

BEAUCHAMP ROAD & GREEN LANE ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting – Minutes

Wednesday 8th November 2017 at 7.30 pm

St Mary's Church, St Mary's Road, East Molesey KT8 0ST

Members present: 22

Andrew Gee, Bill Gotch, Duncan Toms, Jeremy Schomberg, Elsie Shaughnessy, Erica and Andy Nunn, Sandra Maitland, John Gillard, Alan Howard, Chris Lychsell, Robert Welland, H J Howell for M Mottershead, B R Broderick, Robert Prus, Phillip Finch, Bob Poole, Richard Farmiloe, David Sleep, Fred Catling, B T Rideout, J A Turner, C D Searle.

1 Welcome & Apologies for Absence

- 2** Chairman, Ann Bailey opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. She introduced Jenny Band who gave an interesting talk on bee-keeping which was extremely well received by members present.

Ann then returned to the AGM formalities . Apologies for absence were received from Ken & Denise McCarthy, Tony & Wendy Hardy and Pam Sicklemore. Best wishes for a speedy recovery were sent to Pam who is currently in hospital and undergoing yet another round of treatment. We hope to see her on her plot again before too long.

Ann paid tribute to Eamonn Hickey who recently passed away. As many of you will know he underwent open-heart surgery in Ireland some weeks ago and died shortly after his return to the UK. He will be missed as a very cheerful and helpful member and we send our Condolences to his family.

The members of the Committee were introduced:

- Victoria Moore
- Tina Roden – Membership Secretary
- Keith Davies
- Ian Whitehorn
- Ron Bailey
- Jane Poole
- Doug Watson – Treasurer

The chairman also introduced Felicity Phelps who was taking the minutes.

2. Adoption of the last AGM Minutes

The minutes were adopted by a show of hands.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Chairman's Report

Following the AGM, Ann said refreshments would be served to give members the opportunity to chat with other plot holders and committee members.

She said she would like to thank all members of the Committee for their hard work, time and commitment to the Association and to her personally in her years as Chairman of the Association. Ann added: "I would again remind all plot holders that we are a self-managing site and plot holders need to understand that without the Committee our site would not function. We are answerable to Elmbridge Borough Council to ensure we meet their lease requirements and maintain the site to expected standards. We all enjoy the facilities that having an allotment at Beauchamp Road provides. The running of the site cannot, and should not, be left to a handful of members to maintain our excellent facilities, Everyone needs to make a contribution in time and effort and not leave it to a dedicated few, Without your valuable support we will be unable to maintain our outstanding site.

We have again had Working Parties on site. We finished painting the toilet block, tidied our access road, cleared a lot of debris left on untended plots and also cleared items "dumped" by members on the wild life area. This is happening again – more rubbish is being put here – please stop. If you see anyone mention it to us – if you do we will take action.

We had an evening meeting when all the new plot numbering was installed – followed by wine and snacks. These working parties are advertised on the notice board and plot holders are asked to give their time a couple of times a year. We have refreshments (thank you Tina for the home-made flapjacks) and a lot of laughter. A good team spirit. Thank you to the committee who lent their support and sourced supplies, tools and equipment to use. You have all made a difference to our facilities.

After more than a year of phone calls, meetings and emails, which has been both stressful and frustrating, I am delighted to report that we have signed our new lease with Elmbridge Borough Council and Justin is registering it with the Land Registry so all the hard work and frustration had paid off and we have 25 more years of happy digging to look forward to!! We owe Justin Pinches a huge debt of gratitude for his unstinting help to finalise the Lease for the benefit of all plot holders. Thank you most sincerely.

Doug Watson has kept our finances in good order and is an essential and valuable member of the Committee. Tina Roden has done a brilliant job as our Membership Secretary this past year and we are delighted to have her on the Committee. Richard Farmiloe, whilst not a Committee member, has again very kindly dealt with our water issues, which is much appreciated and also for assisting Keith in the replacement of the Committee shed roof – no mean feat – no more leaks. Thank you again to Jane Poole who has continued to undertake "toilet cleaning" duties – not the most glamorous role. A heartfelt thanks to Jane. 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 and results in temporary closures! Victoria keeps our Facebook page up to date; we would welcome more comments and "likes". Many thanks Victoria. Do please support us here and keep up to date with our site activities – both online and on the notice board.

