

Somersham and District Allotment and Smallholding Association

January 2019 Newsletter



Happy New Year everyone! We've had a manic few months since AGM, but things are settling down nicely on the committee. We're hoping to have many more chances for you all to get involved this year and really build on our community spirit, so watch this space! – **Vicky Moseley, Secretary**

Committee Changes

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Committee who have resigned since AGM. They did a lot of work on their own time to maintain the site and we are grateful for their contribution over the years.

We now have some new faces on the committee to join existing members Clive Phillips and Andy Bell. Our new members are Sabine Prideaux, Bob Peggs, Jim Daddy, Greg Wyss and Debbie Coope. I am sure you will join me in welcoming them to their new roles and supporting them all as we move forward.

Toilets

One of the changes that has been discussed by the committee is the possibility of getting rid of the on-site toilets. Whilst they are a useful addition, we are concerned that there are liabilities involved with their upkeep, such as keeping them clean and regularly emptied to avoid risks of infection or disease. It costs £72 to empty and clean the toilets. This was previously undertaken annually, but ideally this should be done weekly – especially during the warmer months. Even if we were to have them cleaned and emptied every month this would cost the association £864 a year, which represents the majority of the site maintenance budget.

If you have any objections to the removal of the toilets please let me know before 12th February 2019 as this will be discussed and decided at the next committee meeting.

Accounts

The accounts for year 2017 presented at the AGM on 7th November 2018 raised a query from the floor regarding the 'Rental Income' value which appears to be lower than expected as rent night 2017 saw the rents rise by £5 per plot for all 196 plots. The expected increase in rental income compared to the previous year should have yielded just under £1000 if full income received. The audience was informed that most plots were utilised.

Following a review of the 2017 income and expenditure files to determine the potential reason for the apparent shortfall in rental income was concluded with the following reasons:

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- New member rents not recorded on the new member ledger file. All other data such as shares, husbandry, key are recorded.
- Vacant plots
- Accountants didn't receive correct information so it can only be assumed they would not have interpreted the data correctly. (This will be checked for the 2018 accounts before submission.)

The total income for the year paid into Barclays was £6160 (bank statements) of which £486 was accrued back to year 2016. The accounts however record £5536 as Turnover (Income) against actual £5674 (6160-486). £138 difference so unknown reason.

The summary of Association data:

Total income possible from 198 plots = £4693 (rents vary slightly for one third, one half and full plots)

2017 Accounts 'Rental Income' = £4016 (2016 was £3594)

Rent night income file shows = £4105 (this was adjusted for errors identified)

New members rents in year = £312

Vacant plots (lost income) = £286

All income was paid into Barclays in the 2017 year and no accruals set against 2018.

The new members rents (£312) missing from 'Rental Income' appears to have been credited to 'Other Revenue' which totalled £975.

In summary, the income was received and banked but not accounted accurately due to the missing data presented to the Accountants.

If anyone wishes to receive a copy of the 2017 accounts, look at the data on file and / or challenge the above please advise the secretary.

New Plotolders

We have two recent additions, Christopher Eyre on the King Street side and Beni Giglio on the Chapel Fields side. Both have made good starts, and I am sure you will all have noticed the difference in plots CF5 & 6 where Beni and his family have made an excellent start on clearing the mess left by the previous plot-holder.

Dirty Plots

Unfortunately, the Giglio's have discovered 12 dead chickens inside a shed on plots CF5&6 that had clearly been neglected. I would like to remind you all that we will not tolerate cruelty to livestock, and this incident may yet be referred to the RSPCA.

While we understand that sometimes life gets in the way, the committee are keen to keep the site as clean and tidy as possible and members with dirty plots will be encouraged to use their plots for cultivation, rather than disposal of rubbish! Hopefully, the recent termination of the tenancy of the previous incumbent of CF5&6 will show how serious we are on this point. If you find you are struggling due to illness or work commitments please do let us know and we will do all we can to help you before it becomes unmanageable.

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New Website

Andy Notman has very kindly offered to put together a new website for the association after the old site was taken down. We hope to have this live as soon as possible, so if you have any ideas for the new site please let me know! We hope to have committee meeting minutes, contact details, and maybe a page on the history of the site. The new website address is www.somersham-allotments.co.uk, although it is live there is minimal information on there at present. In the meantime, there is an association Facebook page – just search for Somersham Allotments and it should be quite easy to find.

Don't forget:

- **Update your details** – if you have moved house, or think we don't have an e-mail address for you please contact Vicky Moseley.

We have a few allotments of various sizes available so if you know of someone who has always wanted to try their hand at allotment gardening, or if you want to expand your plot, please contact me.

Best wishes

The Allotment Committee