

Smitham Allotment society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Held on 26 March 2022 at the Communal Area at 11am

Present:, Ramon Farooki, Fiona and Andy Sparkes, Pauline Ben Ari, Kate & Simon Flint, Simon Little, Dave Warren, John Horngold, Eddie Nash, Colin & Aniko Derrick, Ayube Mohamed, Lucas Ginak, Tekoa Mussard, Yasir Musawar

Apologies: Ann & Richard Shore , Selene Carraro, John Dicken

The meeting was chaired by Ramon Farooki (Chair).

2021 Minutes

The minutes of the 2021 AGM previously circulated were agreed as a true record of the proceedings.

Matters Arising

The **association rules had been updated** following last year's AGM and a revised version circulated to members ahead of this year's meeting. The changes related to the timing of bonfires, the advice to be responsible in the use of hoses (especially outside of the summer months) and to advise that the communal shed was used at the owners own risk.

The guidance issued during the year to members to limit bonfires to within 30 minutes of dusk had been well respected and no further complaints had been received from neighbouring houses.

The requirement to number each plot had also been removed from the association rules but in discussion Eddie reminded members that this was a Council requirement so would need to be reinstated.

Action: Secretary to add back in requirement to number plots. Ramon to ensure plot numbers were repainted on to posts.

A query was raised about the need to advise on a **change of contact details** "immediately". The Secretary confirmed that any change of contact details should be shared with him in case he needed to alert members urgently of any issues on the site but that the wording could be changed to "promptly".

Action: Members to advise Secretary of any change in contact details and Secretary to update wording in association rules.

The **Federation Membership fee** was still being paid but no-one from the Smitham Association had been able to attend the meetings this year. It was agreed that continued participation and payment to the Federation was worthwhile and that the Committee would discuss attendance at future Federation meetings with Barbara Broggio. If she could not attend then a committee member would try to do so.

Action: Committee to discuss attendance at Federation meetings with Barbara and to attend where possible.

The **overhanging ash tree** had been raised with the Council but they had denied responsibility for it and refused to take action. One large branch overhanging the plots had been removed by the Secretary and another plot member.

Members were reminded to make sure the **petrol can was refilled** if it was used to fill the mower/trimmer. Costs could be reclaimed from the Treasurer.

Action: Secretary to provide instructions in the shed to this effect so that all members are aware.

The matter of the Lease remains outstanding.

Chair's Report

The Chair thanked the Treasurer, Ann, and the Secretary, Andy, for their hard work and support throughout the year. The Chair reminded members of the need to keep paths between plots clear and ensure that grass paths were mown/kept under control. He also asked members to ensure that the mower was kept clean if used and reminded them that the mower/trimmer were the only communal items in the shed. He also noted that the shed was becoming cluttered and required clearing out.

Action: Secretary to continue to tell new members of these responsibilities and identify which path alongside their plot they were responsible for when joining.

Action: Chair to arrange date to clear out communal shed.

The Chair said that a date for the annual association BBQ would be arranged shortly along with a request for a working party to help clear brambles, overgrown vegetation at the entrance to the site/behind the bench at the far end of the plots. There would also be a seedling/plant swap or sale arranged in early May.

Action: Secretary to share dates for summer BBQ/working party and date of seed swap.

Finally, the Chair ended by welcoming new association members: Andrew & Carmen, Tekoa, Yasir and Tom.

The sad passing of one of the older former association members Tony Stevens was also noted.

Treasurer's Report

The accounts for 2021, audited by Pauline, were distributed at the meeting. In the absence of the Treasurer, Pauline read out the Treasurer's Report which described the current financial position. She advised that despite an in year deficit of £300 the accounts remained healthy and there would again be no increase in rental fees this year.

There had been £364 spent on improving the communal area and £154 spent on the communal BBQ both funded from reserves. There was a reminder to pay any outstanding fees.

Water was noted as the most significant recurring cost for the Society and there remained the risk that the new lease from the Council as well as rising inflation could necessitate an increase in member fees next year but currently the fee was relatively low compared to other local associations. Some bills for council rent and IT had not been charged in time for the 2021 accounts and so will appear next year (£45 and £69 respectively).

The Chair thanked Pauline for her work auditing the accounts.

The accounts were proposed and accepted as a true record of the financial position of the Society.

Election of the committee

All the existing committee members agreed to stand again and were unanimously re-elected.

AoB

Path Cone – Aniko asked about the cone that had previously been on the main path to prevent members driving onto the unpaved area. It had gone missing. It was noted that although the cone was not really needed members would be reminded that they should not drive on the unsurfaced part of the pathway especially when the weather had been wet as there was a risk of damage to the pathway or getting stuck. A trailer was available in the shed to help transport heavy loads to the end plots.

Action: Secretary to remind members of this rule and the availability of the trailer.

Key Deposit – There was a query about the current cost of the key deposit for the shed. This has reduced to £5 per plot since we no longer need a key for the main gate. The deposit for the main gate could possibly be repaid as it was now keyless but there was still the cost of replacing the padlock so it seemed sensible to retain the deposit. Post meeting note: following recent key cutting costs the deposit in future will be £6.

Toilet door bolts are missing – these are being replaced by Simon Flint.

Contact details for the association – Eddie noted that he was still being contacted by prospective members despite no longer being a committee member.

Action: Secretary to check contact details are up to date on the website and Facebook page. For the latter to check with Ann/Selene.

Locking the Main Gate – this had been issue recently with some members struggling with the new padlock and concern about who to contact if it couldn't be opened. It was agreed that the phone numbers of the committee members and Eddie (who lives nearby) would be displayed on the shed as emergency contacts.

Action: Secretary to display emergency contact numbers outside the shed and advise members of what to do if they couldn't open the main padlock.

Waiting List – The Secretary noted that the Society's waiting list of prospective members was now down to around 20 and that he had contacted the top 10 to gauge interest as from previous experience people often didn't respond or were no longer interested. He had let one plot yesterday and was looking to identify someone to take on plot 14 which had been vacated recently.

The Chair thanked members for attending and the meeting closed at 12:10am.