



**The Somersham and District**

**Smallholding and Allotment Association Limited**

Registered under the Co-operative & Community Benefit Societies 2014

[www.somersham-allotment-association.co.uk](http://www.somersham-allotment-association.co.uk)

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MN said that the society is in jeopardy and will be asking for an EGM as he is so unhappy (a result of AGM).</li><li>• BP asked MN why he thinks so many people turned up to AGM – they were unhappy with previous committee.</li><li>• MN challenged AB on his e-mails to members, and his behaviour leading up to AGM. AB said he is entitled to let everyone know of issues, and the members were invited to AGM by the committee so they were entitled to be there and vote.</li><li>• BP said the previous committee should have recognised the gravity of the feeling from the village with regard to the footpaths.</li><li>• MN asked why only certain members were e-mailed and AB said that these were the details he had from Roy Fabb which were of people who had lodged complaints about the gate closure with the council. VM stated that she would not have given out any members details at any time as she felt that this was being insinuated by MN.</li><li>• BP repeated his question from AGM – who put the sign on the gate which had the details of a named council employee? – RH admitted that some of the previous committee had put the sign up, and admitted that they should not have named an individual who knew nothing of the matter.</li><li>• MN asked AB why Roy Fabb was involved, AB stated that it was a sign of the strength of feeling from the public that such an organised campaign had been formed. Roy Fabb is a dogwalker and does not want the gate access to be closed. MN said that he thought AB had let the committee and society down.</li><li>• RH said that he thought AB should have stood down from the committee when it became clear he had a vested interest in keeping the gate open. AB said he made his views clear from the first conversations about closing the gate off, but was always talked over at meetings making it hard for his views to be heard.</li><li>• AB said that all committee members should have been involved in drafting the letter to members – not just a select few, the secretary had not even been aware of the letter until she was shown e-mails between RH and AB.</li><li>• AB said he asked for a vote on the gate closure at AGM to save everyone time and money, RH said it wasn't fair as the whole association should be given a chance to vote. AB said that they were all invited, whether they chose to show up or not. AB quoted the EGM earlier in 2018 where GP said if people can't be bothered to turn up then they don't deserve to vote.</li><li>• BP said that the newsletter should be used to keep all members informed of policies discussed in the committee meetings – the members should be kept informed of everything. BP stated this was not a criticism of VM's efforts, he appreciated the newsletter and the community feel it helps provide.</li><li>• BP said that communication with members has been very poor and the options should have been set before the members. MN said it was an ongoing situation. BP stated</li></ul> |  |  |
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|  | <p>that the signs went up on the gate before the committee had mentioned it to anyone, the note on the gate was a red rag to a bull and the committee lost the goodwill and good opinion of the dog walkers and general public. BP said that the end result would now be that the footpaths would be adopted, MN said they would not.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RH stated that the red gate is easily defensible with regard to closing it off because a sign has been on it for over 20 years. VM mentioned that the deeds show we do not own the trackway and legally we cannot close it off. RH replied that he was not aware of the land ownership issue. VM referred those present to the legal advice provided by Clare Whitaker of Eversheds Sutherland where she said that the association would, legally, be in the wrong for closing the access.</li><li>• RH accused AB of causing the issue to “snowball”. AB replied that it had happened long before that , dog walkers, joggers and other general public stopped him while he was walking his dog to ask him what was happening and why.</li><li>• MN said that all members should have been informed of the resistance – VM stated again that AB did not have access to the details of the association members. MN rolled his eyes at this point and smirked. VM challenged MN on this as it was clear he did not believe that VM had not been involved in the events leading up to AGM. MN made no response. (VM later submitted an official complaint in writing to MN and the committee about MN’s behaviour).</li><li>• MN said that the AGM was a mess and blamed AB’s actions for this. BP stated that it was himself that raised the footpath issue at AGM under AOB because it wasn’t addressed in the meeting. MN stated again that he wants an EGM.</li><li>• MN said any issues to be raised should be lodged with the secretary before the meeting, BP said that this is not a rule and people should not be expected to prime the committee with the questions they want answers to. BP said that if they couldn’t answer they should just say that they don’t have the answers to hand and they will respond later.</li><li>• BP said that the committee are responsible for his money, and that of other ploholders and it is their right to know where it has gone.</li><li>• RH said that it was not the questions asked, but the manner they were asked in and the motivations behind it. MN and RH said it felt aggressive, but RH admitted that they were legitimate questions that needed answers.</li><li>• BP said that the committee need to be more open going forwards and involve the members in any decisions. VM said that she thought the sign shouldn’t have gone up before the letter was sent to the members.</li><li>• The recent resignations from the committee were discussed, RH said there is not many people who would step up and do the job as GP did, and expose themselves to people’s views and judgements, RH stated that he would not want to do it.