

Minutes for L.A.A. on Wednesday January 5th 2022, Town Council Offices at 7p.m.

- All welcomed and wished a Happy New Year.
- Apologies- Jane Lacey.
- Persons present – Kay West, Samantha Shakespeare, Hilary Tuite, Stuart Sidebotham, Glenys Millard, Graham Millard, Viv Pearson.
- Copies of minutes from last meeting referred to and available for people to read.

Matters Arising from Minutes of November 3rd 2021

- 1) No vacant plots.** Number on the waiting list has increased from **12** in November to **17**. However, several plots might become vacant in the Spring as there are five borderline plots and a couple of plot holders have been sent letters and will be receiving phone calls as a result of the plot inspection on Wednesday Jan 5th 2022.
- 2) Allotment Veterans scheme.** So far, there has been no response to this but, in time, it is thought likely that there will be an uptake for this scheme.
- 3) Using part of the Community Garden to create 3 more mini plots.** So far, no one has expressed an interest in having one of these plots but their availability has not been promoted because they are not complete. The three mini plots that were created need a peat free top soil added and this needs to be sourced. As this would need to be a considerable amount and quite costly it was thought that if it was left until the proposed new plots for the old composting area were constructed so that a bulk order could be placed.
- 4) Disabled toilet facility.** Funding is required for this and it is something that will be followed up once other commitments have been addressed. Stuart had forwarded forms for grant applications for proposed projects, from the Council, to Kay and these will be actioned.
- 5) Report from John Braithwaite - Kings seed Catalogues:**

“This year saw a drop off in orders: the year saw an order total of £295, after discounts compared with £400+ for the previous year, in spite of an overall increase number of plot holders. and the well publicising of the seed catalogues. It's clear enough that ordering with Kings is of benefit to all Members and plot holders not only terms of quality and pricing of goods but also for the free availability of gardening advice from experts at Kings. Still, we must continue to persevere and hope our is more widely acted upon in the future.” (Delivery of goods to 11 Ryelands Road and orders can be collected from the Council Offices as the Committee do not have contact details many of our members). It was felt that the various Covid restrictions had made it more difficult to access the catalogues, which were widely advertised on Face Book, the Allotment Web Site and posters on the Allotment noticeboards.

6) On site secure post box. A secure post box will be placed in the Community Shed. Forms and cheques for LAA membership can be posted in this. **N.B. see below**

7) Treasurers Report from Hilary. The bank signatures are now up and running and the balance was £1,363.16 mid-September. Payment for the insurance is due at the end of January. Because of Data Protection, the Committee still have no definitive list of who is a current member so the amount to be paid will be based on the estimate of £154.74 for 2020 until 2021.

8) Admin for 2022 LAA membership. In future this will be administered by the L.A.A. Treasurer, Hilary. There will be a secure post box in the Community Shed for plot holders to post their membership form with a cheque and a designated day and time for plot holders to go to the Allotment Community area to hand over relevant payment and paperwork to a Committee Member. This could be a social event with refreshments being available.

- a. Membership Forms can be collected from the noticeboard on the Allotment Site and forms and pens can be made available to collect from the Community Shed.*
- b. New invoices for 2022/23 will be issued to plot holders in March for payment in April. and a letter re membership payment details will be included in this.*
- c. The Committee feel that the annual fee of £7.50 is a reasonable amount to pay for the benefits of Allotment Membership and hope to promote this.*

9) Wildlife Area and area for more mini plots. This area has been strimmed. The new mini plots will be marked out in the Spring and it is hoped that these can be constructed in the Spring. Stuart has been researching materials for making the mini plots. These are manufactured by The British Recycled Plastic Company and were mentioned in www.allotment-garden.org/product-reviews/ Although initially expensive, they work out as good value for money as they do not need any time or money spent on maintenance, and are longer lasting than timber frames, which eventually rot away. Perhaps this is a project for the Council Grant application or lottery funding? (See 3 and 11).

