

West Cheshire Allotment Federation

Minutes of the Meeting

held at

Little Sutton Community Centre, Chester Road, Little Sutton, Ellesmere Port
on Saturday 12th October 2013 at 11:00am

Present: Colin Crawford (Chairman), Andrea Hallissey (Secretary), Alan Hull (NAS NW Mentor) Kate Pritchard (Boughton Heath); Garry Scargill, Sophie Gandini (Brook Lane); Mark Underwood, (Burton Road); L Bailey, Theresa Bailey (Elton Gardens); Kevin Beards, (George Allen); Chris Taylor, Paul Jones (Highfield G A); Mervyn Gardener, Jeanne Smith (Hoole AGA); Brian Leahiff (Kingsley); Jules Miller (Kingsway West); Sue Henshall. (Over Allotments); Steve Quayle, D Vaughn (Red Lion); Gordon Emery, Simon Waddington. (Sealand Cottage); John Jones, Ted Lomax (Stamford Street); Keith & Pat Cunningham. (Whitby Poplars).

Apologies: Alan Bradley (Treasurer); Dave Chapman (CW&C); Frodsham Townfield, Keith Mason John Malam (Over Allotments). Paul Shakespeare (Burton Rd).

| | | <u>Action</u> |
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| 1 | Welcome | |
| 1.1 | The Chairman welcomed the delegates and their guest, Alan Hull, to the meeting. He reiterated, particularly for the benefit of the new members, that the main purpose of the meeting was for the members to share experiences and learn from each other; any unresolved issues being taken up by the Federation Officers. | |
| 2 | Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 13th July 2013 | |
| 2.1 | The minutes of the inaugural Annual General Meeting, which had been previously circulated, were approved as a true record by those present. | |
| 3 | Matters Arising Not Covered Elsewhere | |
| 3.1 | (Previous minute 3.2) The agreed alteration to Para. 2.5 of the Constitution had been made and the Constitution signed by the Officers. | |
| 3.2 | (Previous minute 7.1) The availability of future venues that may not charge for community use was still being investigated. | All |
| 3.3 | (Previous minute 11.1) It was reported that CW&C would shortly be sending out a letter to all plot holders on certain colonies informing them of the existence of WCAF and the benefits that could be gained from membership. | |
| 3.4 | (Previous minute 11.1) It was suggested that the postponed talk on legal and personal liability aspects of self management may be included in a future meeting. | A Ha |
| 4 | Chairman's report | |
| 4.1 | The Chairman reported that in the first 3 months since it's formation the Federation had achieved more than may have been envisaged. Although 11 colonies had been represented at the inaugural A G M only 7 had initially agreed to become members. Since then, and largely due to the work of the Secretary, a further 8 had joined bringing the current total to 15. The Officers supported by Alan Hull (NAS NW Mentor) had also had successful meetings with CW&C, Northwich Town Council and Great Boughton Parish Council. | |
| 4.2 | Discussions with CW&C had centered on the proposed Self Management Lease and its associated documents. It was reported that the details had generally been agreed and the main document had now been sent to NAS for their Solicitor to comment on. It was expected that the lease details would be | |

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formally agreed later in the year.

- 4.3 The Federation Officers had also represented the members at the NW Counties ALG Meeting. This is where federations from the North West meet with the NW NAS Officers to discuss various issues and is the direct link to the NAS Committee. The meetings are very informative and as a maximum of 4 representatives from WCAF can go to these meetings 2 association members could also accompany the Officers. The next meeting is on 1st December in the Chester area.
- 4.4 The items discussed at the last NW Counties ALG Meeting included use of the Probation Community Payback Scheme to clear abandoned allotment plots, setting up of an Allotment Watch Scheme (similar to 'Homewatch') and a scheme to buy polytunnels, through NAS, from Premier Tunnels at a reduced cost.

