

Hackney Allotment Society

Minutes of AGM held on Wednesday 1st October 2015 at

St Mary's Church Rooms, Stoke Newington, N16.

Present:

Nancy Korman (Secretary , but acted as Chair in Penny's absence)
Hugh Naylor (Treasurer)

The following site representatives: Vikki Yapp (Aden Terrace) Jane Hough (Overbury Street), Henrietta Soames (St Kildas), Philip Turner (Queensbridge Road) MJ and Helene Gullaksen (Leaside and minute taker) and approximately 30 members.

Apologies:

Received from Penny Miller (Chair) , Ruth Gladwin (Vice Chair) Sue Carlin, Guy Dehn, Katie Nash, Simon Hughes, Sue Fairbrother, Pat Cavanagh, John Slade, Maggie Wilkinson and Sue K

1. Minutes of the 2014 AGM

Members were asked if there were any questions they would like raised. As there were none the Minutes were accepted.

2. Chairman's Report

During the past year, only 4 plots were re-let, but there are already 4 re-lets this year. Nancy pointed out there is no predictability to the availability of plots. There were 8 Neglected Plot Letters sent out with a determination by members of the committee take a tougher stance on dirty plots . It was noted that it is not a matter of aesthetics but a matter of plots not being fully worked and wasting a precious resource.

Q- Price Increase?

It was agreed at last year's AGM that there would be a £5 increase in plot rental each year for the next three years. The plot rental would then be reviewed to ensure that income matched expenditure. Further increases may or may not be necessary.

Q- Plot Splitting ?

Nancy was asked if HAS considers splitting failing plots into half and Nancy replied that HAS has indeed done this this year and

intends to carry on the practice if the plot is big enough to be split.

Q-When will the list re-open ?

Nancy - There are at present 43 people on the waiting . The committee feels that the list is still moving too slowly to take peoples money without hope of moving up the list in a timely manner. A member of the audience argued that it should be up to individuals if they wanted to join the list and Nancy replied that the committee would consider this.

Nancy noted that many improvements have been made to various sites, including extensive pruning and new paths.

There is an URGENT call for volunteers to run the Newsletter, at the moment this task falls to Nancy Korman but she is pressed for time as secretary and would like it taken over. Please consider helping out with this task . Volunteers please contact Nancy directly.

3. Treasurer's Report

Hugh Naylor presented the audited accounts to the meeting. Expenditure this year £6000 . Income this year £3000 .

Hugh noted that funds had been spent at Overbury where new plots had been created by lifting paving stones and creating raised beds. This created three new plots. Tree work was undertaken across several sites. This kind of expenditure is considered to continue at a similar cost over the next year. The highest cost was £5000 at Leaside for the extensive new paths . This cost came in just after the new financial year deadline, so will be included in next years figures.

Hugh drew attention to the this years float of between £3000 or £4000 and so feels that the accounts are at least moving in the right direction.

Nancy commented that making new plots is very expensive , for example cleaning and making fit for purpose, the cost of Leaside was around £18,000 and that was many years ago.

There were no questions about the accounts from the floor. The accounts were then accepted by the meeting.

4. Election of Officers

There was no election for the posts of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, as the number of people willing to be considered was the same as the number of posts available. The incumbents will carry on. Vikki Yapp, site rep for Aden Terrace, and Simon Hughes, site rep for Spring Lane, have resigned, and were thanked for all their work over many years.

5. Other Questions and Items raised by members

Carla from Queensbridge Road complained that they still had no water on their site. Nancy replied that HAS would continue their efforts to get piped water on to the site and promised to look into it again.

The other main topic of discussion was people volunteering , family members and neighbours helping plot holders. Should there be an official registration of friends? The concern was that if a plot holder could no longer manage the site, it should be surrendered and someone from the waiting list be offered the plot. On the whole it was felt friends and family are a benign help but occasionally there was a flagrant disregard of this.

It was suggested that the site Reps should be informed at all times of plot holders' illnesses, extended holidays and work sabbaticals in respect to plots being helped out by others in order to know better who was using the Allotments.

Policy on key cutting must be reiterated. Holders must not cut keys and pass them on to others. A question from the floor was asked - If a member goes on sabbatical can some one from the top of the list help the out? Would they want to do that? Nancy replied that the rules are clear that a prolonged absence would mean surrendering your plot and going at the top of the waiting list, to be offered a plot when the member had returned. Given the demand for plots, HAS cannot afford to allow plots to be unused because a plot holder is away for the whole of a growing season.

Carla suggested using asking people from the waiting list if they would like to help out members struggling with their plots. This could be tried out.

It was mentioned that the shed on church walk was now in need of serious repair and would probably need funds spending on it this year.

It was suggested that people on the waiting list for 5 years or more not pay subs anymore but just continue to register their interest. However it was felt by the meeting that it was better to show a more tangible commitment and to carry on paying for the time being.

A member from the floor asked if the waiting list should be published on the website so you would know how far up the list you were? This proposal was rejected as some members request certain plots, temporary half plots may be given for a period , etc ... and generally it was felt that the list is a complex business and would take too much work and unnecessary dispute to publish it. Each year the next ten numbers of the waiting list are published on the website.

- Organic Seed orders - due to be with Sarah Kissack by the end of November.

6. Other Business

Nancy spoke a few words about Diana Whitworth , a Site Rep for many years, who sadly passed away this summer. She spoke of her kindness and achievements. She will be very much missed by HAS and we send Guy and his family our thoughts and best wishes at this difficult time,

7. Best Plot Awards

Aden Terrace: Best Plot - Susan and Ian Burton

Anna Dixon

Leaside: Best Plot - Diana Whitworth and Guy Dehn

Spring Hill: Best Plot - Jon Grover

Andrea Sinclair

Spring Lane: Best Plot - Ben Myhill

Sheila Webb

Small sites: Best Newcomer - Andrew Lindsey

The meeting ended at 9.30pm.