

Hackney Allotment Society
Minutes of AGM held on Tuesday 7 October 2024
Church Rooms, St Mary's Church
Stoke Newington Church Street

Attendees:

Imelda Messenger	Chris Coe
Emma Gribble	Sarah Welsh
Jane Hough	Siobhan McMahon
Ian Burk	Rowena Altheer
Heather Finlay	Elsa Hamaz
Jana Hasegawa	Betty Manning
Sue Kay	Jeff Manning
Richard Kay	Wayne Minter
Alistair Ross	Colin Butcher
Nancy Korman	Judith Losing
Catherine Gunningham	Zebbie Patel
Marie McShea	Liz Anderson
Cara Phillip	Sofia Craxton
Val Gorbould	Julia Rockcliffe
Grant Cocks	Annie Wilson

Apologies:

Ian Dick
Guy Dehn
Kate Nash
Kerry Morgan
Fiona Clark
Francesca Mahoney
Emmanuel de Lange

2024 AGM

Julia took the chair and opened the meeting by introducing the Trustees, Jana, Hugh and herself and explained how the society works with all members having an input and responsibility for the sites. Explained that the trustees are all voluntary with busy lives and doing the roles for the love of growing vegetables.

1. Minutes of the 2023 AGM

These had been circulated with the notice of the AGM. As there were no objections these were approved.

2. Chair's report.

Waiting list reopened in February and out of 720 applicants, 100 new members were added to the current waiting list. None of the new members were present that evening.

Jana provided an update on the selection process and its impartiality. She used AI to randomly generate positions on the waiting list, anonymously selected 100 random members which were then reassigned new positions on the list. As most vacant plots were outside N16, they were mostly taken on by new members. As of September 24, there are 101 members on the waiting list.

Julia welcomed 8 new plot holders and 100 new members on the waiting list.

Julia also shared HAS instagram account which is gaining its popularity with 348 followers and new Whatsapp community which enables individual sites to join in order to share important updates. All sites except for Spring Lane have a Whatsapp Group and Elsa Hamaz will look into rolling one out for Spring Lane. Jana and Julia will support her with QR code posters and set up.

During the year, 2 major repairs were undertaken. The waterbutt in Church Walk site required remedial works due to a leak.

Aden Terrace had a new boundary fence with one of the adjoining properties fitted by Hackney Council.

Jana encouraged all to keep on top of small repairs in order to minimize maintenance costs especially tree management as tree pruning is the overall biggest cost. Tree works were carried out at Aden Terrace this year.

Julia provided an update on site visits which took place throughout 5 evenings over first 2 weeks of July to view the 9 sites with 150 plots. She commended on the excellent standards of plots. 5 dirty plot letters and 13 soft warning emails from representatives were issued. Common problems were trees; 13 trees were identified in need of pruning down to 2m.

Jana also commented on the diversity of sites and site visits being a good opportunity to visit all sites to get a better understanding of their specifics.

3. Treasurer's Report

Hugh reported that we are in good financial shape and that our income from membership fees and plot rentals covered our expenditure last year, although we need to account for extra income from new membership fees due to waiting list reopening. The biggest cost was tree pollarding at £2,200.

The Society paid out the £250 received from a donation from the family of Sylvia Cummins to Josh who restored a bench in her memory. Hugh also mentioned that HAS has been left two legacies by a former member but that these would not be realised for several years as the asset is still in use.

Expenditure			
Sundries		£74.63	
AGM & Social		£395.99	
Rent and water rates		£1,470.79	
Site expenses		£151.66	
Pollarding, etc		£2,200.94	
Insurance and affiliations		£181.87	
Website		£28.78	
Misc		£131.12	
Total			£4,635.78
Income			
Rent and membership		£5,143.00	
Interest		£309.57	
Donation		0	
Total			£5,452.57
Profit / (Loss)			£816.79
Balances			
Net balance as at 1 July 2023			£8,221.12
Plus income (ex-interest) less expenditure 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024			£507.22
Total balance as at 30 June 2024			£8,728.34
CCLA account			£6,327.31
Co-op account			£8,728.34
Total balance			£15,055.65

4. Joint membership declaration

Jana explained that the Committee has formalised joint membership to enable partners who have been working plots with their partners from the same household equally, since the start of the tenancy, to recognise them as members of the Society. Joint memberships can be evidenced by site representatives if this is in doubt. This principle is in place to avoid keeping allocation of allotments fair, due to the huge demand in Hackney. These principles avoid enabling plot holders to add partners at a later date so they can pass down from generation to generation. A discussion followed with one member objecting to the concept of one household.

