

Chairman's Introduction and Report

1 Welcome

A very warm welcome to all Allotmenters, family and friends it is wonderful to see so many of you here this evening. My name is Michael Norman and following a Special General Meeting of the Allotment Forum Committee, I stand before you this evening as your Interim Chairman until the Ballot Results are announced under Item 5 of tonight's Agenda.

1.1 Apologies

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

We have no minutes of last years Annual General Meeting.

3 Report from the Chair

My name is Michael Norman, I am Forum Site Representative of Old Northwick Lane Allotment Site, where I have held a plot for the past 20 years.

I secured my first allotment in Worcester City 41 years ago (a mere child!) behind the Squash Rackets Courts (Cannons Gym) off the Droitwich Road.

I joined the Allotment Forum at its conception and have previously been Forum Site Rep. at Old Northwick Lane for 14 years. During which time I was Vice-Chairman and Chairman over a combined nine year period.

In September of last year I was invited to join the Forum Executive Committee. Towards the end of the year we have seen our extremely capable Chairman Peter Parry step down as Chairman of the Forum. Vice Chairman, Pat Gething stepped in and assumed the roll of Acting Chairman which she executed with confidence until mounting family commitments forced her reluctantly to step down. I know from personal experience that it can at times be extremely challenging to strike the right life balance between family commitments and responsibilities and wanting desperately at the same time to fulfill a driving desire to pursue something you are passionate about. That applies equally to both Peter and Pat.

At this point I was approached to fill the position of Interim Chairman up until the AGM today.

On 2nd March a Special General Meeting of the Forum Committee was convened in compliance with our Constitution, Forum Site Reps. were asked prior to this meeting to prepare a short presentation if they were interested in applying for any of the Executive Committee Positions. (Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer) I put my name forward for the Post of Interim-Chairman which was unopposed. I was returned with a unanimous vote from members present.

It has been both a very busy year for the Forum and at the same time an extremely testing one for our Executive Team.

Your volunteer Site Representatives have, as always worked tirelessly in supporting WCC manage the 23 sites across Worcester City. Their continued dedication in ensuring that all available plots on the sites are let, contributes directly in helping to reduce the impact on future rent increases.

To that end, it is essential that we all ensure that at least two thirds of our individual plots are cultivated each year as contracted in our Agreement. If you presently have a full plot

and are experiencing difficulties in cultivating two thirds, have an initial word with your Site Representative. It may be possible to split the plot in half. Making the other half available for a new tenant who may be waiting patiently on a Waiting List. I have noticed of late a growing tendency for termination notices to be more readily used where significant waiting lists exist, so please ensure that your plot is well cultivated.

During the past 12 months we have seen a management change at the City Council from Community Engagement Team to Street Scene. It has meant a change of personnel resulting in less attendance by them at our General Forum meetings. We have however seen the start of regular meetings between our Executive and the City Council.

During the year more effort has been made to widen our scope on publicity. Our Chairman has been interviewed on BBC Hereford & Worcester and supported articles in the Worcester News and the All About Worcester publication.

Mains water consumption on all our sites equates to around £21,000.00 per annum on allotment overheads.

In the past year the City Council were encouraged to sell off their old Wheelie Bins to tenants in order to collect rain water. This cost of mains water provision on site is a serious issue when you consider the income from plot rent. Please ensure that we all observe the sprinkler ban, limit the time spent running hoses from standpipes and conserve rainwater in water butts from sheds and greenhouses.

I am presently asking the Council for facts and figures on how they justify the measured consumption on Allotment Sites. All sites should be metered and as yet I have not received any clarification.

When previously serving as your Chairman, I very much like to visit Site Reps. on their Sites. I have already visited Pat on Timberdine Avenue Site and I look forward to visiting more sites during the growing season.

We should also spare a thought for Louise Robertson and Richard Coopey whose sites at Waterworks Road and Pitchcroft Lane have had to endure unprecedented continual flooding this winter.

3.1 Vote of Thanks

See attached sheet.

3.1 Vote of Thanks :

- (1) Peter Parry - Outgoing Chairman Peter has served the Forum tirelessly for the past two years in his role as Chairman. He has made a significant contribution to our management style, as we made the progressive transition under the new team of Environmental Operations (Street Scene) at Worcester City Council.
- (2) Pat Gething - Outgoing Vice Chairman and most recently Acting Chairman
Pat has given freely of her time in supporting Peter as Vice Chairman over the past two years. Prior to this she has also contributed to the work of the Executive Committee for a number of years.
- (3) Arthur Rowe - Outgoing Treasurer Arthur has been working allotments for the past 48 years. He now steps down as Forum Treasurer, having held the position for the past ten years. He had previously represented the Allotment Forum as its Chairman for 5 years, during a period when significant changes were made at the City Council.
- (4) I would like to give a vote of thanks to Sue Horrobin - (Head of Environmental Operations) and her team at WCC
Mark Bayliss - Environmental Operations Manager (Street Scene)
Guy Powell - Technical Supervisor (Street Scene)
Nick Mc Gowan - Team Supervisor (Street Scene)
Lesley Beach - Technical Professional Officer (Street Scene)
Kerry Poole - Technical Support Assistant (Street Scene)
- (4.1) Warwick Neale - Community Engagement Manager for Community Services WCC
- (5) I would also like to take this opportunity of thanking all the Plot Holders who contributed towards our display of produce at the Worcester Show last year. Typically providers of produce and those who set out and manned the exhibit. It was a worthy winner of the Silver Award. All produce was subsequently distributed to Charities in the City.
- (6) A quick mention for Mark Surey (Comer Avenue Site) who has volunteered to mentor those Plot Holders who wish to keep permitted livestock on their plot. There is an Information Leaflet available from Kerry Poole - Technical Support Assistant at WCC.
- (7) On a personal note, I would like to thank Maxine Hemming for agreeing to take over from me as Forum Site Representative at Old Northwick Lane in March 2013. When my late wife was taken critically ill. I then spent the next 10 months supporting her in University Hospital, Coventry. Maxine stepped down as Site Rep. in late summer last year.