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| **Minutes of Allotment Association Meeting, Wednesday January 11th ,7pm, Council Art Gallery** | | |
| Present | Kay West (acting chair), Hilary Tuite (treasurer and membership sec), Stuart Sidebotham (Council Grounds), Sue Morris (minutes sec) Viv Pearson, Hazel Davies, Mary Locock, Simon P. | |
| Apologies | Glenys and Graham Millard, Jane Lacey, Valerie Waring | |
| Minutes | Taken as read as already circulated | |
| Allocation of tasks | Would be done as the needs arise. | |
| RSPB | Plot holders are encouraged to take part in the RSPB annual bird watch on 27th and 29th January. Record all the birds which visit your plot for one hour on one of the days. Forms and observation sheets to be made available in the Community Shed. | |
| Recruitment of new members | Following Hilary’s suggestion, Stuart will include a flyer explaining about joining the allotment association with the rental invoices. This will emphasise the separation between the council rent and the association membership fee. The Association membership runs concurrently with the National Allotment Association which is due on August 18th. One or more recruitment days with a presence by the main entrance will be held from June.  Simon asked what the benefits of membership of the association were and it was explained that the main ones are insurance cover under the NAA scheme and the King’s Seed Scheme. Simon also commented on the high cost of the allotment rent in Leominster. Kay pointed out that the costs in Leominster were comparable to those elsewhere in Herefordshire. The site is leased from the landowner so the rents have to cover this cost. | |
| Leominster in Bloom Spring Plant Fair and It’s your neighbourhood award | Spring Fair to be held on 20th May. It was agreed to take part and appeals will be made for plot holders to raise and donate extra seedlings.  The Autumn Plant Fair will be held on 23rd September.  It was agreed that the LiB It’s Your Neighbourhood award was generally positive and helps us to work a bit harder at improvements. Kay will apply and prepare a dossier for the judges. | |
| Treasurer’s report & Membership | The balance at the bank is currently £1291.76. Since our last meeting, the payment for the first seed order has been paid for with the LAA making a small surplus of £17.51.  Membership now stands at 27 fully paid-up members. Hilary made some suggestions for recruiting new members (see above). | |
| Vacant plots, waiting list, new plot holder info pack | There are 14 on the waiting list and currently no vacant plots. Stuart is still working on the new plot holder information pack which is hoped to be an A4 sheet with bullet points outlining the rules of the site. | |
| Dates of meetings | Wed, March 15th, AGM Sunday May, 14th, July 9th, September 10th, November 8th.  Harvest Supper Oct 6th or 13th. Could Council check cost and availability of the Forbury? | |
| Site Matters | Improvements to swap table | Roofing and side panels have already been acquired and we are awaiting better weather to install. Volunteers needed. |
| Repairs to water tanks | Stuart has tried many plumbers but no one has been willing to take on the job. Viv suggested Les Price who did the original installation. Sam Shakespeare asked for consideration to be given to installing simple drainage channels under the walkways at the far end of the site which become saturated and muddy if the water pipes are leaking in the area as happened before. |
| Removal of taps | There was discussion about the use of hose-pipes for those who are unable to carry watering cans (e.g. Simon who had an injury in the summer) Hose-pipes are currently banned because some tenants had used overnight sprinklers which use a huge amount of water. This will ultimately be a Council decision. |
| Improve water harvesting from cube and tree bog. | Sue will attempt to find someone with a trailer who could collect rainwater butts or IBCS . |
| Wildlife area | Samantha has asked her colleague, Nick Staples, a meadow expert, to advise on care and development of the wildlife area. A natural meadow grassland could be developed in the space of a few years. He will visit the site on Tuesday, 17th Jan at 10.  30. Stuart also hopes to attend. We hope to get advice on siting bat boxes although Samantha can do this. Viv suggested a working group to make bird/bat boxes. Echo also make these. FB posts to be used to inform plot holders of the aims of the wildlife area. (Sue with input from Samantha and Kay) |
| Gate to shut off the far end of site to vehicles in winter | Kay would like a gate rather than the fencing used at the moment. She needs the measurements to plan wild life area. Stuart said there wasn’t enough money in the council grounds maintenance fund to do this but he would check. There are currently no funds for the disabled composting toilet. |
| Awards Scheme | A judge to visit the site about 3 times a year would be needed. Mary suggested David Thresher, from Berrington Hall. Stuart will try to contact him. Categories to be decided. | |
| AOB | Hazel has obtained a pack of small trees (rowan, hazel, crab apple) from the Woodland Trust. They should arrive in March and an appeal for help with planting will be made then.  Simon asked if anyone had used “Wonderwall” which is a system of protection for brassicas.  Restart photo of the month on FB (Sue to ask Rob) | |