**Annual Report 2018-19**

Welcome to the Cutteslowe Allotment Association annual general meeting. This report gives a brief outline of what’s been happening since the last AGM and updates members on what will be happening this year.

This has been another good year for our Association.

Since the setting up of the Cutteslowe Allotment Association Committee in 2011, we have been working on strategies to improve the site, bringing new members into our Association and helping our plot holders to enjoy their gardening. This year the Committee has received great support from our members in the form of help during our Work Party sessions.

***Membership***

We currently have 64 members. We also have a waiting list of 16 prospective plot holders. We anticipate some turnover of members as we approach the renewal of annual subscriptions, notice of which will be given in December 2019. Once the final number of vacancies is clear we will contact prospective members who are currently on the waiting list. Presently, we seven vacant plots.

Through a combination of membership turnover and a continuing process of plot rationalisation and creation we hope to be able to accommodate as many as possible on the waiting list during the coming season.

The strategy of turning some large plots into half plots has been successful and has enabled new members to manage their plots with greater ease. The strategy has also proved very helpful in enabling us to increase our membership and has introduced more people to the pleasure of growing their own vegetables.

***Site Improvements***

This year has been very productive in terms of site improvements. This year’s major development has been the installation of the **hard-standing area at the main gate** the creation of the **starter beds** and the purchase and installation of a **new** **Community shed** next to the mobility beds**.**

In large part the improvements have been due to grant funding, the hard work of our volunteers during work parties and the tireless efforts of Ian Sheppard, our Secretary, who has been able to co-ordinate major works with the Parks Department and outside contractors.

A special vote of thanks should be extended to Oliver Horwood ,Nigel Howard, Ian Sheppard, Charlie Millar and Bob Findlay who have been responsible throughout this year for cutting our communal paths. Other improvements have included:

* *Repairing the lock for the main gate*
* *Repairing the water pump*
* *Purchasing of a new brush cutter, rotivator, hedge trimmer attachment*
* *Building new 3 new Community compost bins*
* *Completing work on the raised beds bringing them into full use for the season*
* *New signage (internal and external)*
* *Clearance of the abandoned former compost area and spoil tip*
* *Construction and painting of trellis made from pallets to the rear of the communal area*
* *Clearance of the area to the rear of the poly tunnel and behind plots 10 and 10a*
* *Collection and burning of rotten wood, rubbish and weeds*
* *Clearance of general non-compostable rubbish on site (skip)*
* *Acquisition of manure for plot holders*
* *Relocation of community sheds*
* *Pollarding of the large willow tree behind plots*
* *Clearance of trees blown down during two storms*
* *Four successful work parties that were able to continue site improvements*
* *Association Summer BBQ*

***Grant Applications***

We have had some significant success again this year in terms of Grant Applications. Tesco Bags of Help grant of £2000 together with £3600 from the National Lottery award enabled us to undertake a major construction project in the creation of the hard-standing area at the front gate. A new community shed was purchased and equipment to enable us to maintain the public areas of the site more effectively.

***Plot Development Plans for 2020/21***

* Reset gate post
* Shelving inside the community shed
* Plants for the community garden
* Additional community tools
* Install an alarm system in the container
* Install cycle racks

Please feel free to make further suggestions for improvements to our site.

***Work Parties***

We have had a marvellous response from our membership for the work parties which scheduled on four occasions this year.

The change in Rules has been very effective and all members who had not paid the *‘opt out levy’* contributed to our 4 work parties over the course of the year. We estimate that this response generated about 260 hours of collective work on improvements to the site.

This work has had a notable impact on our communal areas and the improvements on the site have been significant. Many thanks to all those members who gave so generously of their time.

***2019 Oxford and District Allotment Association Competition***

The Centenary Allotment Competition was held 2019. We entered the site and individual plots. Judging was completed in September and the results were very pleasing.

**Cutteslowe Allotment Site**

Joint First for the Best Kept Allotment Site (£200) **Alderman Knight Award**

Gerald Clarke **Special Award**

Pero & Stephanie Jankovic **Newcomer Certificate**

Bob Findlay, Deborah Crawshaw, Harry & Hilary Fletcher **Highly Commended Certificate**

**Site Issues**

We have had three issues this year of which we should all be aware:

**Paths**

* It has sometimes been difficult to mow paths due to obstructions such as netting, discarded weeds, large stones and encroaching couch grass. All side paths need to be kept clear of all obstructions.

**Cultivation**

* A small number of allotments were poorly cultivated to the extent that they did not meet the minimum standards for cultivation outlined in the Members Rules (copies available at AGM). The Committee will conduct a more rigorous programme of inspections next season. Plot holders should review the Members Rules with reference to the cultivation of plots.

**Security**

* We have had two instances of theft again this season and the gate has been left open overnight. Please be vigilant and if you see any behaviour that is suspicious please report it to a member of the Committee. Please ensure you lock the gate on both entry and exit to the site.

***Background Information for New Members***

As we have a significant number of new members, we would like to take this opportunity to explain to members why we have an Association for the site.

The management of Allotment sites varies across the country according to the ownership which can be either privately held or owned by the local authority.

Some local authorities manage the sites by having a dedicated allotment officer who deals directly with individual plot holders in rent collection and management of the sites, while other authorities lease out the land to trustees, landlords or associations.

Oxford City Council has 32 sites across the city and manages these sites by leasing them with devolved management to Associations. This means they have trustees who hold the lease and the site is managed by an elected committee in accordance with their lease and agreed constitution and rules.

Currently Oxford City Council is reviewing the rent for its allotment sites based on size, areas of cultivation and amenities supplied by the council Cutteslowe Allotment Association is also a member of the Oxford & District Federation of Allotment Associations which works to:

* *Promote, support and safeguard the welfare of allotment associations in Oxford and those Associations approved by the Executive Committee*
* *Provide links to administrative advice and support*
* *Act as an invited arbitrator where necessary on any internal allotment disputes*
* *Represent Associations and offer support if necessary in any dealings with Oxford City Council and other public bodies*

In addition to the above the association also benefits from the insurance held in the name of the Federation as all OCC sites must have cover as part of their lease for Public Liability and Employer liability. association membership stands at XX members which is an increase of from 2012'