5. Election of Vice chair

Julia announced that the position of the vice chair is currently open and encouraged members to put their names forward. Jana specified what the role would entail.

6. Thanks to our site representatives

London E5

- Leaside Road 17 plots - entrance at west side of railway bridge over Leaside Road - site reps: **Jack Eldon, Guy Dehn**
- Overbury Street 11 plots - corner of Overbury Street and Rushmore Road - site rep: **Kerry Morgan**
- Spring Hill 43 plots - north west corner of sports field - site reps: **Heather Finlay, Laurence Sgroi**
- Spring Lane 18 plots - entrance on footpath at side of River Lea - ORGANIC - site rep: **Elsa Hamaz**

London E8

- Queensbridge Road 2 plots - at rear of 362 Queensbridge Road - site rep: **Philip Turner**

London N16

- Aden Terrace 26 plots - entrance at north end of Clissold Crescent - site reps: **Susan Kay**
- Church Walk 8 plots - entrance at south end of Church Walk - site rep: **Kate Nash**
- St. Kilda's Road 4 plots, 1 raised bed - entrance at rear of 57 St Kilda's Road - site rep: **Marie McShea**
- Springdale Road 4 plots - entrance between 40 and 44 Springdale Road - ORGANIC - site rep: **Annie Wilson**

7. Best Plot awards

Best newcomers

- **Spring Hill**
 - Sehibani, Kazim Guzel
- **Leaside**
 - Siobhan MacMahon
- **Aden Terrace**
 - Maggie Ross
- **Church Walk**
 - Lesley Slater
 - Glyn Williams

Best Plot

- **St Kildas**
 - Nick Carter
- **Spring Lane**
 - Helen Bishop/Kate Elander
- **Leaside**
 - Patsy Hans
- **Aden Terrace**
 - Nancy Korman
 - Vicky Yapp
- **Queensbridge Road**
 - Phillippa Lloyd
- **Spring Hill**
 - Annie Moreton

8 Composting Top tips

Due to the impending cost of brown bin collections, Julia opened a discussion on composting and members shared their tips e.g. bind weed roots should be soaked in water for a week before adding to the compost heap.

Cara Phillip shared her experience with hot bin and Jana spoke about its mechanic, advantages as well as cost.

9. Items raised by members

Security on Spring Hill

Zebbie Patel has raised the issue of security and her produce being stolen. It has been agreed that the site will identify weak spots, and Jana will coordinate with Heather to see what measures can be installed to make the site more secure.

Borehole on Spring Lane

Emma Gribble raised the issue of potential water contamination and asked for the water to be tested as 14 plot holders deem the supply not to be safe. Jana asked the site to identify what pathogens they believe are present and obtain a relevant quote. The committee will also respond in writing.

Memorial benches at Spring Hill

Heather updated the members regarding the installation of two memorial benches for former plot holders; Andreas Korianou and Sylvia Cummins whose benches were funded out of a whip-round and legacy respectively.

Actions

Action Description	Site	Owner
Nominations for New Vice Chair - share 'job description' eg duties		Julia
Make formal Announcement via Newsletter/ WhatsApp - joint memberships. If working your plot on an ongoing basis since start of tenancy with a partner from the same household let us know so we can add them to our database (this is to avoid people skipping the waiting list)		Jana
Support WhatsApp community membership	Spring Lane	Julia
send e- vouchers for allotment prizes		Julia
Security issue	Spring Hill	Heather
Borehole/well water testing proposal - provide detailed quote to HAS	Spring Lane	Emma Gribble