

SENLAC ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

Minutes of Meeting

7th March 2019

Present: Trevor Henning (TH), Keith Harmer (KH), Anne Gavin (AG), Jacqui Post (JP), Christine Colman (CC), Fern Burgess (FP), Alan Gavin (ALG), and Glenna Favell (GF).

1. **Apologies for absence:** All present.
2. **Agree minutes of 5th July 2018 meeting:** Minutes agreed with minor amendment.
3. **Matters arising:**

Item 6 (Netherfield): Jane was supposed to contact Netherfield plot holders regarding the water supply. This has not happened.

Item 6 (Virgins Croft): TH asked about progress regarding chainsaw and climber certification for BTC ground staff. GF advised that the regulations require two ground staff certified for chainsaw work. BTC currently has one person certified for chainsaw work. GF also advised that BTC is currently advertising to recruit an apprentice grounds person. It is intended that the apprentice will receive training for both chainsaw work and climbing. The tree work at Virgins Croft will however be completed by the end of March 2019.
4. **Treasurer's Report:** ALG advised that there is £258.41 in the account.
5. **Allotment Vacancies:** AG advised that Cherry Gardens has 5 vacant plots (2b, 21b, 24, 27 and 30), Virgins Croft 5 (1a, 1b, 6b, 8b and 14), Watch Oak 7 (10b, 11a, 16a, 18a, 18a, 18b and 19), and Netherfield none. AG supplied copies of spreadsheets showing vacancies. AG will forward a further corrected copy to KH.
6. **Detailed Action Plan, Environment Committee Meeting 9th February 2019:**

AG asked for a copy of the Detailed Action Plan. GF advised that it should be attached to meeting minutes on the BTC website. AG will obtain a copy and email to SAA committee members. GF advised that the water tank at Watch Oak will be removed and maybe moved to Netherfield. KH asked when the water at Cherry Gardens would be turned as one plot holder wished to brew tea! It was considered that it was not necessary to turn on the water yet.
7. **Chickens on Cherry Gardens and Council Response:**

GF advised that this question went to the Environment Committee and, after long discussion, it was agreed that it was acceptable to keep chickens on a central plot even though it would ensure that rats would cross all to plots to reach the chicken food. FB advised that one rat litter, due to their short gestation period, could result in an increase in population of 2000 rats per year. AG advised that Ealing Council for example, require that chickens be kept in edge plots. It is clear that, although the Allotment Act allows chickens on allotments, local councils can add specific requirements. SAA asked that BTC consider that chicken owners on allotments provide rat poison boxes around their chicken cages as this is expensive for neighbouring plot holders. Watch Oak plot holders are well aware of the problems with chickens attracting rats. They expect to have to provide even higher grade, more expensive poisons, as rats become immune to lower grade poisons. A protocol for chickens could be devised by BTC which includes the use of poisons as being mandatory etc. SAA raised the question as to why BTC requested that allotment holders form a SAA committee to advise the council and then completely ignore their advice.
8. **State of Each Site:**

Virgins Croft: TH advised that plot holders are looking after the plots but the area is looking slightly forlorn due to the vacant plots needing to be cleared.

Watch Oak: JP stated that this also applied to vacant plots on Watch Oak. A boundary tree is overhanging the chicken cage and may damage that plot. Watch Oak

have rescued a shed that they intend to locate on the children's plot for the distribution of spare plants, equipment, etc. JP asked whether the council could assist in levelling the area there. GF asked whether rotovating would help. BTC will liaise with JP on this.

Netherfield: FB advised that all ok there. A polytunnel is being moved as it creates shade on a neighbouring plot.

Cherry Gardens: KH advised that there has been a vast improvement in the last year. He owns a rotovator that can be used by plot holders.

TH asked what happened to the inspection reports. GF advised that Jane deals with letters to plot holders. AG will obtain a copy of the inspection report and send to committee members.

9. **Skips:** There is a new supplier this year. SAA considered that it would be preferable that the skip be supplied for the May Bank holiday at the end of May (starting 24th May 2019). GF will ask Jane to arrange this if not already arranged. A bigger skip for Cherry Gardens and Watch Oak would be needed if available.
10. **BBQ:** Watch Oak is happy to host this and a provisional date of 20th July 2019 at 5pm was agreed.
11. **Any Other Business:**
 - i. KH advised that he is a member of another allotment group that arranges coach trips to specific horticultural centres. They were considering Kew Gardens this year but the new congestion charges would incur an additional cost of £200 so a new venue is being considered. KH will keep members advised of the next trip.
 - ii. JP advised that she had fitted a new padlock at Watch Oak. AG stated that SAA should pay for this.
12. **Date of next meeting:** 30th May 2019 at Barrack Farm.