

Minutes of a committee meeting held on Tuesday 10 January at 7.30pm, venue: Gledhow Sports and Social Club

Present: Paul, Margaret L, Margaret P, Primrose, John, Patrick, Steve, Brian

1. Welcome

Paul welcomed members to the meeting especially to Steve Wilde to his first committee meeting.

2. Apologies: Bob

3. Update on insurance claim.

The loss adjuster had been to see the toilet and had agreed the claim. Paul had been informed that the cost of clearing the site is normally seen as part of the claim but since we had cleared the site he would recommend that the £250 excess be waived.

Paul had been looking at replacements for the toilet when a second incident occurred. There had been another break-in when only few small items had been taken from the back store. Paul reported that he had made the hut as secure as possible but had not been able to fix the grill fully.

Before any other action could be taken the hut had been set alight at two points and the Fire Brigade called to arrive on site around 3.30 am on 21st December. Paul had been called at 4.30am to secure the tools left in the tool store. They had to demolish the hut sides so that they could enter the hut. The Fire Brigade had contacted the police who, when they finally arrived, spent some time on site but failed to discover any evidence.

Paul took pictures and contacted the insurance company. Paul had enquired about firms who could clear the site but it was suggested that we could do it ourselves.

4. Next steps after the fire

Paul had contacted AWM (who have provided the Council-funded skips) to enquire about skip hire. The full rate is £325 but much cheaper if ordered via the Council. Paul had contacted Lynne and she had agreed to order the skips.

There had been a good turnout of members on the previous Thursday which filled one skip and cleared much of the debris leaving a pile of debris for the next skip. A group on Monday had worked on this pile and filled two more skips.

Paul suggested obtaining a container which could be placed round the concrete ramp. New tools will have to be bought and stored for the Thursday Volunteers. Container storage will also be needed for the potato/seed orders. There is no stock left hence no shop but there has to be space for storing tools for maintenance.

Paul reported that he had been looking into the hire of a container and had asked Lynne at the Council for advice. Northern Containers was recommended. A 20ft x 8ft container would cost £12.60 per week plus £114 to deliver and £114 to collect. It would cost £1380 to buy. Another company, Elliott Hire, was more expensive but could provide temporary shelving. Lynne had made no recommendation as to which firm to choose.

Paul favoured hiring in the first instance. Northern Containers are based at Stourton so he will try and get down there to look at the condition of their containers. He suggested siting the container with the doors facing the plots.

John asked how long we might need the container and Paul stated that he thought probably 6 to 8 months minimum. John calculated that it would be best to hire if keeping the skip for less than two years.

Primrose asked about the Park's regulations. Paul felt that it would be best not to consult them at this time. John thought that if the container was in the same location as the hut where planning permission had been given there should not be a problem.

John asked whether Paul thought that the insurance company would meet our claim. Paul didn't know but commented that the main element of the claim was the building which cost us £10,900. Paul had been in touch with the supplier of the old hut but they had not yet supplied him with the cost of a replacement. For equipment Paul would enter the costs on the claim where they were known. Roughly the equipment would be valued at around £2500 with the value of the stock to be added. Margaret L indicated that amount the buildings were insured for was £20,000.

Paul asked the meeting if they were happy for him to go ahead and order a container. The members agreed.

5. Extra Ordinary General Meeting

Monday 6 March was proposed. The Sports and Social Club was available and we could have the large room to ourselves.

Paul suggested that we should outline to the meeting what options were available he would also seek to determine whether attendees had specific interests and or skills upon which we could draw. There are alternatives to replacing the old hut by another wooden one. Members may have skills and contacts we could utilise.

Paul commented that other associations had used garages on their sites but had found them susceptible to break-ins via the roof. We could do things differently but it was vitally important that for whatever option is chosen there is mains power to the site. Paul said that he would try and determine what was happening to the proposed sub-station.

Paul asked if we should retain all the features and facilities available via the old hut. John suggested a cost/benefit analysis but noted that sales from the hut generated a profit of over £1000, a very important source of income.

The involvement of garden members in the decision process was discussed. It was noted that many garden members spent considerable sums in the hut. Margaret P pointed out that we had lost our only list of current members in the fire. She had a copy from 2011.

Paul reported that Lidgett Lane and Oakwood have no hut but make money from plant sales. We would need another source of income if we did not have the sales hut.

The hut profits are affected by discounts we can obtain by bulk buying but bulk buying means having enough storage capacity.

Margaret P asked whether planning permission would be needed for a replacement structure. Paul indicated that we could contact Lynne in the first instance for advice concerning this.

Paul reiterated the need to obtain a register of members' interests and skills. We also need to identify all the different options – straw bales, containers, concrete garage.

John proposed establishing a sub-committee of people with different skills to allocate roles/responsibilities. Paul said he would still like to be involved.

Email would obviously be used to inform members of the meeting and to ask them to come along with ideas and offers of help/expertise. Letters would be sent out to those members with no email.

John asked about applying for grants and Paul indicated that hopefully we could do this. It was noted that possibly some firm might be attracted to a project that would have high visibility in the community.

In conclusion the extra ordinary general meeting will be held at the Gledhow Sports and Social Club starting at 7.30pm on Monday 6 March 2017. Letters and emails must go out at least three weeks before the meeting. Garden Members would be encouraged to come but would not be able to vote.

6. LDAGF

Membership cards are available but distribution is difficult without the hut. The AGM is scheduled for Wednesday 18 January in the Civic Hall. Paul encouraged members of the management committee to attend.

7. Any Other Business

Brian was asked to order a skip for Easter week, ie to be delivered on Thursday 13th April.

The next committee meeting will be held on 7th February.

The AGM had been tentatively arranged for 27th April however neither Paul nor Margaret were available on that date so it was agreed that the AGM be moved to 20th April.

The plot inspection would be held on 6th May.