

Annual General Meeting - Minutes
Held on
Monday 16th November 2015 @ 7.15pm
At
Vine Hall, Vine Road, West Molesey KT8 9LF

Members present: 31

1. Welcome

Ann Bailey welcomed those present and thanked them for coming.

2. Apologies for absence:

Likhan Saha, Peter and Sandra Norgate 105N, Richard , Elsie Shaughnessy, Ron Bailey, Phillip Finch, Ray Lewihstin, Trevor Marshall

3. Adoption of minutes:

The Minutes of 2014 had been displayed on site and on the Association website prior to the AGM.

4. Matters arising:

Prior to the adoption of the Minutes the Chairman advised the meeting that a letter had been received from Alan and June Howard (Plot 70) who had proposed that the Minutes were unacceptable and should only be approved if they excluded the item under AOB where Luke Beale had asked for clarification on a comment made at the last AGM with reference to 'extra effort'. Mr and Mrs Howard felt that Luke was entitled to greater clarification than that given. At this juncture the Chairman pointed out that Luke had stated in writing that he was entirely satisfied with the information he had been given and further was given a further copy of the Site Rationale. The Chairman clarified 'extra effort' meaning that all plot holders should ensure they adhered to the Tenancy Agreement and the Rules and Conditions. Finally, it was pointed out that the Minutes are a record of what was said and what was agreed and it was felt the Minutes as circulated were a true record of the 2014 meeting.

The Chairman then asked for a show of hands to accept the Minutes of the 2014 AGM. These were accepted by the majority in attendance.

Chairman's Report:

It is my pleasure as Chairman to write and invite all members to attend our 2015 AGM which is taking place on Monday 16 November at 7.15 p.m. This year it will be held at Vine Hall, Vine Road, East Molesey,KT8 9LF. I hope as many members as possible will make the time to attend to support the Committee and air their views.

I should like to thank all members of the Committee for their hard work, time and commitment to the Association. Particular thanks to Pam Sickelmore who has now decided to 'retire' from the Committee – not from her allotment I hasten to add! Pam has contributed hugely to the Association over the years and will be missed by the Committee. The unpopular role of 'reviews' has continued to be conducted by John Bavin. It has been said before but must be repeated; our lease is due for renewal in September so we would urge all plot holders to make a special effort in the coming months to keep their plots tidy and their pathways cut in readiness for the inspection of the site that will take place prior to our lease renewal.

Peter Rendall has kept our finances in very good order and has been super efficient and an essential member of the Committee. However, he is standing down as he will be out of the country for much of the coming year. Richard Farmiloe, whilst not a Committee member, has again very kindly dealt with our water issues for us which is greatly appreciated. Thank you again to Jane Poole and Pam who have continued to undertake 'toilet cleaning' duties – not the most glamorous role! May we request members **not** to help themselves to the toilet rolls or try to flush blue hand towels down the toilet – it blocks the system which results in temporary closures!

Another year of highs and lows with the unpredictable English weather. It seems success with crops has varied from plot to plot. Soft fruits saw bumper crops; sweetcorn and beans were hit and miss depending on whom you spoke to. Nothing new here and as always we all hope to do better next year. Fingers crossed.

We have again supplied skips on site in March and September, which have enabled plot holders to remove bulky items from their plots. These have proven to be a success and we hope to provide skips again in the coming year and will put notices on the boards to advise the dates.

The roadways will be closed again this year when the water is turned off to protect the lanes from damage. They will be reopened again when the water is turned back on in early Spring. We would ask plot holders not to remove the barriers across the lanes during the 'closed' period.

Disappointingly, it is always the same plot holders and Committee members who are willing to lend a hand when repairs are needed to be done on the site and their help is greatly appreciated. Filling in the potholes on the roadways recently was a prime example. The repairs are for the benefit of all plot holders and it has been suggested that we introduce a once a year working party commitment from all members.

This would enable more tidying up and renovating to be done and, we hope, encourage community spirit amongst the plot holders. Bring your thoughts on this to the AGM where we propose to discuss it in more detail.

Finally, a note of caution for those members who bring their children onto the site. Please do not allow them to go onto other plots – but remain on the pathways at all times. Please keep them in your sight, as there are numerous hazards where they could be injured. I look forward to seeing you at the AGM on 16 November.

