

# **Hackney Allotment Society**

## **Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 5 October 2011 at St Mary's Community Centre, Defoe Road, London N16**

**Present:** Penny Miller (chair), June Lancaster (secretary and Church Walk site rep), Jackie Breakwell (treasurer), Jessica Datta (Spring Hill site rep and minute taker), Vikki Yapp (Aden Terrace site rep), Jack Eldon (Leaside site rep), Philip Turner (Queensbridge Road site rep) and approximately 35 members.

### **1. Introduction and apologies**

Apologies received from: Henrietta Soames, Diana Whitworth, Philip Pearson, Jon Fuller, Sue Fairbrother, Anna Dixon, Chris Bowler and John Slade

### **2. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the 2010 AGM were agreed as a true record.

### **3. Report from the chair**

Penny Miller reported that there were around 150,000 people in Hackney, living in 100,000 households, and there were only 125 allotments. The waiting list of 300 has been closed to new applicants for three years and so the only way to meet demand is to increase the number of sites available. She suggested members put pressure on Hackney council to increase provision. The allotment society began 32 years ago in response to an officer in the planning department who asked for suggestions from residents to make use of local pieces of land. There is pressure on land for building and it is thought that the council now favours community access garden projects rather than allotments. The history of allotments goes back to the time of Elizabeth 1 when common land was enclosed. Despite the difficulty of finding land for allotments, the National Trust has recently created 1000 allotments on their land although unfortunately none in Hackney. The Community Right to Reclaim Land is a new right to request to bring publicly owned vacant or under-used land into use. A government database of sites is available for searching. This might be a mechanism for identifying potential new allotment sites.

Regarding neglected plot letters, eight have been sent out in the last year representing around six percent of plot holders. The chair asked those who were having difficulties working their plots because of, for example, ill health or caring responsibilities to contact site reps or committee members.

### **4. Report from the treasurer**

Jackie Breakwell reported that expenditure was lower than last year but that expenditure still exceeded income by a small amount. Income (from rent and dues) was slightly lowered as the waiting list has shortened. In response to a question, she reported that the total rent to Hackney council was £560 per year. Leases run to approximately 2016.

A member reported on the new Eastern Curve Garden in Dalston which is community run and which should act as an incentive to develop new growing projects.

## **5. Election of officers**

Penny Miller was re-elected as Chairperson (prop: June Lancaster; sec: Jackie Breakwell)

Henrietta Soames was re-elected as Vice-chair (prop: June Lancaster; sec: Jackie Breakwell)

Nancy Korman was elected as Secretary (prop: June Lancaster; sec: Jackie Breakwell)

Sarah Kissack was elected as Treasurer (prop: June Lancaster; sec: Jessica Datta)

Amanda Scope was re-elected as Newsletter Editor (prop: June Lancaster; sec: Penny Miller)

Maggie Henton was re-elected as Auditor (prop: Jessica Datta; sec: June Lancaster)

Bob Geater was re-elected as Auditor (prop: Jackie Breakwell; sec: June Lancaster)

Joss Bany was re-elected as an additional committee member (prop: Philip Turner; sec: Eugene Clerkin)

## **Site representatives**

Aden Terrace: Vikki Yapp was re-elected

Church Walk: Merel Reinick was elected

Leaside: Diana Whitworth, Ian Dick and Jack Eldon were (re-)elected

Overbury Street: Anna Harding and Amanda Scope were re-elected

Springdale Road: Annie Wilson was re-elected

Spring Hill: Jessica Datta, Philip Pearson and Jason Cole were (re-)elected

Spring Lane: Simon Hughes was re-elected

St Kilda's Road: Henrietta Soames was re-elected

Queensbridge Road: Philip Turner was re-elected

The chair thanked Emily Mytton (Spring Hill) and June Lancaster (Church Walk), site reps who were standing down, for their contribution over the last year.

## **6. Best plot awards**

Best plot awards were won by the following:

Aden Terrace: Christine Hathway and Sean Meany (plot 24)

Leaside: G. Saha (1)

Spring Lane: Justine Armatage and Charlie (10)

Spring Hill: Andrea Sinclair (17b) and Claire Tyler (22)

N16 small sites: Maggie Wilkinson (Church Walk 6)

E5 and E8 small sites: Annie Blackmore and Patrick Spence (Overbury Street 4)

## **7. Items raised by individual members**

Neglected plot policy - this issue is already under discussion by the committee which will report to members when decisions have been made.

Spring Hill - a member has asked for Spring Hill to become an organic site. The chair has asked him to survey Spring Hill plot holders on their views.

## **8. Any other business**

Questions from the floor:

A member asked after the bees at Spring Hill. Jessica Datta reported that they had safely survived last year's cold winter and, despite having swarmed, were thriving.

A plot holder asked how many people are currently on the waiting list. There are 127.

Suggestions were made for improving site security. These included raising the height of fences, planting prickly shrubs around perimeters and putting up signs deterring entry.

The chair thanked officers June Lancaster and Jackie Breakwell, who are both standing down from the committee, for their contribution to the society. Presents and applause were given.

The next HAS committee meeting will be held on Tuesday 25 October at Stoke Newington Library at 7pm.