Thanks are due to Keith who has facilitated the new signage on the plots, which is a great improvement and makes identifying the plots a lot easier. He has created, repaired, painted and put in place new signage and generally been very supportive and active.

Whilst many will complain about another washout summer, this year's weather has been ideal for fruiting plants. The long, warm, dry spring encouraged pollination at peak flowering times in April and May. We then had an abundance of rain. The summer was both wetter and warmer than usual – the ideal combination which allows fruits to swell and ripen. Thanks to these conditions we had bumper crops of strawberries, tayberries, apples, plums, cherries, raspberries etc. We were also picking blackberries exceptionally early at the beginning of July. Other crops, asparagus, sweetcorn, tomatoes, courgettes and cucumbers benefitted from the weather whilst as always some crops like runner beans and onions were slow to get going. As we say – there's always next year!

The skip on the site in March enabled plot holders to remove bulky items from their plots and we plan to continue with this practice as they have proved to be welcome and successful, However, watch the notice boards, read your emails and our Facebook page – that's what they are for – to advise you of skip dates and other matters relating to the site.

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.

Our pumpkin party on Sunday 8 October was well supported and we had some exceptional specimens to judge – thank you Philip Finch for his expert judging. Sincere thanks to Vicky, Tina, Jane, Elsie, Doug, Linda, Ron, Jeremy and Keith for the unstinting help on the day. Without you it would not have been possible. It was wonderful to see so many plot holders come and join in the fun – with and without pumpkins to be judged. The winning pumpkin measured 158.5 cm. So you know what to aim for next year. I look forward to seeing more members joining in the competition and fun."

Ann then moved on to talk about the rumours surrounding the Trading Hut. She said that: "today we are unsure if they are staying or moving to Hampton Court Way. EMGS are still waiting to hear if planning permission has been granted by Elmbridge Council, but currently we are in limbo as far as the renewal of their sub-lease is concerned. It's a watch this space scenario. Justin does have assurances from Elmbridge Council that they will do an inspection to ensure there is no asbestos on our site. We await the outcome of that situation.

Our rules for having bonfires have largely worked – with a few exceptions. It is the exceptions, which create problems for everyone. I have recently received two formal complaints from Elmbridge Borough Council – Pollution Department – with photographs in once instance taken by residents. Please ensure you follow the guidelines given to you on bonfires. Only light a fire on a still day and only burn dry material – thus creating little or no smoke. Any plot holder failing to do this will be under threat of having their lease terminated. You can all help – if you see a smoking bonfire ask the plot holder to put it out or remove the offending material – it's our site and this impacts on us all. We do not want to ban bonfires. Fair warning.

There are notices on the footpaths asking you all to keep your paths strimmed and mown and also keep your trees cut back so that they do not overhang pathways and no one damages themselves. Keith Davies kindly installed the signage and posts – please take note and let's ensure no accidents occur again because of dangerous pathways.

The reviewing system has continued to be implemented and reviews will commence again early in the New Year.

As I have already said, please pay particular attention to Member Working Parties. Thank you to those of you who have joined in and helped the Committee on these working mornings, As I've said earlier, we have made some improvements for the benefit of all plot holders. It has been fun with great team spirit, we just need more of you to join in and give a couple of hours of your time to help. We will put notices up giving details – please use the notice boards to keep yourselves up to date.”

5 Treasurer's Report & Adoption of Accounts

Doug Watson advised the following: “ I hope you can all see a copy of the Summary Accounts. The plot rental and subscription revenue remains healthy and reflects our strong membership. I will take this opportunity to remind members that the subscription is a prerequisite for having a plot, as we are a membership-based association.

The key areas of expenditure this year have been water and maintenance. Water billing moved from Thames Water to Castle Water at the beginning of the financial year and the invoicing and frequency period has changed. This has resulted in almost doubling the expenditure with no obvious changes in our water consumption pattern; I will be looking into changing the provider in the coming year.

As always, we have made continuous investment in making sure that the allotment area is up to scratch, partly over the last year in preparation for the council renewal process covered by Madam Chair previously. As members change we do have the task of ensuring plots are reasonably clear ready for new members. The expenses this year have pushed us into a deficit of five hundred pounds, which is an improvement on last financial year; however, our capital base remains reasonable.

The BRGL sponsored the annual Pumpkin Party, the cost of which is included in the membership, amounted to around five hundred pounds (including the seeds mailed to members).

