

Firstly thank you for the invite Mick (Chair) and thank you Chair along with your team for the provision of our fantastic facility. Thanks also to the landowner, John Martin and his family who is always very receptive to assisting us with the operation of the site including the management of the composting area.

My plan is to give you a fairly short presentation and I'm happy to field any questions you may have.

In a nutshell, the allotments are functioning very well. We have 63 plots and 37 tenants. We have full occupancy with no one on the waiting list. 4 tenants are from outside the parish. Other than 2 or 3 unkempt plots for which letters have been sent out, the site is in very good condition and we hold regular working parties to tidy the site and to trim and cut back where appropriate. The fencing on the right hand side is/was in need of some attention, although I believe John has now repaired it as far as he can – we'll revisit this in the spring when the weather is a bit more hospitable.

At the AGM in May, we kept the rents at the same level for the third consecutive year despite RPI increases. We have done this over the past two years by supporting the rent through fund raising monies and by increasing the number of tenants this year. Rent surpluses are now held in a ring fenced account with the intention of keeping the rents as stable as possible going forward. All rents due for 2018/19 have been collected. As of our last committee meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December, WFA hold a balance of £2,625, plus a ring-fenced memorial surplus of £109 for future maintenance etc.

After consultation with HPC and the assistance of NSALG, we issued new tenancy agreements earlier this year. 35 tenants have signed and returned them, 2 have not – we will continue to pursue these.

We are also now GDPR compliant and these requirements have now been incorporated into new tenancy agreements.

Our major development plan for next year is to construct a storage area for the finished compost, the wood chip and the manure – this will be the area where the old building used to stand. A concern we have is that we lose a lot of soil from the site and don't replace enough of it. We have a composting area, but John Martin takes most of it away for us as we have no place to store it properly for communal use. It will mean managing the compost better and we will engage John in this – if we can then make the finished product more available for tenants and encourage them to use it, then it will be a significant benefit for the facility. We will involve HPC in the planning/construction of this.

Many of you will be aware that working alongside the diocese, we raised funds to construct a memorial garden in the church grounds to commemorate those killed in the Hixon rail crash 50 years ago. We held a memorial service and presentation back in January which was very well attended and we have a rota of allotment committee members where we maintain the garden on a monthly basis. With some surplus monies, we have also erected a small memorial stone on the grass verge by the bridge.

Finally Chair, following many years of discord between HPC and the allotments association, we are delighted that we seem to have entered a new era of cooperation and working together and it was a pleasure to have you attend our recent committee meeting. As Chair of WFA, I am absolutely committed to nurturing our partnership and I look forward to many years of progress and enjoyment.

Simon Ellin - December 2018

