on their plots. If you have it clear it out and compost.
 - j) CR would like to thank whoever put new soap next to the washbasin.
6. Bull Meadow Report (Andy Klecha):
 - a) A slow start at BM a lot of plot-holders are struggling to get started, the wet weather and the heavy soil have slowed down the start of growing season.
 - b) Wood chips on site, manure delivery next week.
 - c) Vacant plot to be let soon; a “new” half plot has just been released will need clearing before can be let.

- d) The double gate that leads into the site is damaged. Looks as though it has been hit by a vehicle on its way out as bows towards the track. The gates can be opened and closed if pulled together and moved at the same time rather than one at a time. AK will look at adjusting the pillars to see if that works and buy a new combination lock.

7. Treasurer's Report (Jane Fielder):

- a) No bills needed to be paid since last meeting in April.
- b) Bank balance is £4422.67, cash-in-hand is £75.71. Total £4498.38 (this excludes cash held by site managers at RR & BM).
- c) Money in since April meeting includes £80 from Gro Organic sales
- d) CR reimbursed for mower repairs costing £90
- e) CR reported that the latest water meter reading is 5557

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

- a) 21 on waiting list. One plot on BM let to new plot-holders. One, newly released half-plot on BM to be cleared and let. SC plans to invite next on list to view plots on Saturday.
- b) Keys and discount cards are not always returned when members leave. Smith's/Chadwell Garden Centre can't tell us who is still using the cards as their bar code is just linked to our name, not individually allocated. The key deposit scheme only applies to the newer members so not clear yet how effective that is in encouraging return of keys and cards.
- c) SW to email all members to offer the Smith's discount card – not sure who does/not have a card. SC will distribute.

9. Any Other Business:

- a) **Raffle** raised £4.50 – thanks to Sheila for organising
- b) **Summer Social** – BBQ **NEW** date Saturday 3rd August, 5pm start at RR. Also be a good opportunity to have a quick meeting at 5pm to plan the Open Day – please come along. Email reminder will be sent nearer the time.
- c) **RR Open Day** – Saturday 17th August – planning meeting 5pm on 3rd August Rosedale Road site.
- d) **RR Main Gate** – this must be kept locked at all times, members feel safer if the gate is locked so stopping any passers-by wandering in. One of our plot-holders who lives locally spotted some teenagers walking through at 11pm one night. She asked them, politely to leave, which they did, but one half of the gate had been left wide open allowing easy access! Lock the gates when on site and when you leave!
- e) **Veg Talk** – BLIGHT – spotted on RR, none at BM

Once you have it you must either remove the affected leaves if not too bad, or cut down the haulms (tops, stems and foliage of the potato plant) if the stems have been affected. If cutting off the haulms then leave the potatoes for two weeks before lifting – you will then know if they are edible or not! The cut-off haulms must be removed from the site. DO NOT put them on your plot compost heaps, take them home and put in your brown garden waste bin, or your general waste bin.

If you don't have any signs then you can take some preventative measures. Spray a copper based fungicide available at Smith's Garden Centre, or Chadwell Allotment Shop. An organic method that has had some success in the south-west would be to spray with a mix of milk and water, unclear how successful this method of prevention would be.

Pink Fir Apple potatoes, a very late main crop, are notorious for getting blight so keep an eye on these if you grow them. A good main crop blight resistant potato is Sarpo Mira.

JS suggested spraying a seaweed mixture on potatoes, this will add nutrients and make a healthier plant that may withstand the blight but will not prevent.

No blight seen on tomatoes on either site, hopefully will stay that way!

10. Next Meeting: 7.30pm Friday 13th September 2024 at Tyrells Hall Club