We recovered the cost of the skip hire from the Council this year.

The Committee would like to thank Trevor Marshall for once again auditing and approving the books.

I would also like to remind members that when paying the rents prompt payment is appreciated as we are all volunteers and having to chase people for their rents is costly and time consuming which, I, for one, could do without. (It took over six months to collect all the subscriptions this year with a small number still outstanding).

We reviewed increasing rents broadly in line with inflation for next year. Indexing rents was voted and agreed at the AGM 4 years ago. However, we are maintaining the rents at the same level.

One final thing: can you please remember to write any cheques to BEAUCHAMP ROAD ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION (this is the name on the pass book) and not BRGL as some have a habit of doing.”

In addition, the Treasurer stated that costs were rising every year because of inflation. He also said that Thompson and Morgan offered a 50% discount on seeds purchased by allotment holders.

Richard Farmiloe proposed adoption of the Treasurer’s report. John Bavin seconded the motion which was carried.

6 Membership Secretary’s Report

The Chairman said that Tina had been a very active and hard-working member of the Committee over the past two years and has done sterling work as Membership Secretary. Sadly, this year she is standing down due to personal commitments. She will be greatly missed by all the Committee.

The Membership Secretary said: “Since January this year we have had 34 applicants to go on our waiting list with 6 members waiting for an additional plot. We have been able to welcome 16 new members this year. There is a constant and continual turnover of plots especially at the annual renewal period.

At the beginning of the summer, we launched an advertising campaign as we had several empty plots. As a result we now have 16 applicants on the waiting list, the last 5 joining the waiting list this month, During the first week of the campaign we had 25 enquiries which has resulted in an extended waiting list.

Currently, we have only two vacant plots, one of which the Committee have paid to be cleared due to the previous plot holders leaving the site in an unusable condition. The second is being taken on by a current member. Plot clearances are paid for through the £25 deposit that all new members have to pay on acceptance of their plot. Throughout this year, the Committee have paid for numerous plots to be cleared, including a couple of plots which members are unable to tend personally due to ill health. If the Committee are made aware of personal issues, we do our best to support the member.

New members receive a welcome pack by email. We have received very good feedback from new members who have received the packs which are not only full of the Terms and Conditions and rules of leasing a plot but also hints and tips for growing produce and any forthcoming events. If you think we should have included additional information within the pack, please let us know. If you would like an updated version, please leave your email address with me and I will forward a copy onto you. On the same note, please ensure that you keep all of your contact details up to date by notifying us through our site email: beauchampallotments@yahoo.co.uk

My term as the Membership Secretary has come to an end and if you feel that you would like to join the Committee and take on an active role, please speak to one of us after the meeting. My time on the Committee has been very enjoyable and I would like to thank all of the Committee for their continued friendship and support.”

The Chairman pointed out that it was good news that the plots are so popular. If plots are not kept up, there will be notice of termination.

7 Committee Elections

The Chairman announced that she is standing down as Chairman but is willing to remain on the Committee.

The Membership Secretary said in her report that her term has come to an end.

Committee members who are up for re-election and are thankfully prepared to stand again are:

- **Ron Bailey**

Nominated by Keith Davies and seconded by John Bavin.

- **Ian Whitehorn**

Nominated by Victoria Moore and seconded by John Bavin

- **Linda Thomas**

Nominated by Ann Bailey and seconded by Douglas Watson – Linda offered to join the Committee after the AGM last year and it has been a pleasure to have her with and prepared to stand for election.

- **Ann Bailey**

Nominated by Victoria Moore and seconded by John Bavin

Committee members were elected by a show of hands.

Jeremy Schomberg was also elected to the Committee by a show of hands.

8 AOB

Robert Welland N65/S65 asked whether manure would continue to be delivered on site. The Treasurer explained the difficulty of access for Veolia who can only use a certain type of truck. It is impossible for this truck to access the site because of the cars parked in Beauchamp Road. The Committee are trying to find another source. He pointed out that members had found the last delivery was of poor quality.

David Sleep asked what would happen now there are no officers. The Chairman said that the officers' all had other commitment and it was hoped that some other members would step up and take on some of the responsibility.

The Treasurer said that there is a month in which to find new officers. He noted there were only 22 members present at the meeting out of a total membership of 140.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 8.45 pm