</li></ul> |  |  |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RH said he felt let down by the recent events, and BP asked him why he thinks the others resigned. Members only find out about committee vacancies after they have already been filled. Recent appointments to the committee, including Paul Edmondson and Dave Rodgerson, were made after GP arrived at a committee meeting with them and asked for them to be voted in – members were not informed of the vacancies. AB mentioned GP asking Iris Bell not to stand down from the committee until after the AGM so that there would not be a vacancy to fill on AGM night. VM mentioned that she was a witness to this conversation, which happened at the Pumpkin Stall, and noted how uncomfortable it made IB at the time. GP seemed to be attempting to intimidate IB and was trying not to be overheard.</li><li>• BP said that the committee have misled the members of the association, they took their own decisions with no thought for the majority of the members and now they are seeing the effects.</li><li>• MN stated that no correspondence has been received in objection to the gate closure. VM said we had received the notices of the footpath modification orders from the council, but no direct complaints. It appears all correspondence is going down the official channels with the council.</li><li>• MN showed those present a notice which had been put through doors on King Street, and the wider village. MN accused AB of distributing the same. It was recognised by those present that the notice was Roy Fabb's document which had been widely shared on Facebook groups (spotted: Somersham, and Somersham plus) – and was not of AB's making.</li><li>• BP and AB said that people have been intimidated by previous committee members, BP said he could name at least 3 women who have complained to him about the actions of particular people, which has left them feeling scared about standing up and making their voices heard. BP said the atmosphere on King Street has completely gone, there is no community spirit anymore. AB said that the perception of members is that some of the previous committee were aggressive and confrontational and we need to be careful about how things are perceived – Ab referenced GP asking for the details of anyone who voted for the gate to remain open. CP mentioned he had also heard complaints of aggressive and threatening behaviour towards women in particular.</li><li>• MN called a ten min break and left the room.</li><li>• AB said to MN that he wasn't going to apologise as he hasn't done anything wrong, MN said he would not forgive him in any case.</li><li>• MN stated again that he wants an EGM to vote on the gate closure, elect a new committee and vote on the accounts.</li><li>• The issue with the accounts was mentioned and BP said it was worrying that none of the committee had picked up on the discrepancies – if BP hadn't raised it at AGM it would have passed without a challenge.</li></ul> |  |  |
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|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AB said gate closure and footpaths shouldn't be part of EGM, we should wait for the council's decision on the matter as they are looking at ownership of the trackways.</li> <li>• RH said we should ask the council for a deadline for a response. VM checked this after the meeting and the matter is on a waiting list so could take a couple of years to be decided.</li> <li>• BP said Steve Criswell does not want to get involved and says it is between the association and the county council, but it is a parish concern as it is to do with footpaths and rights of way. AB mentioned that he had heard the council had over 60 objections to the proposed closure.</li> <li>• BP said that the council seem to be playing two different hands, and giving differing advice to each side. RH stated again that the sign on the gate is the objection, BP replied that the way is not obstructed and has not been historically, in fact it could be said that the association encouraged walkers because they built the bypass to the red gate when the new fence was put up.</li> <li>• It was agreed to hold an EGM to decide the footpath issue and elect a new committee.</li> <li>• MN asked if we needed an arbitrator – VM said she thought it was unnecessary, MN said we had already had trouble over the issue. VM said that people stating their views was not trouble, there was no threat or problems from the members at the AGM, there is no reason to expect them at an EGM. BP voiced support for an arbitrator so MN has agreed to look into it and come back to us with some dates. It is noted that there will be costs associated with this.</li> <li>• Discussion was had over whether to hold the EGM before or after the accounts had been examined. BP said either the money is there or it is not, but if the money is missing MN needs to decide what we will do about it. It is down in the AGM minutes as an action and the members will want to know what has happened. BP will look at the accounts to see if the money has been accrued, or is simply down to a clerical error.</li> <li>• MN to let us know a date for the EGM in due course.</li> </ul> |              |  |
| 4. | <p>Allocation of Plots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MN had nothing to address.</li> <li>• BP said that he had noticed a shed being removed from the vacant plot next door to his. The shed became association property when Kristian Tilbury was removed from the plot and as such should have been sold, with the funds going back into the association. It looks like sheds/greenhouses etc are being passed on to friends of the committee which is creating a loss to the association.</li> </ul> <p>Dirty Plots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CF5&amp;6 were raised as an issue again. Plots are messy and chickens had been left to die. MN to speak to Andy Ray as a matter of urgency. Andy Ray has also not paid rent for</li> </ul>   | MN<br><br>MN |  |

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|    | <p>2018/19 season. Those present said the whole plot was a mess and did we want him to pay his rent – we could get rid of him now which could stop any further problems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VM to provide MN with a list of those who have not yet paid rent.</li> </ul> | VM |  |
| 5. | <p>Maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MN had nothing to report.</li> </ul>   | MN |  |
| 6. | <p>Site Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MN had nothing to report.</li> </ul>   | MN |  |
| 7. | <p>A.O.B.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing to report.</li> </ul>   | MN |  |

Meeting Closed at: 8.50pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> December – 7.30pm