

Committee Report for the AGM Friday 16th January 2009

I am sorry to have to report the deaths of the following allotment holders during the past year.

Mrs Sylvia Crittall from the Bolton Road site.

Mr Mayne from the Maidenhead Road site

Mr Ken Bateman and Mr John Hemmings from the Municipal Site.

Committee.

Thanks for their contribution are due to Mrs Fenella Munt and Mr Tony Baldwyn who have resigned from the committee due to pressure of work.

Mr and Mrs Bill Birch have also decided to resign after many years of service to the Association. Doreen has offered to continue assisting Lesley and John Spence with the organisation of the dances as and when necessary.

The committee would like to thank all of them for their valued contribution to the Association.

Rules

At last year's meeting it was reported that the status and the rules of the organisation were under review. The committee has been working throughout the year on this matter and David Hickman will report on this matter later in the meeting.

Membership.

The beginning of the membership year is always very busy once the invoices are sent out. At the present time we have 440 Allotment holders compared with 412 last year and 296 Home Gardeners compared with 275 last year. A further 90 Home gardeners have yet to renew their membership, but they often do not renew until the Spring growing season commences.

Many thanks are due to Lesley Spence and Don Hartridge for the highly efficient manner in which the annual rents and membership fees have been collected. It is as a result of many hours spent in the cold at the Maidenhead Road and Fairground Trading sheds on Sundays and Thursdays which is only relieved by the occasional cup of coffee.

Hall.

The hall continues to be a popular venue with local groups of various kinds and it is rented out on about 40 occasions most months of the year. The Association has also continued to hold dances throughout the year, culminating with the annual New Year's Eve dance which as usual was sold out. Many thanks to Lesley and John Spence and Doreen Birch for all the work that this entails.

Jayne Rigg has continued to offer her regular Sunday lunches which are always popular and extremely good value and the annual Christmas lunch was oversubscribed. The quiz which Joe organised kept the diners entertained and a good time was had by all. However, Joe has promised to make his quiz more difficult next year, so you have been warned.

The condition of the hall is under constant review and improvements are made as and when necessary. In this regard the committee is most grateful to Ralph Green for his diligence and efforts at ensuring that the state of the hall is kept in a satisfactory manner for all hirers and that we comply with the ever increasing demands made upon us. Regrettably our current insurers have made even greater requirements so that we have been obliged to consider possible alternatives which may be less onerous. We are hopeful that the recent installation of a CCTV system in addition to upgrading the fire alarm will be a factor in ensuring a lower insurance premium.

We recently installed clear no entry and exit signs in the car park in an effort to improve access and prevent accidents. We trust members will follow these helpful signs.

The compound which for years had been very unsatisfactory being draughty and not particularly weatherproof is now being upgraded. When it is finished it should provide much improved storage conditions for both the Trading shed materials and other items.

Outings

Karin Lohr organised two outings during the past year. One party had a day trip to Hatfield house in June and another went to Wisley in July. The committee would like to thank Karin for her work in organising these trips.

Events.

The growing season was plagued with difficult growing conditions last year with an early heat wave and too much rain at times and then cold and grey periods when warm sun would have been preferred. August in particular was a difficult month, when the period before the show was not very warm but rather wetter than we should have liked.

However despite the problems, a fine selection of flowers, fruit and vegetables were on display at the annual Show and Fete. The deputy Mayoress came to declare the show open and stayed to enjoy both the exhibits and the side shows. The weather for once remained fine and dry. There was a good attendance and everybody enjoyed the sideshows and the bargains available on the various stalls. I personally have never served so many teas.

A special thank you is due to all the ladies who baked the marvellous selection of cakes and scones for the tea room and of course to Jayne Rigg and the hard working ladies who spent the afternoon in the kitchen making and selling the teas.

The local papers carried plenty of coverage of the afternoon with photographs of some of the prize winners. The deputy Mayoress also attended the prize giving in September and handed out certificates and cups to the various winners and remained to enjoy the cheese and wine. It was a most enjoyable evening and our only regret being that more of the prize winners did not attend.

Many thanks are due to Harold Mitchell for all his hard work in organising both the show and then the prize giving. Thanks are also due to all the volunteers who helped with the preparation before, during and after the show. Their assistance is invaluable and without it the show and fete would not be possible.

I would like to remind members that details of events and other information is available both on the website and in the regular news letters. David Hickman our editor is always pleased to receive items for inclusion whether they be gardening tips, recipes or other items of interest.

Finally I would like to wish everyone a happy and successful gardening year.