

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2015



AGM 2015

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 Carling, 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?

There are at present 43 people on the waiting list. 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 the many improvements 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 who 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

HAS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR

Penny Miller -
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VICE CHAIR

Ruth Gladwin

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TREASURER

Hugh Naylor

SITE REPS

ADEN TERRACE

Sue Sharples

CHURCH WALK

John Clarke and
Maggie Wilkinson

OVERBURY STREET

Jane Hough and
Amanda Scope

QUEENSBRIDGE ROAD

Phillip Turner

SPRING HILL

Philip Pearson, Jon Fuller,
Beth Webber and
Frederica Brooks

SPRING LANE

Helen Bishop

SPRINGDALE ROAD

Mairin Power and Annie Wilson

LEASIDE ROAD

MJ and Helene Gulleksan

ST KILDA'S ROAD

Henrietta Soames

£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

Plot Awards 2015

ADEN TERRACE
Susan and Ian Burton
Anna Dixon

LEASIDE
Diana Whitworth and Guy Dehn

SPRING HILL
John Grover
Andrea Sinclair

SPRING LANE
Ben Myhill
Sheila Webb

SMALL SITES
Best newcomer:
Andrew Lindsey
(Overbury Street)

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 someone from the top of the list help them out? Would they want to do that? Nancy replied that the rules state clearly 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 plothead 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.

The meeting ended at 9.30pm.



NAG, NAG, NAG...

This is a good time for weeding. Nothing else much to do on the plot, the ground is damp and therefore soft so weeds will come out easily, and it will help to get a head start on the amount of clearing you will need to do in the spring. There are several ways you can do this.

- Just pull them out
- Some need to be dug out -ie. the dreaded bind weed
- You can put down a mulch of cardboard, black plastic or anything else that will exclude light so weeds will die off.

Whilst you are doing this, please keep an eye out for unwanted saplings, particularly sycamores which are very small at the start but grow fast and are hard to remove. Other trees also self-start so do feel free to pull them out. If on the other hand you are putting in a fruit tree, please remember dwarf root stock only and they must be planted at least three feet from the boundary of your plot. And please talk to your site rep first, who will need to make sure that your tree will not cast shade on your neighbours plots.