

Chairpersons report

From the 16th of October 2022 to present

Communication from the Council

We have formalised the process of registration today to abide by the GDPR regulations from the council and to remain a self-managed site, and also ensure we have a clear and updated record of all members of the GSCAA.

Although with negative articles and talk of self-managed sites being taken over by the council, meaning plots being split down and rent increases and additional water charges to pay, after a meeting with the council and the officers the following information can be confirmed.

The council have made the recommendation during the ongoing review and if agreed upon the main key areas will be put in place:

1. All allotments whether self-managed or council run will have to adhere to processes and documentation that are set out by the council to ensure all sites are run in the same way.
2. All self-managed sites will need to apply to continue as self-managed sites, the council will offer support and guidance to ensure all sites applying have the relevant documents and procedures to be granted permission to continue as self-managed.
3. A proposed rent has been set in the review for all allotments to pay £200 per acre to be paid by the allotment association to the council.

These points are all pending the outcome of the review which they hope to have completed by this year.

We will also have a transcript of the full meeting available to all members on the website under documents - shareholder meetings, on the website once the council have confirmed it is a true and accurate document of information shared.

Projects in progress

- Community area and Toilets
- Fencing
- site shop Online and online platform
- Miniature plot creation

Further details are below if you have expertise in these areas and would like to offer input and support, please contact GSCAA's email address.

Trustees

We are looking to elect a 3rd trustee, and this will be done once the new management committee is in place and we have our first committee meeting.

Update to documents

You have all received the updated documentation which we are taking forward from today's AGM, with the consent of the council. These are all available on the website, paper copies to take from the AGM and in the community shed, and now formally read into the constitution of today these are:

Constitution itself

Tenancy agreement

Data Protection Policy

Equality policy

Complaints, grievances, and objections process

Add part about the trustees and the reading of the documents and the council visit

The Association committee

The Association Committee has seen a number of changes in 2022, but despite this have continued to

With the resignation of NB in August 2022 we would like to thank him for his fantastic work and achievements over the years at GSCAA, he has been a key member and we hope we can rely on his support in the future. We also welcomed DD to the committee as the secretary who has already settled into the role and has been a tremendous support.

We hope to extend the committee this year and for members to come and take part as observers in future committee meetings, please consider your skills and abilities and seek to enhance the committee by becoming involved in future projects for the allotment site.

Waiting List

The committee has worked hard in filling the vacant plots.

It was noted that a number of plots were not being cultivated and had become neglected. Letters have been sent to the allotment holders and action to terminate has been issued for the plots that failed to make significant improvements in the 6 weeks' notice. We have had a number of plots become available due to this action and alongside the plans for the miniature plots. We have contacted and met with the council to ask for the list of people waiting for the plots, as we have to allocate plots in accordance with their waiting list once that has been provided.

NSALG

We continue to be members of the NSALG which helps us to obtain competitive insurance coverage for third-party injury and public liability. We are not covered for personal injury and theft.

Seed, potatoes, onions and compost order

We are currently working fast to allow all members the opportunity to be able to order seeds, potatoes, onions and compost at low prices, we hope to complete this at the end of January.

Allotment shop

The shop and online shop are currently underway and are set to start offering a small number of items by February and will grow its variety of stock.

Site Security

The completion of the fencing is still a project we are looking to complete, but we are looking for quotes and funding, as well as advice from council departments as to how best to continue with the work.

We have also linked in with the local PCSOs and are looking into ways to work with those bordering neighbours to minimise theft. As well as additional crime reduction methods we can implement on-site.

We do however have a strict policy on all entry gates to the allotment being shut and locked by all members.

Bids and fundraising

We have not received or put in any bids for funding during this period but have a number of options we are looking into for 2023. Including free training courses for 3 members of the committee to attend to help understand how to put funding applications in. we have also met with Charlotte Eccles the Community Development Officer for our area, who has offered to support the committee in training for applying for bids and also sharing information on any funding that may be appropriate for us.

Work parties

We have held 3 successful work parties and seen a vast improvement in the maintenance of the site, a big thank you to all the members who have been involved.

We hope to have more success in the future and encourage all members to get involved and help us keep the maintenance cost down. Which in turn helps the committee to keep the rent from being increased.

Toilets

The toilets are now being regularly cleaned and will be maintained until we can find an alternative option for the future.

Badger set

Recently we have had a badger set registered on-site and will require all members to ensure the badger is protected at all times. As per The Protection of Badgers Act (1992,)

Complaints

14 outstanding complaints from the previous committee have been dealt with and have been resolved to the best of our ability.

We have dealt with one appeal

We have not dealt with any complaints during this period

We have produced a complaints procedure policy which is now in effect.

Summary

We have managed to achieve some great progress after the devastation that covid-19 has caused. We still have a long way to go to get the site cleared and all plots working, as well as provide a safe and enjoyable community area on the site.

We will be inspecting gardens quarterly to ensure all plots are being cultivated and will send improvement notices if necessary.

We hope with the help of the work parties we will be able to hold an open day in 2023 and invite the local community onto the site. As well as getting the site to a well-managed state.

We aim to continue the welcoming, exceptional and positive culture on the allotment site so all plot holders feel safe and happy and so any community visitors will also feel the same.

We will drive the site to become a key place for the local community to come and relax and also be able to get involved in creating a more sustainable and biodiverse area on the allotments.

Main Focus for 2023

1. Continue to improve the website and digital technology for the GSCAA
2. Create a more practical community area to support our local community
3. Work to ensure a good maintenance plan and site security for the whole site
4. Have strong diversity, biodiversity and sustainability policies to ensure a happy and safe environment for all members, the public and animals on site
5. Development of the existing relationship with the Stoke City Council to remain self-managed, which is the expressed view of the precious community

We hope that 2023 will be a productive and stable year for the GSCAA, and would like to thank all members for their continued support and guidance. The committee will always ensure the views and opinions are taken into consideration from all members. Although sometimes difficult management decisions need to be made in order to keep the site safe, secure, and compliant. Sometimes we may need to call on all members to ensure this is met. We understand that

sometimes it may seem assertive in some manners, but we hope all members understand that we are always working in their best interest to ensure we meet the challenges and external factors, professionally and fairly in all we do.

Nathan Cotton (chairperson)