

St Thomas Allotment Association

MINUTES OF MAY 2022 COMMITTEE MEETING

1. Preliminaries

1.1 attendance/quorum/ welcomes

Present (quorum present): John Butler (Chair); David Solman (Secretary), Charles Knill (Trading Manager), Paul Collier (Treasurer), Christine Webb (Events Co-ordinator), Jim Clark (Web & Data Manager), Claire Richards (Pines & Regents), Rob Shields (Rackfields), Richard Brownbridge (Clapperbrook La.), William Turner (Ashwood Rd.); **apologies:** Rob Harding (Ide La.); **guests:** Jonathan Tooze on behalf of Rob Harding (Ide La.); **absences:** Tim Snell (Newman Rd.).

The Committee welcomed Jonathan Tooze from Ide Lane allotments and introduced themselves.

Agreed 1. The Secretary to discuss, with Rob H. and Jonathan Tooze, scope to co-opt JT as deputy to Rob H.; the Secretary will then report back to the committee.

1.2 Previous Minutes for approval/sign-off

The following draft minutes had been circulated (inclusive of any amendments notified to the Secretary prior to this meeting); these were read through and signed-off without further amendment: (i) Cttee Mtg 3 - Sunday 13th March v2.1 | (ii) AGM March 13th | (iii) sub-Cttee mtg - Tues 22nd March v1.1 | (iv) Cttee Mtg 4 (online) - Thurs 28th April.

1.3 Matters Arising

From those previous minutes, the following matters arose:

- **Noted 1.** John B. circulated a 1 pp summary of insurances available from the Somerset Federation of Gardening Clubs; the intention is to look at this more fully when an item about current and future insurance is considered by the committee in the depth it requires.
- **Noted 2.** Paul C. confirmed that the transfer of the bank account into his name & address, from that of Fiona K., had now been completed by Lloyds Bank.
- **Agreed 2.** John B. reminded the committee it will need to discuss the workings of a proxy voting scheme in a future meeting.

1.4 Agenda. Agreed as proposed in the pre-circulated draft.

2. Constitution

2.1 - agreement that all previously-agreed updates are now incorporated

A more composite updated draft was tabled, and this was not separately reviewed.

2.2 - approval of new amendments in the circulated draft (item, by item)

The committee considered a general run-through and discussion of a re-draft circulated by John B.

Agreed 3. That John B. take out any newly proposed draft material about a membership scheme and the role of a membership secretary - and thereby revert to the wording about membership that has been approved by the committee (*whether to include additional wording about this topic in the draft constitution, is to be looked at after the committee has had the opportunity of holding a dedicated meeting to fully review and decide upon its approach to the complexities of any membership scheme or schemes that it wished to approve, implement or further pursue*).

Agreed 4. That wording now proposed for the Treasurer role description is not duplicated by similar text elsewhere.

Agreed 5. To reposition the clause about 'force majeure' closer to the end of the document.

Agreed 6. To delete the clause beginning 'Any contract longer than one year' as it is superseded by the additional detail about Trustees.

Agreed 7. To reformulate the wording under 'Accounts' where it refers to appointing an independent inspector, simplifying it with wording suggested by (or to be agreed with) Paul C.

Agreed 8. To delete the sentence under clause '9. Amendments' beginning 'Any proposal to amend...!' and instead to propose draft wording to set out the notice period required for submission of any such amendment prior to an AGM as this will allow time for circulation to all Members in advance of an AGM.

Agreed 9. That the committee will further review and consider the suggested numbers that would make meetings quorate, and may amend or most these;

Agreed 10. 'months' and 'weeks' to be replaced by specifying the no of days;

Agreed 11. Under '4 Grievance', to delete the reference to ordinary members taking on an appeal function at their AGM's, and instead state that any decision of the committee shall be final; also that a footnote be added to include a 'to be added' note as a space for a proposed link, which will be a link to the 'Grievance Procedure' yet to be approved by the committee.

Noted 3. The Secretary advised that the usual word for the continuation of officers in their posts if there are no alternative candidates and therefore no vote can be meaningfully taken at an AGM, is 'appointment by acclamation'.

2.3 - approval of deferred amendment (Item G - deferred from Cttee Mtg 4)

This proposed addition of the word 'registered' so that the draft constitution would now read: 'Membership will begin as soon as the membership form has been completed, received and registered'. Consideration of this one-word amendment was omitted due to time/other business.

Agreed 12. (by default). The amendment to add 'registered' at the end of the sentence '*Membership will begin as soon as the membership form has been completed and received*' will be put on the next, or a subsequent agenda.