Planning the wildlife area. See suggestions below:

- a. As there is vehicular access running parallel to one side of this area it was thought that a small hedge or border would be advisable to prevent vehicles from inadvertently encroaching on this area. This would protect plot holders raised bed pathways and provide a suitable habitat. A small "ditch could run on the inside to aid and attract greater biodiversity and help with drainage as the track can become waterlogged in the winter.
- b. Pond in wildlife area/scrapes.
- c. Bug hotels - could do this as an allotment workshop and involve families with this. Find information on designs and what recycling materials can be used in construction.
- d. Wildflowers/ plants that attract insects.
- e. Places for animals to hibernate and suitable mini habitat (for slow worms).
- f. Plant hedge with some trees to provide food source for birds and insects.
- g. Mow pathways through so habitat is not trampled on.

h. Seating areas.

i. Keep a record of birds spotted in the Community Area, where plot holders record what has been spotted, like they do in hides at Bodenham lakes.

10) RSPB Garden birdwatch 28th — 30th January 2022. It was suggested that this could take place at the allotments. Information on Face Book, the Allotment Web Site and posters could be used to advertise this. To take part, watch the birds for one hour at some point over the three days the Birdwatch is taking place. Only count the birds that land, not the ones flying by. We could assign an area to anyone interested in doing this from their plot and submit results from everyone to the RSPB. You can **pre-register** to take part and receive a free guide that will help to identify most common garden birds. It will also entitle you to a 20% discount code to spend in RSPB's online shop. Julie has contacted the Environment Agency about having **bat and bird boxes**. Stuart is looking into the possibility of obtaining these but advice might have to be given from an independent source as Leominster is currently an Environment Agency Red Zone.

11) Swap table/ keeping this area tidy is difficult as being open to the weather can be an issue particularly when the wind blows lightweight objects into the nearby hedges. **Follow up the idea of having** an open Swap Shed that could also have advertising and notices on the walls? Perhaps this can be included on the Grants Form (see 3 on minutes) Possibly sponsorship from a local business?

12) Is it possible to act upon recommendations from The IYN Assessment?

- a) *Alternatives to pesticides and herbicides – Plot holders need to be given alternatives. Perhaps a workshop delivered by a relevant organisation such as the Wildlife Trust, Soil Association information, Ryton and the web site:
<https://www.allotment-garden.org/product-reviews/> (see 8)*
- b) *Companion planting? (see above)*
- c) *More plots to have water butts to conserve water- A mains water supply is still needed as there can be very dry spells. A person from Ledbury had contacted Sam re 1,000 litre I.B.C (Intermediate Bulb Container that is used for storing liquids) being available for a delivery charge of £35. This was advertised on FB and one plot holder requested one. When this was followed up it appeared that only one could be delivered and there have been no further communications from this person for a considerable time. Stuart said that the Council had an I.B.C. with a slight leak so it could not be kept on Council lorries but they couldn't keep it so it was suggested that it be given to the interested plot holder.*

A.O.B.

Dates for future meetings

Day	Date	Place	Time
Wednesday	March 2 nd	Council Offices	7 p.m.
Saturday	May 7 th A.G.M Election of Committee for 2022-23	Allotment Community Area And committee meeting as appropriate	2 p.m.
Sunday	July 10 th	Allotment Community Area	3 p.m.
Sunday	Sept 11 th	Allotment Community Area	3 p.m.
Wednesday	Nov 9 th	Council Offices	7 p.m.

Other dates

- May Plant Fayre (Held on the 23rd in 2021).
- Leominster in Bloom I Y N assessment?
- September Plant Fayre (held on the 18th in 2021).
- October Harvest Supper (held on the 8th in 2021).

Harvest Supper. There was a discussion regarding the pre-covid Allotment Awards which were presented at the Harvest Supper. It relied upon three inspections over a year by an independent person. Obviously, this meant that decisions were not biased. However, one view was that these awards were not always fair as people had differing commitments timewise which would obviously impact on time spent on their plots. Also, plots were cultivated in a variety of ways with a different emphasis on what was grown. Consequently, it was decided that there should be more and different categories. It was suggested that these could be advertised in advance so that plot holders could be asked for nominations.
To be discussed at a future meeting.

Fallen Tree by allotment Entrance – The Steward has been informed and has said that it is the responsibility of the farmer as it borders his land. On the morning of Jan 5th, as the allotment site inspection was completed, someone scrutinised the tree and was then seen approaching the farmers residence.

Social events for 2022

It was felt that social events, such as a BBQ, were an important as it gave an opportunity for plot holders to exchange news and information. The Committee decided that this should be discussed at the meeting in May as events would probably take place in July and August.

Thank you to those who attended and for your ideas for the topics discussed.