

Ashfield Allotment Association

Treasurer **Joe Roper**

President **Eric Shaw**

Chairman **Daniel Barrington**

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Sunday 11th October 2015, Meeting opened 11.05 am with 32 attendees.

Chairman, Daniel Barrington, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE : John Morris.

2. MINUTES OF AGM held 12th October 2014.

Agreed as a true record, proposed by Colin Langeveld, seconded by Marilyn Gray.

3. MATTERS ARISING: No Matters Arising.

4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT :

I'd like to thank all of the committee for their hard work over the past year.

I'd like to make a special mention for George. George started running our stores seven years ago but he's done much more than a Storekeeper. He's managed and maintained our communal areas, flower beds, pathways, machinery and been there to give help and advice to the many new ploholders we've had. He's spent many, many hours growing plants in the polytunnels for us to sell at the May open days and grown lots of produce in the polytunnels and communal areas for us to sell at our flower shows. Well I'd be here all day if I tried to list all the things he's done for the allotments. I'd like to thank him on behalf of everyone on the allotment site for all of his work.

This year there have been lots of incidents of committee members receiving abuse from plot holders. This behaviour is completely unacceptable. No ploholder whether they're a member of the committee or not deserves to receive abuse or threats from people. This is supposed to be a hobby.

Being a committee member is a completely thankless task. We don't get paid, we don't get back handers, we don't get any special perks, we don't get free rent, – it's ridiculous that I'm sitting here even saying these things but unfortunately some people are spreading these rumours.

All committee members are volunteers and we give up our time freely because we care about our allotment site. We want to have a good, well run, allotment site which I believe we have.

Some people know that I'm a Liverpool City Councillor. The Council has and is still facing massive cuts to its budget. The Council doesn't have the funding for the day to day management of the 25 allotment sites across the city. The council relies on allotment committee's to carry out the day to day running of the allotment sites. If we didn't have these committees then we wouldn't have allotments.

It's no wonder that we haven't had a Secretary for the past three years. Our previous two Secretaries resigned because of the constant abuse and hassle they were receiving from ploholders.

I'd like to thank Ken for taking on the difficult task of sending letters to ploholders who aren't working their plots. That includes committee members who don't work their plot's, we don't get any special treatment. I've had warning letters!

The council want all of the plots on their allotment sites to be worked, we've got massive waiting lists across the city and it's not fair that there are so many neglected plots. While some people don't like the warning letters system, it has worked and people who haven't been working their plots have started working them again or they've given them up and we've been able to re-let them to the next person on the waiting list. Having a plot is a big commitment and you've got to be able to put the time in to work your plot.

The council set the rules on the allotment site, if you don't like the rules then you shouldn't have signed the tenancy agreement. We've all signed up to abide by the rules of the councils tenancy agreement.

Our Flower Show was a big success again this year. We had lots of entries again and the judge said that she was very impressed with the quality of entries. I really hope that more new plot holders will enter next year. It's a bit of fun and there are lots of people who will give you help and advice.

Christine, plot 26, gave a vote of thanks to all the committee members for their voluntary work in the site. She acknowledged it is a 'thankless' task, and appreciated all their efforts.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT : Everyone present was given a copy of the Accounts and Balance Sheets. Treasurer, Joe Roper (JR), explained and discussed the figures.

He urged everyone to purchase from our Stores, as this contributes to the healthy balance we have in our account. There was a general discussion regarding the better quality of our seed potatoes and compost etc, by comparison with large retail shops.

He explained the 10% rent rebate system from Liv CC, for prompt payment.

He advised there are plans to upgrade our water pipes.

(NOTE: At this point, Paul, plot 32A, offered to assist when this work is carried out).

Proposed E Wilson seconded C Quirk. Agreed by all.

6. AUDITOR'S REPORT ON ACCOUNTS : Awaited

JR explained the delay, and apologised. The report would be available at the next meeting.

Chairman asked if accounts could be accepted, pending report.

Proposed by John Byrne, seconded by Eddie Wilson. Agreed by all.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Officers and Members 'stood down' but all present advised they were prepared to stand again.

- President - Eric Shaw. Did not stand for re-election due to the fact he had been unable to commit to some duties during the past year.

Those present wanted Eric to remain as President.

Colin Langeveld referred to Eric's long service and horticultural knowledge, and an asset to our site.

Colin proposed that Eric be made Honorary Life President.

Proposal seconded by Tommy Fitzsimmons.

Eric thanked everyone, and agreed to accept the position.

- Chairperson - Daniel Barrington. Proposed by Christine Quirk/Ann Morris. Agreed.

- Secretary - Ken Hines. Proposed by Eddie Wilson/Gaynor Little. Agreed.

