

Smitham Allotment society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Held on 1 April 2023 at the Communal Area at 11am

Present:, Ramon Farooki, Ann Shore, Fiona and Andy Sparkes, Simon Little, Dave Warren, John Horngold, Eddie Nash, Colin Derrick, Lucas Ginak, Marie Jenkinson, Heather & Graham Lovegrove Jan Goddard

Apologies: Pauline Ben Ari, Barbara Broggio, Jeremy Palmer, Ayube Mohamed

The meeting was chaired by Ramon Farooki (Chair).

2022 Minutes

The minutes of the 2022 AGM previously circulated were agreed as a true record of the proceedings.

Matters Arising

Some actions from the 2022 AGM were still to be addressed including the painting of plot numbers on posts and a date for clearing the shed. However, contact details for anyone struggling with the gate lock had been added to the notice board on the shed and a successful BBQ and seedling swap had been arranged.

Instructions about refilling the petrol can for the lawnmower and identifying responsibility for paths are now provided by the secretary when a plot is taken on.

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.

The **grass beyond the "cone" had been badly damaged** by vehicles driving on it when the ground was soft.

Action: Secretary to send a reminder email about not driving on the grass unless the ground was hard (usually in the summer months) and the availability of a trailer in the shed for transporting heavy items.

The **Croydon Federation** is not very active at present but Barbara had agreed to join their meetings when possible.

Action: Secretary to continue to advise new plot holders regarding responsibilities for refilling the petrol can and maintaining paths. Also to check with Barbara about Federation meeting attendance.

The matter of the **Society Lease** remains outstanding and there were mixed views about whether any further action was needed. A view was expressed that it might be prudent to visit the Council offices and getting a copy of the title deeds and this should be considered in future.

Chair's Report

The Chair thanked the Treasurer, Ann, and the Secretary, Andy, for their hard work and support throughout the year. He noted that 2022 had been a year of recovery following Covid but the hot, dry weather had meant it was a quieter year compared to previous ones.

He noted that there had been very good progress with the communal areas and thanked Lucas for his hard work with the pond area and the other plot holders who had helped to clear the plot outside the shed ahead of the BBQ. A lot had been achieved in a very short space of time and it would be good to repeat this in 2023.

The chair also thanked Ann and Andy for their support for the communal BBQ which had been a success.

Finally, if 2023 was another hot, dry summer then we would need to monitor water usage and think about growing more drought tolerant plants. However, the key thing was to continue to enjoy the allotments including the social interactions it provides.

Action: Chair to arrange date to tidy communal area and clear out shed.

Treasurer's Report

The accounts for 2022, audited by Pauline, had been circulated in advance. The Treasurer, gave an overview of the accounts and current financial position. Rising costs meant that there was an in-year loss for the Society in 2022 so a £10 annual increase in rents had been implemented pending approval at the AGM and as there had not been an increase for a long time all members seemed happy with this step.

The main expenditure in 2022 was for water which was based on an estimated reading and following an accurate reading of the meter the Society is now due a £100 refund. A lot had been spent on the communal area in 2022 but this year improvements were mainly due to volunteer efforts. The other main cost in 2022 was the summer BBQ. The website costs in the 2022 accounts are high as they represent two years cost.

In answer to a query about the Society's assets, Ann advised that the majority of these are held in the National Savings Bank and therefore attract interest payments. The high level of assets reflects the payments made by Thames Water for the earlier drainage works and provide a buffer for any capital expenditure the Society might want to make.

The Chair thanked Ann and Pauline for her work preparing and 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 proposed and unanimously re-elected by those present.

AoB

Website/Facebook content - the use of both the Society's website and Facebook page were discussed including the need to ensure contact details were up to date as Eddie is still receiving phone calls. Content for the website can be uploaded by Graham whilst anything for the Facebook page needs to be cleared by the site administrator.

Action: Queries about the Society should be redirected to the website in the first instance.

BBQ/seed swap – it was suggested that the seed/plant swap could take place on Saturday 13th May and the annual BBQ on Saturday June 24th. Both at 11am but the Secretary would email round to confirm.

Action: Secretary to confirm dates/time of seed and plant swap and BBQ

Bonfires – in answer to a query about bonfires it was agreed that these could take place from October to April but should ideally be at dusk and plot holders should stay around until the bonfire is finished and/or extinguish any embers.

The Chair thanked members for attending and the meeting closed at 11.50am.