2.4 - discussion of consultation proposals (deferred from Cttee Mtg 4)

The proposed discussion of consultation was omitted due to time/other business.

Agreed 13. (by default). Proposals for consultation will be put on the next, or a subsequent agenda.

3. Polytunnel Lettings (Charles K.)

3.1 - proposed decision to terminate the letting of one mini-garden plot

Agreed 14. The Committee agreed to inform the gardener who has not paid the 2022 fees despite written reminder(s), that the Association is now letting the poly-tunnel garden space to an applicant on the waiting list; John B to draft the letter to the poly-tunnel gardener, and liaise with the Secretary in its drafting.

3.2 - proposed decision to let one mini-garden plot

Agreed 15. The Committee agreed to re-let the poly-tunnels garden space to a person on the waiting list; Charles K. to liaise with the Secretary for a copy for the Poly-

tunnel agreement and guidance agreed by this committee earlier this year; he will then ask them to sign it where required for letting the plot.

3.3 Poly-tunnel Agreement & Guidance

Agreed 16. That the Committee will bring forward a redraft of the poly-tunnel Agreement and guidance for next year's lettings cycle that includes wording to set out a policy that anyone with payment arrears of more than 3 calendar months shall no longer be entitled to their poly-tunnel garden space; any personal tools will be removed and stored for their later collection; and it will be re-let.

Agreed 17. Jim C. to liaise with the Secretary to ensure a copy of the Poly-tunnel Agreement & Guidance is available for download on the website.

4. Events & Publicity

4.1 - Vision/Ideas from Chris Webb

Chris W. outlined a number of plans/ideas and proposals for events. She will bring forward ideas for a 'best plot' competition and/or a visit or visits programme to e.g. Rosemoor, or similar, but will need to look at the practicalities across so many different sites. The Secretary noted that Fiona K. had mentioned she will return her show-prize cup shortly, and replied to a question from Chris W. to advise that STAA holds insurance for events up to a certain size.

Agreed 18: Chris W., Jim C. and Richard B. will meet-up and produce an outline plan for establishing a working group that they will run, to which plot-holders from the allotments we serve will be invited, with the aim of putting on (i) a Summer Show for July 2023 based roughly on STAA's previous summer show; and (ii) an Autumn event such as an apple-pressing event, and/or a barbecue (possibly at Clapperbrook); they will read a copy of the Association's insurance for events to ensure it provides the cover they would like.

Agreed 19. Jim C. to search in the website file archive for an e-copy of the previous show leaflet so it can be amended for the next one.

4.2 - Updates re. Facebook and Website & new Opt-ins (Jim C.)

Jim C. reported that he had checked Rackfield's recent list of plot-holders who wished to Opt-in to STAA emails and currently, only 10 of the plot-holders at Rackfields are on

the Association's Opt-in email database. Jim C. will therefore seek to use the Opt-in process set up by his predecessor, to email the plot-holders at Rackfield who are not on the opt-in list, a link to the form they need to read and agree to, so their emails can then can be used by STAA .

Agreed 20. Jim C. to send invitations to plot-holders at Rackfield to register all their e-mails with STAA by opt-in, so the Association can liaise with them by e-mail.

Agreed 21. All committee members who undertake Let & Check, or have volunteers doing this for them, to liaise with Jim C. to ensure all the people who have been let plots through Let&Check since Ruth compiled the Associations e-mail opt-in list, either are on that list or have opted out, or will be emailed by Jim C. the link for them to decide.

Agreed 22.. Jim C. to liaise with the Secretary and/or others to update the website with the current names of people carrying out Let&Check.

5. Finance

5.1 - Expenditure Proposals from Charles K.

Charles K. presented a proposal to replace the broken water pump at the G&H poly tunnel; it was the original one and had lasted well for several years before packing-up. It had been looked at by a specialist, who advised it was not repairable.

Agreed 23. The Committee agreed funding of c.£400 for a new pump at G&H poly-tunnel. Also. £30 for a further G&H proposal.

5.2 - Expenditure proposals for Ide Lane allotment, from Rob H.

Jonathan T. presented the application-form and answered questions, for funding of a new mower to replace the broken one used at Ide Lane.

Agreed 24. The Committee agreed funding of c.£200 for the new mower at Ide Lane; Jonathan T. to liaise with Paul C. to agree the manner in which a payment or reimbursement will happen.

Agreed 25. Jonathan T/ Rob H. to bring back to the Committee a proposal for funding of a new strimmer for Ide Lane if they decide the old one is in need of replacement.

