

Minutes for L.A.A. on Wednesday March 2nd 2022, Town Council Offices at 7p.m.

- All welcomed.
- Apologies- Viv Pearson, Graham Millard, Glenys Millard.
- Persons present – Kay West, Samantha Shakespeare, Hilary Tuite, Stuart Sidebotham, Jane Lacey.
- Copies of minutes from meeting of Jan 5th 2022 referred to and available for people to read.

Matters Arising from Minutes of January 5th2022

1. **NO vacant plots.** (We have 117 plots (including 7 mini plots) with 95 plot holders.) 19 people on waiting list.
2. **Allotment Veterans scheme** Viv Pearson and John Braithwaite will become Veteran Members as a thank you for all their work and support for the L.A. A. It has been agreed that the LAA will pay for their membership for one year. To date, no other people have taken up this offer.
3. **Using part of the Community Garden to create 3 more mini plots.** Their availability has not been promoted because they are not complete. They need a peat free topsoil added and this needs to be sourced. Hopefully ready by May
4. **Construction of raised mini beds on trimmed area.** It was decided that recycled plastic structures would be a more environmentally friendly alternative and they would require little maintenance once constructed. However, they are more costly. Stuart researched cost and worked with Kay to complete a grant form, which was submitted to the Council. Hopefully, there will be some funding available for this project in the near future. They 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.
5. **Disabled toilet facility.** Funding is required for this and it is something that will be followed up once other commitments have been addressed. Stuart has forwarded forms for grant applications for proposed projects, from the Council to Kay, and these will be actioned.
6. **Report from John Braithwaite.** Kings seed Catalogues 2022/3. These will be available for Allotment Association members to collect from John's home address, 11 Ryelands Road, between 10.00am and 12.00am on given days of the week. (To be announced.) Also, orders can be collected from this address. Facebook, the Allotment Web Site, the Allotment notice board and post box in the Community Shed will be used for relevant information.

August - Catalogues arrive

Start of November - hand in first orders

Mid December - goods arrive

Early December- second order (about a month after the first one.)

7. **Fallen tree by the allotment gate.** The farmer responsible for this fallen tree was informed about this at the start of January as it borders his land but has not yet dealt with this. It cannot be touched by the Town Council in its current hanging state but they are monitoring it to ensure the safety of plot holders.
8. **On site secure post box.** A secure post box has now been placed in the Community Shed. Forms and cheques for LAA membership can be posted in this. It is regularly checked for communications from plot holders.
9. **RSPB Garden birdwatch 28th – 30th January 2022 at the allotment site.** The information was advertised on Face Book, The Allotment Web Site and posters on the Allotment notice board. Forms and identification charts were made available for those who wished to take part from the allotment site results for the whole area. Hilary, Sam and Kay all took part and the results have been submitted to the R.S.P.B.
10. **Bat and bird boxes.** Stuart is in contact with Jude from the Environment Agency and is looking into the possibility of obtaining these and advice on where to site them.
11. **Membership Report from Hilary.** Membership payment is due in August 2022. 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) *A letter re membership payment details will be included with the plot payments for April 2022/23. However, it is not due to be paid to the L.A.A. until mid-July, in readiness for August renewal.*
 - 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.*
12. **Wildlife Area.** The Woodland Trust has donated saplings/ whips to the Town Council and Stuart has agreed to pass these on to Leominster Allotment Association to plant as a hedge to border the track adjacent to the Wildlife 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. Suggestions given below, as recorded in minutes of previous meeting on Jan 5th 2022.
 - a) *Seating areas.*
 - 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) *Keep a record of birds spotted in the Community Area, where plot holders record what has been spotted, as they do in hides at Bodenham lakes.*

13. **Swap table.** Keeping this area tidy is difficult as being open to the weather can be an issue when windy weather blows lightweight objects into the nearby hedges. The idea of having an enclosed swap area is being followed up. This could be as simple as boxing in the table on two sides and the back, adding height so that some form of roofing could be added, possibly using the side of the metal cube to aid with this enclosure. Stuart kindly found and delivered different sized pallets that could be used as part of this structure. Face Book, Allotment web site and notice board posters have been put up to request a work party or volunteers to help with construction.
14. **Leominster In Bloom It's Your Neighbourhood.** Ongoing discussion and action needed to see which recommendations can be actioned? (See minutes from January 2022)
15. **New categories for judging plots.** It was felt that there should be a wider range of categories and awards, to be given out at the Harvest Supper. This would reflect the fact that plots are cultivated in a variety of ways with a different emphasis on what is grown. Face Book, Allotment web site post and notice board posters have been put up to ask plot holders for ideas. Stuart is contacting possible judges for this. Awards will be given at the October Harvest Supper (Friday 7th to be confirmed).

