

Hackney Allotment Society

Minutes of AGM held on Wednesday 6 October 2021

Virtual Meeting

Attending: Debra Allwright
Liz Anderson
Annie Blackmore
Sandra Boyce
Frederica Brooks
Julia Clarke
Brent Cunningham
Peter Carter
Jack Eldon
Val Gorbould
Jane Hough
Kay Kante
Sarah Kissack
Susan and Richard Kay
Nancy Korman
Susan Livermore
Siobhan MacMahon
Imelda Messenger
Nick Middleton
Penny Miller
Hugh Naylor
Kelly O'Neill
Cara Philip
Marisa Scholz
Aurore Sebastian
Lesley Slater
Beth Webber
Annie Wilson

Talk: Rebugging the Planet by Vicki Hird

Vicki's talk centered around her new book, *Rebugging the Planet*, a plea to recognise and appreciate the contributions of bugs to so many vital aspects of life on earth: cultivation of crops, replenishment of soil, food for other bugs, birds and animals (including humans). As inhabitants of this planet, we need to change our attitude of fear and dislike of bugs to one that respects their need for sufficient habitats both stationary and migratory to ensure their survival and avoid direct actions that kill them off. Vicki ended by showing some gorgeous photos of bugs she had taken in her garden and invited us to send photos of bugs we took on allotment sites, to show the diversity of the local bug population. Don't rely on this very short precis of the book: buy it now.

Annual General Meeting

1. Apologies

Received from Rachel Aldred, MJ Azzopardi, Sylvia Cummins, Guy Dehn, Mariarosa Frasca, Ruth Gladwin, David Harradine, Lucy Jones, Emily Mytton, Pat O'Leary, Richard Pendry, Andrea Sinclair, Henrietta Soames, Ginny Strawson, Maggie Wilkinson.

2. Outcomes from the 2020 AGM

Members recalled that the 2020 AGM was by email. Nancy sent out the wrong document with the invitation to this year's AGM, and the correct document is attached to these minutes.

3. Chairman's Report

As the Chair (Penny Miller) had a period of illness this year, she and the Secretary had decided to provide a joint report. HAS currently has 190 members, 5 resigned during the year and 48 are on the waiting list. 4 plots were re-allocated during the year, and there are currently 3 vacant plots under consideration. The past year saw a considerable amount of pruning work carried out on 4 sites (Aden Terrace, Church Walk, Overbury Street and Spring Hill), remedial work on Queensbridge to deal with items left behind when people left the site. Four site representatives resigned - Jon Fuller and Sylvia Cummins from Spring Hill and Maggie Wilkinson and Sara Madge from Church Walk. Amanda Scope and Annie Wilson were thanked for the amazing newsletters they produced during the year in terms of both interest and appearance, and Bob Geater for maintaining the website on behalf of the Society.

4. Treasurer's Report

Hugh Naylor presented the accounts, pointing out that our expenditure was considerably higher than income but that we were still able to maintain a healthy balance in the bank. In response to a question, he explained that the expenditure of £135 on the AGM related to prizes for best plot awards and flowers for the Secretary. He also reported that in due course, HAS would be receiving two generous legacies left by former members.

5. Election of Officers

The current officers (Penny Miller Chair, Ruth Gladwin Vice-Chair, Hugh Naylor Treasurer and Nancy Korman Secretary) had all agreed to serve again, and as there were no other nominations, congratulations were offered.

6. Best Plot Awards

Aden Terrace: Best Plot - Betty and Geoff Manning

Leaside: Best Plot - Ian Dick

Most Improved - Mr G Saha

Spring Hill: Best Plot - Nadia O'Mara and Lawrence Sgroi

Spring Lane: Best Plot - Elisa de Grey

Small Sites: Best Plot - Deborah and Martin Jeffries (Church Walk) and Jane Hough
(Overbury Street)

Best Newcomer - Philippa Lloyd (Queensbridge Road)

7. Discussion

Proposed by Sarah Kissack: We should not assign allotments to members who already have an allotment elsewhere/with another society.

This issue had been raised at two previous AGMs and had not been accepted. The Managing Committee had anticipated difficulties in actioning this, but it was pointed out that we already rely on the honesty of members in claiming concessionary plot rental fees. Members who spoke for this proposal cited the scarcity of urban allotments and that those who already had an allotment should either surrender the allotment or not accept one from HAS. HAS current bylaws do not allow a Hackney household to have more than one allotment and this requirement would be an extension of that principle. In addition, it was requested that a suitable definition of an allotment be proposed so that it was not significantly dissimilar to what was available in HAS. A vote was taken which showed 19 in favour and 4 against. It was agreed that as those present represented a minority of the membership an email vote would be solicited from all members within a few weeks.

Proposed by the Spring Hill site: All newcomers to the site are required to be pesticide free. This refers to the common understanding of pesticides as excluding non-harmful organic/natural pesticides.

Brent Cunningham introduced the discussion and explained that all plotholders had been consulted but two still had not responded. Concerns were raised as to how this would be policed, whether sanctions were needed if no compliance, but Kay Kante and Brent Cunningham indicated that new members would be spoken to and urged to comply (something that happens on Leaside already) and that this would just be another housekeeping rule for plot holders to consider. The plotholders on Spring Hill were keen to see this move forward now even if it were imperfect, and come back later with another proposition when they had full agreement. A vote was taken and there were 22 in favour and 2 against. It was agreed that this proposal would now be the rule for the Spring Hill site.

8. Any other business

There was none and so the meeting ended at 9.15.