- Treasurer - Joe Roper. Proposed by Christine Quirk/ Neill Davies. Agreed.

- Auditor -Sheila Chanley. Proposed by John Byrne/ Marilyn Gray. Agreed.

- Membership Officer -Colin Langeveld. Proposed by Neill Davies/Terry Wilson. Agreed.

-Show Secretary - Daniel Barrington. Proposed by Joe Roper/ Ken Hines. Agreed.

Ken offered to assist with these duties.

- Storekeeper - After various comments and discussion between attendees , it was suggested that this post be discussed , in more detail, by committee members, taking into consideration the level of input George is able/willing to carry out. Plot holders would be advised the decisions and future plans via the Notice Boards. (All attendees supported and agreed to accept this suggestion).

-Committee members- Nominations for Terry Wilson, Eddie Wilson, John Byrne, Neill Davies, Marilyn Gray, additionally new member Gaynor Little.

Proposed by Joe Roper/Joan Langeveld. Agreed.

-Co-opted member- Joan Langeveld. Proposed by Neill Davies/Joe Roper . Agreed.

All nominations and proposals accepted by members present.

8. HONORARIA:

-Storekeeper - Increase from £50 to £60 pa.

Proposed by T Fitzsimmons seconded by J Roper. Agreed.

-Treasurer- Allocation £30. Unchanged.

-Secretary - Allocation £30. Unchanged.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Ken H advised everyone that George has requested assistance with the flower beds/communal area. Any members willing to help should approach George.

b. Eddie W advised everyone that we need to assemble a 'working party' to help clear rubbish/debris/weeds from the back of the plots 54 & 55, which are adjacent to residents gardens. There had been complaints from residents, and the council had offered to provide a skip purely for this area. Skip not to be used for other plot waste. (This would be difficult to enforce, but a sign would be placed on gate/notice boards).

Thanks were given to Paul (plot 32A) who offered to help. More volunteers were needed.

c. Miriam (Lime Hub Plot No 5) had advised there were problems with the portable toilet.

Flooding, and broken lock on the inside. Committee would arrange urgent repair or replacement - Health & Safety issue. (Ken will action)

d. Reports were made regarding difficulty with padlock on Main Gate.

It had been repaired earlier this year, but we were advised it may need replacing soon.

It was decided to purchase a new padlock. (NOTE:- a few days later Joan arranged purchase of new padlock).

e. Marie, plot 37, enquired about the manure and pine/green vegetation which had been left by the parking/pedestrian area. She wanted to know if/why the committee had refused future supplies, or if they had actually agreed.

She was advised that no committee member had given permission for either of these to be scattered around the Parking/pedestrian area, breaching Health & Safety guidelines, and in accordance with Tenancy Agreement item 3 k.

Delivery of manure will be acceptable if/when a suitable area is set aside.

It is not recommended to use pine/fresh bark/wood chippings, on the soil, as it may alter the ph levels, increasing acidity, and making the ground unsuitable for many crops. Permission has not been given for delivery of any more.

f. Tommy, plot 7B, said that no-one had been notified when there was a delivery of top soil a few months ago. He complained that people with nearby plots took most of the soil.

He was advised that, several months earlier, John Morris had made enquiries for delivery of free top soil. He was only given notice of delivery the evening prior to delivery.

It was delivered in the morning, therefore there was not time to notify all plot holders.

People who were on site at the time took what they could.

g. Tommy F, plot 7B, asked for clarification of notices on the boards, regarding when people should, or should not, approach committee members. He was reminded that committee members are also here to work their plots - they do not want to be accosted by plot holders complaining/moaning, particularly in an abusive manner. Anyone who has a complaint should write a note and use the Mail Box. Correspondence is read at the monthly committee meetings, and actioned accordingly.

Anyone can approach any committee member, in a pleasant manner, for general advice.

h. Marie, plot 37, asked for advance notice when a skip is to be delivered, and wants delivery on a Saturday, so that people who work Monday-Friday, would be there to make use of skip.

i. Ann, plot 3, referred to the survey regarding 'Compost Toilet'.

Daniel advised that he had made several enquiries, and that he and Ken had visited an allotment where a compost toilet was in place.

They were not impressed and agreed it would not be suitable for our site.

It was decided that our existing toilet was actually more suitable for this site, but would be emptied/cleaned on a more regular basis.

(see 9 c, above, action to be taken).

There was no other business.

Daniel thanked attendees, and welcomed new committee member, Gaynor Little.

He reminded people that the committee meet monthly, usually 2nd Sunday of each month.

Items for the Agenda should be put in writing one week prior to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 1210hrs.