

EDEN ALLOTMENT HOLDERS ASSOCIATION
Monthly Committee Meeting
Carrickfergus Town Hall 5th November 2008

Minutes of Meeting

Present:

Myrtle Fraser (Chair)
Gary McCabe (Vice Chair)
Austin Herron (Secretary)
Ivan Johnston (Treasurer)
John Wann
Pauline Whittley
Phil Allen
Raymond Hanna

2.1.08 Apologies

Richard Cochrane

2.2.08 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 1st October 2008 were presented to the meeting and proposed as a true record by Gary McCabe and seconded by Pauline Whittley and adopted by the meeting

2.3.08 Matters Arising

On 1.7.08 regarding professional advisors there were no suggestions or proposals from the committee or members. Ivan indicated that we would not need an auditor for example until the financial year and that this and other appointments should be looked at again as the need arises and this was agreed. He also reported that as also agreed under this item the Association had now opened an account in the Northern Bank in Carrickfergus.

2.4.08. Correspondence

There were no items of correspondence for this meeting.

2.5.08 Reports & Liaison with Council

Austin reported that he had again raised the matter of the leaking tap in field B and the holes in the fence alongside the river with Stephen Daye and been told that these had been forwarded to the works department. On the issue of Polytunnels and other materials the Council does not have such items.

2.6.08 New Agenda Items (for end of meeting)

Myrtle requested that seed sourcing be discussed, Pauline wanted to raise access issues; Austin affiliation to the National Allotments Association and Phil National Tree Week and these were agreed for inclusion as new agenda items 11; 12; 13 and 14 respectively

2.7.08 Appointment of Professional Advisors

The matter of professional advisers had been dealt with under matters arising

2.8.08 Work Programme for Year

Following detailed discussion it was agreed that the committee should focus on three areas of work over the coming year 1. – Hedgerows and Boundaries; 2.- Communal Procurements and Distribution Arrangements and 3.- Association Structures and Administration: It was also agreed that Phil, John, and Raymond would organise the first workgroup, Ivan and Pauline the second and Gary and Austin the third and report back to future meetings on progress and developments. It was also proposed that John Clarke be approached to join the first group and this was also agreed.

2.9.08 Use of Field D

Austin provided further information received from the Council regarding the proposal to make the field exclusively organic. Following some discussion including concerns such as the rights of existing plot holders to a full plot exchange if they wished to move, and the degree of policing of the organic credentials of the area, it was agreed to write to the Council highlighting three main areas. Firstly that we fully endorse and support the principle of the Councils to encourage and facilitate part of the Eden Garden Allotments Site which will be independently certified, accredited, and maintained as an organic area. Secondly we would however not wish to see this initiative in any way disadvantaged people who have no commitment to organic principles and have been on the waiting list for a plot for an extended period. Finally given the very recent establishment and group experience of our organisation we would need to emphasise that we would find it very difficult to provide accrediting or policing services to these arrangements at present and would need to get clarification from the Council on how this will be effected in this context. Austin was requested to convey these suggestions to the Council. John suggested that we might be helped to be better informed about these issues if we were to look at the work of a group like the organics centre in Sligo. Ivan felt this was a very useful approach and agreed to look into getting further information with a view to possibly arranging a trip.

*Action – AH
IJ*

2.10.08 Manure Issues

Austin reported that he had been contacted by Bill Johnston who had spent around £90 getting manure transported to the site. He had discussed sourcing manure with him and others earlier in the summer and Bill had tried to phone him while on holiday (without success) to follow this up and then decided to get the material delivered on his own initiative. Many plot holders have been making use of this material although there are general concerns about the use of horse and cow manures at this time. Myrtle said that she had discussed this matter with Stephen Daye who had indicated that the Council might be prepared to pay for this on this occasion. Members felt that there should have been greater efforts made to get prior payment commitment approval and that systems for this should be looked at as a matter of urgency by the new working group.

2.11.08 Seed Supplies

Myrtle has some seed catalogues available from Thompson & Morgan and would arrange to distribute these at the next meeting. She also had some internet contact details for much cheaper items which she would also pass on to as many people as possible. Austin suggested that he might be able to get links to these onto the Eden Allotments site and would talk to her about this.

Action AH

2.13.08 Roads and Access

Pauline was very concerned about the state of the main tracks on the site particularly for anyone with even minor mobility issues. Gary felt that some of this had been caused by heavier vehicles such as lorries or tractors but we should nevertheless try to initiate some form of discussion on a code of practice for driving on the site. Myrtle agreed but said we should also pursue some form of upgrade by the Council and/or a communal building to at least allow the removal of the temporary toilets whose maintenance necessitates heavier traffic on the site.

2.14.08 National Allotments Society

Austin indicated that he had sourced some information on affiliation to the \National Allotments Society which our Association would be eligible to join. Following some discussion while it was agreed that there could be some very positive benefits of membership the group costs were felt to be too steep at this point. It was decided that some of the committee might take individual membership and the issue could then be reconsidered in future years.

2.15.08 National Tree Week

Phil enquired about the proposals for the National Tree Week event planned for the allotments site and felt it was very short notice to allow for any scale or complexity of planning.. It was also unlikely that it would be possible to get any great amount of input from the overall membership in a way similar to the open day in the summer.. Following a brief discussion it was decided that the committee had no particular ideas they wished to apply and agreed to simply support the Councils efforts and look to developing something themselves for the spring.

2.16.08 Any Other Business & Date of Next Meeting

Austin reported on the recent fact finding visit of Sammy Wilson to the allotment site and it was agreed to send a letter of thanks with an open ended invitation for a follow up visit. Pauline reminded the meeting that the next one was the last before Christmas and she and Myrtle agreed to arrange some refreshments for the end of the meeting.

Action – M.F + P.W

The date and time of the next meeting was confirmed as 7.30 p.m. on 3rd December in the Town Hall

The meeting closed.