A.O.B

1) Having an Allotment site Open Day- Sunday June 5th 2.00pm until 5.00pm.

Leominster Festival organisers were contacted to see if there would be "Open Gardens" in 2022. This event has previously been organised by the Priory but they said this would not be taking place in 2022. Leominster Festival has kindly offered to promote an Allotment Site Open Day on our behalf. **This will only be able to go ahead if people will volunteer to be the necessary Stewards to assist with visitors safe parking.**

2) Improving the entrance Parking Area. Make it more welcoming (apart from tidying up the Swap Table).

It was suggested in a previous meeting that a post to prevent the gate from swinging right back into the hedge might be an improvement. Other ideas are:

- a) Painting a "Welcome to Ginhall Lane Allotments" sign on the cube.
- b) Moving the tubs from the overgrown hedge area to go along the side of the cube and plant them up.
- c) Ask the Grounds team to put rosemary plant in the rotten tub into the ground in the same area, keep the plaque and apply for a replacement tub.
- d) Use posts with a rope to demarcate parking area as vegetation is encroaching on this. LIB have offered two no longer needed planters to the Town Council and they have agreed to place them on the allotment site. These could be used to help demarcate parking area, rather than posts and rope.

3) Leominster in Bloom, It's Your Neighbourhood Award. We will be taking part in and the judges will visit the allotments on Saturday July 16th at 11.00 a.m. to look around the allotment site, accompanied by LAA committee members. They may stop for a chat with anyone working on their plot as they have a keen interest in getting different viewpoints on the way in which a plot is used and the wider allotment community.

4) **Seed Swap.** At the end of January, we were asked if we would like to have a stall at the February 12th Seed Swap. The Committee declined this invitation as it was thought we would not have enough donations to make this viable.

5) **Proposed increase in rent.** The Town Council asked the L.A.A to notify plot holders of a proposed increase in rent in 2023. This is due to the increasing cost of maintaining the allotment site. This will be clarified prior to the proposed rent increase. As well as recording this in the minutes the plot holders have been notified of this on Face Book, Allotment web site and notice board posters will be put up.

6) **Request from Romey for donations of herbs to L.I.B.** The Leominster cubs will be planting up the two beds (as you exit the Etnam Street car park walking into town). They were thinking about having sustainable beds planted with herbs. This request was put on the Allotment website, Face Book and the Allotment noticeboard.

7) **Social events for 2022.** It was felt that social events, such as a BBQ, were 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. However, without support from plot holders, the lack of funds will make it increasingly difficult for the committee to raise any revenue to subsidise any social gatherings.

8) **Communication / Community Shed Post Box.** The Committee work closely with the Town Council, who are very supportive, on the behalf of plot holders. Minutes of the Committee Meetings are posted on Face Book, the Allotment Web Site and hard copies on the Allotment Notice board. Numerous questions that are received have already been raised and the outcomes recorded in the minutes. Checking the minutes will help to keep plot holders informed and make them aware of ongoing developments and issues. There is a secure post box in the Community Shed which can be used as a means of communication. The post box will be regularly checked to see if plot holders have any suggestions or concerns regarding the running of the allotment site.

9) **Request from Stuart on behalf of the Town Council - Planting trees at Ginhall Lane Green Community Orchard, Wednesday March 16th at 9:30.** Notification of this has been put on Face Book, Allotment web site and notice board to ask if any plot holders are available to help plant thirty fruit trees.

10) Important Notification for all plot holders re The Future of Leominster Allotment Association

A number of the current committee are relinquishing their posts. Consequently, the LAA will need a Chair Person, Secretary, Membership Secretary and Treasurer.

The current incumbents will remain on the committee to support and maintain a viable number to allow this association to continue and flourish.

Nominations can be given to the Town Council or placed in the Community Shed Post Box before the AGM on May 7th

Dates for future meetings

| Day | Date | Place | Time |
|-----------|--|--------------------------|--------|
| Saturday | May 7 th A.G.M Election of Committee for 2022-23 | Allotment Community Area | 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

21st May 2022-Plant Fayre. Without support from plot holders, it will become increasingly difficult for the Committee to raise any revenue to subsidise any social gatherings and improve the Allotment site

- Allotment Open Day Sunday June 5th from 2.00pm until 5.00pm
- Leominster in Bloom I Y N assessment Saturday July 16th at 11.00am
- September Plant Fayre (held on the 18th in 2021.)
- October Harvest Supper (held on the 7th in 2021.)

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