ANN BAILEY

5. Treasurers Report:

The Treasurer's report was completed by Peter Randall and audited by Trevor Marshall. A copy of the report was sent out with invitation to the AGM and the key points are highlighted below:

- Peter highlighted that Elmbridge Council Annual Rent was still outstanding – as shown on the accounts and due for payment.
- Replacement signage, skips and some plot clearance were the main outgoings.
- The water bill is now constant as Peter had the meters read and we are now up to date with Thames Water. We are no longer reliant on estimated bills.
- This year was the first year the Return Deposit fee was introduced and it has been successful. We will ensure these funds are accounted for and available to refund when plot holders relinquish their plots in good order.
- The audit was undertaken by Trevor Marshall. Peter thanked Trevor for his hard work.

6. Secretary/ Membership Report:

Pam Sickelmore gave the report as she had acted as the Secretary for the majority of the year of 2015 and was standing down at this AGM:

Pam reported that the turn over of members had dropped during 2015 in that fewer have left or been terminated. 12 new members had joined the Association this year making 112 members since 2008 that are still with us.

Re the Waiting List Pam said that all plots are taken and there are 12 on the Waiting List with 3 existing plot holders wanting another half; and 8 wishing to be contacted next year when their personal circumstances have changed. 10 members left the association during the year, 4 of whom had their leases terminated due to persistent lack of cultivation. The committee have been using the £25 deposit that we request from members now joining to clear those plots that have been very neglected.

Pam said that she still received very few keys returned after plot holders' leave. Pam raised the issue of the gate padlock. While we do have one spare, the committee request that oil is **not** put on the lock as this damages the workings within the barrel. Only use WD40 if the padlock is 'sticking'. It is in need of WD40 now. If your key sticks, the knack is to put key in firmly and withdraw the key very slightly to turn.

The bonfire situation remains a success and there were no complaints at all in 2015. However, Pam asked all plot holders to be aware of others on surrounding plots and ensure fires were only lit in the official months and follow the guidance for burning in the Starter Pack. If members do not have that

information, please email Pam and she will send it. All information can be found in Tenancy Agreement 3K; the Rules & Conditions 6:4 and in Miscellaneous Information in Starter Packs.

She asked all members to re-read their Rules and Conditions AND the Tenancy Agreement and pointed out that payment of subscription means that plot holders agreed to abide by all items in those documents. If members don't have copies, these can be requested from the Committee.

Pam said that while she had come off the Committee she would welcome anyone coming to ask for help and advice if needed. She asked the membership to be aware of our approaching lease renewal and asked them to be especially diligent in the care of their part of the site. She pointed out how lucky we were to have access to a space like ours, not only to be able to produce our own food and flowers, but to enjoy the company of other like minded people and have a part in supporting our fragile natural environment. Finally Pam said that there were additions every year to the list of flora and fauna seen. This year we had had sightings of rose chafers and the hummingbird hawk moth on site but sadly no wasp spiders. Pam thanked the membership for their support over the 7 years she had been Secretary.

Although Pam will be stepping down, she will continue to support the Committee and be available to offer her assistance, which is invaluable. The Chairman thanked Pam for her many years of hard work and dedication to the Association.

7. Committee Elections:

Ann Bailey advised that Doug Watson has agreed to undertake the role of Treasurer. Doug was nominated by Peter Norgate and Seconded by Elsie Shaughnessy.

Ian Whitehorn has agreed to serve again on the Committee and he was nominated by John Bavin and seconded by Ron Bailey.

Ron Bailey has agreed to stand again for the Committee and he is nominated by Jeremy Schomberg and Seconded by Sandra Maitland.

Tina Roden has volunteered to join the Committee and to undertake the role of Membership Secretary and she is nominated by Phillip Finch and Seconded by Victoria Moore.

Jessica Inwood has volunteered to join the Committee and to undertake the role of Secretary. She is nominated by Pam Sickelmore and seconded by Ann Bailey.

Ann Bailey had agreed to stand for another year as Chairman and was Proposed by Sandra Maitland and Seconded by Pam Sickelmore.

All Members up for election were unanimously elected by a show of hands.

The Chairman advised that the following Members not due for re-election would remain on the Committee.

Jane Poole will continue as our Liaison Officer.