All

5 Treasurer's Report

- 5.1 A bank account in the name of the Federation has been opened at the Co-operative Bank and the income to date is £280; comprising £150 membership fees, £100 grant from NW Counties and £30 profit from the raffle. Total expenditure has been £30 rooms hire £8.60 stamps and £23.49 mileage making a total of £62.09p. Balance to date stands at £217.91. The Secretary also explained the details for obtaining a future rebate from NWC ALG.
- 5.2 Postage has been charges at second class rates and mileage at 30p/mile for the first claim and then 21p/mile thereafter.

6 Reports from Member Associations

- 6.1 Boughton Heath Allotment Association
They had been successful in obtaining funding and installing a community cabin on the site and were now looking at procuring a solar panel electrical system.
About half the plot holders are members of the Association and CW&C have now transferred the running of the site to Great Boughton Parish Council. The parish council are considering introducing a two tier rent system.
- 6.2 Brook Lane Allotment Association
They are preparing to go self-managed as soon as the documents have been approved and they are happy with the terms and conditions.
- 6.3 Burton Road Allotment Association
This is a private site on the point of going self-managed. The NAS solicitor has looked at their lease and has advised that they have legal identity by following the 'industrial providence' route.
- 6.4 Elton Garden Association
Elton Parish Council is their landlord and they are self-managed. The system is working well.
- 6.5 George Allen Allotment Society
They are preparing to go self-managed and are looking for funding (including Housing Trust and NHS sources) to repair fence, gate and footpaths. They have also held fund raising events and split the profits between Society funds and local charities.
- 6.6 Highfield Gardening Association
They have operated on a partial self-management system for 2 years and their committee is happy to proceed to full management. A ballot of the plot holders is to be held shortly to assess the general feeling. They have held 5 successful fund raising events over the past 2 years.

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- 6.7 Hoole Allotment Gardens Association
HAGA are considering moving to self-management within the next 2 years but the large number of plot holders on the site may cause difficulties with administration. There are a number of overgrown plots on the site which are not being policed by CW&C.
They are trying to get insurance cover for their trading hut but 'Blue Fin' will not provide a policy. Alan Hull to check with insurance companies. **A Hu**
- 6.8 Kingsley Allotment Society
This is a new private site which a number of the plot holders have created themselves. They have successfully overcome a series of obstacles, including the planning process, to get the colony established.
- 6.9 Kingsway West Allotment Association
Kingsway are preparing to go self-managed as soon as the documents are ready and they are happy with them. Details of the responsibilities of the boundary fences and the expected water costs are needed. They have held a successful open day which has helped with Association funds.
- 6.10 Over Allotments and Leisure Gardening Association
They have 56 plots and the parish council has sourced funding to significantly improve the site with the plot holders doing the drainage work. They do various successful fundraising events throughout the year. Their latest project being the repairs need for the Disabled Community Plot
- 6.11 Red Lion Lane Allotment Association
The site is partially self – managed and they are looking to go fully self-managed in the future. However maintenance of the boundary fences and hedges needs to be done and details of the water system and charges clarified.
- 6.12 Sealand Cottage Allotment Association
Sealand Cottage would like to go self-managed but CW&C are not considering them at present. The Federation to follow that up at the next meeting. They also expressed their concerns regarding responsibility for boundary fencing; an issue that was holding up the decision to move to Self Management.
(The chairman commented that CW&C was currently confirming boundary ownership and associated responsibilities with sites that were due to go self managed.) **WCAF**
- 6.13 Stamford Street Allotments Society
The site is preparing to go self-managed when the documents are ready. There has been flooding in the middle of the site but that appears to be a seasonal problem. Kingsway West had a similar problem a few years ago and could suggest a possible solution.
Stamford Street had applied to CW&C for permission to create a community area with building but approval has not been given. There have also been recent comments about the keeping of ducks on the site. The Federation to follow up these issues at the next meeting. **WCAF**
- 6.14 Whitby Poplars Gardening Association
The site has problem of access due to the gate, track and overhanging trees and bushes. The Federation to follow that up at the next meeting. **WCAF**
- 7 Guest Speaker**
- 7.1 The meeting welcomed Sue Henshall from Over Allotments and Leisure Gardeners Association, Winsford who gave a very interesting talk on how their colony, with the help of the parish council and other funders, had been regenerated into a well organized and flourishing entity. The plot holders had not only done most of the necessary work themselves but had also established long term social and fund raising events involving the whole of the local

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community.