Noted 4. The Committee, and Jonathan Tooze in particular, were asked to note that STAA's insurance only covers public and employer's liability for use of hand tools by registered volunteers. Therefore any use of other tools, whether bought with funds from STAA or otherwise, is at personal risk. Whether insurances are available at an affordable cost for use of non-hand-tools, shall be looked into by the committee when insurance is fully discussed as an agenda item.

5.3 - Treasurer's Update (Paul C.)

Paul C. circulated accounts for the period 1 Oct 21 to 30 April 22. These showed the opening bank balance, trading receipts, poly-tunnel income, total income, goods purchased for resale, Rackfields trading shed costs, running costs, total expenditure and the current bank balance. The Association appears to be reasonably on course to cover its outgoings.

5.4 - Misc updates (i) Redraft of Financial Rules; (ii) liaison with Accountants; (ii) Lloyds bank transfer from Fiona K to Paul C.

Noted 5. That Paul C. will bring forward a review of the Financial Rules, with any suggestions for amendment; the Secretary is liaising with the Accountants and will report their inspection of the 2020-21 accounts when he hears back from them; that the Lloyds bank transfer from Fiona K to Paul C. had now been completed.

6. Items for Upcoming Agenda's

6.1 - Membership Scheme (to be the sole item on the Next Agenda)

The agenda for this item listed matters to be discussed such as: (i) report-back on Rackfield trial (Rob S.); (ii) options for Sale of Goods at tSheds (Charles K.); (iii) the making of membership contracts (David S.); (iv) Terms and Conditions (David S.); (v) Membership Form - online version (Jim C.); (vi) Membership Form - paper version (Rob S.); (vii) summary of benefits-of-membership (Rob S.); (viii) welcome leaflet for new plot-holders (Charles K.); (ix) current membership numbers (David S.). Given the time required for his, and/or to discuss other related aspects of membership, it was proposed that membership be the sole item for the next meeting.

Agreed 26. The committee agreed that the next full in-person committee meeting will aim to solely cover the complex topic of membership.

6.2 - Contracts (License to use tSheds & Let&Check renewal)

Bill T. explained he was keen to put these on the agenda of a future meeting. John B. reported that he has already raised these with Amanda of ECC; he is aiming to meet her again in June. He will continue to ask if such matters can be resolved.

Agreed 27. Bill T. will put the issues of the tShed licenses and Let&Check renewal, on a forthcoming agenda.

6.3 - Insurance: (i) review of 'Cowick Lane' Public Liability scheme); (ii) record of signed volunteer forms for each site.

Agreed 28. The committee agreed that the topic of insurance will be put on a forthcoming agenda and will include (i) review of 'Cowick Lane' Public Liability scheme); (ii) record of signed volunteer forms for each site.

7. Round-table of Sites

7.1 **Rackfields** - composting toilet scheme. Rob S. had put in an application to ECC for a local area grant to pay for a proposed composting toilet which he would build, and that ECC had helped with a difficult re-let of a plot.

7.2 **Pinces** - tree works. Claire R. updated the committee about the proposed tree works at Pinces which STAA is co-funding, and anticipated it would be carried out in the autumn.

7.3 **Ashwood** - Bill T. gave an update about refurbishment of their tShed and about the skilful repair of a wooden bench by volunteers, for which STAA gave them tShed vouchers. He had met Amanda Z of ECC who visited Ashwood Rd. allotments and helped resolve some plot-holder issues.

7.4 **Other Sites** - Richard B. reported that, at Clapperbrook, ECC needs to cut the bank on the track and look at overhanging trees. John B. reported that Amanda Z of ECC would be visiting Cowick La. allotments in June.

7.5 - how to publicise such work / achievements

Agreed 28 (by default). This topic (publicising local site improvements by STAA) to be deferred to a future agenda.

8. AoB | 9. DoNM


- Richard B. asked Rob S. if, following his circulation of a proposed membership form, he had an updated version ready for the committee.
- Bill T. asked if the committee would like to use this venue for its next meeting(s).
- Claire R. kindly donated samples of her prize-winning gin varieties to committee members, to take home.
- Richard B gave out the contact details of someone who is offering a used, glazed, greenhouse.

Agreed 29. Rob. S. to continue to update his draft membership form proposal.

Agreed 30. Bill T. to book the next three monthly meetings at this venue.


.....

Committee approval of these minutes:

signature of chair 

date 21.06.22,

printed name:..... JOHN BUTLER

signature of Secretary 

date 21.06.22

printed name:..... DAVID STRAWN