John Bavin will continue to oversee the Review Programme

Vicky Moore will undertake responsibility for the Web Page and Facebook page.

Ian Whitehorn

The Chairman thanked Steve Plumbridge for his past help and hard work as a member of the Committee and it was regretted that pressure of work precluded him from remaining on the Committee.

8. Working Party Proposal

The Chairman outlined the proposal to have 4 Working Parties each year to take place on a Saturday morning and Wednesday evening for 2-3 hours each time.

The Committee would set dates and Project details for the Working Parties in advance and these would be advertised on the notice boards and on the Web Facebook pages.

The purpose of the working Parties was to encourage a team community spirit and social interaction within the allotment site and to get jobs done such as:

- Painting inside and out of the Toilet Block
- Clear Car Park Kerb edges of weeds and rubbish.
- Paint and Treat Water Butt covers
- Fill pot holes in roadway

Refreshments would be provided.

A sign-up sheet would be put up on Notice Boards for Plot holders to put their names on for each project.

It was also proposed that there would be a £10 opt out fee for those not wishing to participate in the Working Parties the funds from which would be used to hire tradesmen to do the tasks. There was lengthy discussion about these proposals. Members voted in favour of holding Working Parties and it was generally felt to be a good idea but they voted against there being an opt out fee payable for those who did not participate.

The Committee agreed to progress these in the New Year and members were asked to look out for notices on the Members Notice Board on site.

10. Any Other Business

The Chairman advised that there were three items to discuss.

Fiona Fraser had proposed to the Association holding a 'Seedy Sunday' event at her home on the first Sunday in February – 7th from 11.00 – 3.00 pm. All members of the Association would be invited. Many varieties of the seeds available at 'Seedy Sunday' are not listed – so it is against the Law to buy and sell them – but perfectly legal to grow them. Consequently, the seeds are not for sale – and are not to be found in commercial catalogues. Visitors attending would be asked to either swap seed packets or to make a donation of 50p per packet to cover the cost of organising the 'swap'. Everyone was invited to bring seeds or plants to swap. Fiona has brown envelopes for seeds or you can take your seeds along in envelopes of jars. Please write the name of the seed and date on the packet or jar. Any other information would be great – but not necessary. If the event is a success Fiona will hold it annually. Reasons for doing this:-

- It maintains age-old skills.
- It keeps a diversity of locally adapted varieties alive.
- It resists the privatisation of plant genetic material
- It keeps seed making in the garden and out of the laboratory.

Members voted in favour of supporting this event and posters would be put up on site giving all members due notice. Fiona attended the AGM and was able to give members more information when the meeting closed.

The Chairman advised the next item was again from Alan and June Howard who wished to know 'Who brought in the Site Rationale' and who put it together'?

The Chairman advised the meeting that the 'Site Rationale' was put together by the Committee in 2010. It was based purely on Item 3A in the Tenancy Agreement. It has been an accepted method of managing the site for 5 years and those that regularly attend the AGM are aware of the Starter Pack and its contents.

Mr and Mrs Howard wrote in their letter that they felt there were too many Rules and Regulations – the Chairman advised that these have all been in place since the site became self-managed 25 years ago. The Starter Pack is there to ensure everything is clear to those joining.

The Chairman advised that a further copy of the Rules and Tenancy Agreement would be put on the site Noticeboard to act as a permanent reminder.

The Reviews, which it is suggested by Mr & Mrs Howard are undertaken in a 'cloak and dagger' manner. Again the Chairman advised that the Starter Pack tells you when these will

take place. If the plot is in good order then all will be well. If members receive a letter it is for a good reason.

Mr Howards plot has been monitored since 2007. It is not weeded and well maintained. The Chairman advised you are permitted to lay your plot fallow for a short time – if covered. This stops the spread of weeds, which have a habit of blowing onto adjacent plots. If you cannot maintain your plot to the required standard then give it up – we have a waiting list.

Finally the Chairman advised that a source of manure had been established and a Risk Assessment would take place shortly and provided that it proved satisfactory then deliveries would take place as soon as possible. It was hoped to have 4 deliveries a year and members would be advised via the noticeboard. She further advised help would be needed to make the manure compound area more substantial with pallets serving as walls to contain it.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and support in doing so.

There being no further items the meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.