8 Any Other Business

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| 8.1 | It was generally agreed that CW&C did not appear to be actively filling vacant plots. This matter should be discussed with CW&C at the next meeting. | WCAF |
| 8.2 | It was felt that the number of enclosures to the meeting agenda had used far too much paper. It was agreed that in future all the documents should be sent out to the delegates by e-mail. | A Ha |
| 8.3 | Steve Quayle suggested that plot holders could grow a row of vegetables specifically for Claire House. Steve will act as coordinator and further details will be given in the forthcoming newsletter. | A Ha |
| 8.4 | It was agreed that the newsletter should be quarterly; to be published midway between meeting dates. | A Ha |
| 8.5 | The Secretary gave out an invitation for 2 members to go to the NWC ALG meeting on 1 st December. | All |
| 8.6 | The Secretary also gave out an invitation for 2 members to go to the Allotment Officers Forum meeting on 7 th November. | All |
| 8.7 | The secretary reported that Gordale Nursery will sponsor a Federation gardening competition and asked for ideas on what type of competition would be popular among the members. | All |
| 8.8 | The Draft documents on animal husbandry, beekeeping and secretary responsibilities have been included in the document pack for comments. | All |
| 8.9 | The Secretary asked for volunteers to design and run a Federation web-site. John Malam from Over Allotments was volunteered in his absence. | |
| 8.10 | Alan Hull announced that as WCAF had made such progress over the last few months he would now be concentrating on getting the sites in East Cheshire organised in a similar manner. Although thanks were given verbally by all those numerous sites that Alan has helped, it was unanimously agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to the NAS Head Office highlighting the tremendous help and support Alan has given the allotment colonies in West Cheshire over the last year. | A Ha |

12 Date of Next meeting.

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| 12.1 | The next meeting will be at 12.00am on Saturday 11 th January 2014 at a venue yet to be determined. | |
| 12.2 | It was suggested that a permanent venue would be the easiest for all concerned and CW&C may be able to provide something suitable. | A Ha |
| 12.3 | The Chairman commented that the meeting had taken much longer than envisaged largely due to the important business of exchanging experiences and identifying possible solutions to problems dealt with under Item 6. He felt that if the Federation was to grow significantly then consideration would have to be given to dividing the area into more manageable units. | |

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Appendix A

Members of the West Cheshire Allotment Federation Management Committee

| Association or Society | Representative | Representative |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| | | |
| Boughton Heath | Kate Pritchard | |
| Brook Lane | Sophie Gandini | Gary Scargill |
| Burton Road | Mark Underwood | Paul Shakespeare |
| Elton Gardens | Les Bailey | Ann Williams |
| Frodsahm Townfields | Keith Mason | , Robert Yardley |
| George Allen | Kevin Beards | Vicky Wylie |
| Highfield G A | Chris Taylor | Paul Jones |
| Hoole AGA | Mervyn Gardener | Jeanne Smith |
| Kingsley | Brian Leaniff | Jane Matherson |
| Kingsway West | Jules Miller | Maria Heywood / Ben Hayes |
| Over Allotments | Sue Henshall | John Malam |
| Red Lion Lane | Steve Quayle | Joanne Moore |
| Sealand Cottage | Zoe Collier | Gordon Emery |
| Stamford Street | Phil Hill | John Jones |
| Whitby Poplars | Keith Cunningham | |