

AGM MINUTES
BARNES HORTICULTURAL AND ALLOTMENT SOCIETY
Saturday 17th JUNE 2017
HERTFORD AVENUE

Present:

David Abel	Tally Foster	Brenda Lattimer
Ronnie Bendall	Deborah Genders	Janet Lavender
John Bentham	Mark Gourlay	Chris Lawrence
Richard Blackwell	Chris Hess	Helen Lawrence
Frances Burbeck	Justine Hess	Derek Lawrence-Brown
Giuliana Checketts	Duncan Hoadley	Katie Lee
Jo Childs	David Hornblow	Sharon Leonardi
Sheena Clark	John Hynd	Diane McLellan
Alex Clarke	Gina Ingram	Desmond Millen
Emily Coates	Aileen Izett	Maureen Millen
Penny Cowell	David Izett	Susan Moore
Bob Crookham	Emily Jacob	John Padgett
John Edgar	Jenny Jeffries	Stephen Rhys
Paul Edelin	Sophie Kennedy	Maritha Scott
Mary Enache	Halina Kessler	Simon Silvester
David Foster	Isabel Kimber	Anna Stokoe
	Percy Kimber	
	Dasha Kuzina	

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chairman welcomed everyone and introduced the Committee; the Website editor, Diane McLellan; and the Site Reps for Hertford, Palewell, Pavilion and Triangle sites (there was no representation from Priory).

Apologies received from: Bernard Adams, Jenny Caesar, Richard Ward, Debbie Williams, Charlie Armour, and Janet Bostock

2. Minutes of AGM 26th June 2016

It was proposed (Alex Clarke) and seconded (Mark Gourlay) that the Minutes of the last meeting be accepted as a true record and adopted.

3. Matters Arising.

¹Rents – The Parks and Finance departments at the Council are not ‘joined up’ which means unless Parks ask Finance look up to see if someone has paid their rent nothing is flagged up.

²Flooding - The Council has looked at the problem of flooding to Priory site. The Primary School’s astro turf has been filmed during a rain shower to see if that was causing an issue. The

Council estimates it will cost £8-12K to correct which they believe is hard to justify given the rental income of the few plots affected. In future these plots will be charged a minimal rent of 1 rod.

³Code of Conduct to be drafted and put in place in by next AGM.

4. Reports:

Chairman's Report - Duncan presented his annual report – copies circulated.

- Derek Lawrence-Brown will continue to attend BRAG meetings and will take on the role of Vice-chair until November. Susan Moore will also attend. We are allowed up to 5 representatives and in the past year 2 have attended.
- We have some of the best sites in the borough and we need to continue to use the sites well.
- Allotment Bonfires – the Council's directive has been amended to allow bonfires on the first Saturday of the month between April and September between 9am and 1pm. October – March rules will then be in place.
- Demand for further expansion of the School is possible – a theory has been voiced that the School will want a 'back entrance' which will create issues for both the School and the Allotments. John Hynd reported there is an archive in Richmond Library with the history of these negotiations and agreements.
- Events – While the recent Open Day in May was well attended the Annual show in September was a quieter affair. It did fall at the end of the school holidays and weather on the day is a factor. The Chairman thanked Committee members who had increased our publicity for the Open Day, including use of localized social media.
- The Chairman outlined the difficulties faced by the Committee, in particular the Allotment Secretaries, in carrying out its work. This had emanated from the Priory Site and the Council had been involved on several occasions. Rather than undermine the work of the Committee, creating a generally bad atmosphere, it is important that all volunteers get behind the Committee to work for the good of all the Society and the benefit of our 5 allotment sites. At a time when the Council is reviewing devolved management, we must demonstrate that our devolved arrangement works efficiently and effectively. In an email of 8 June Donal Douglas declared his intention of standing down as Site Rep in the Autumn. An interim replacement will be appointed by the Committee to carry out the role from October up to the next AGM in 2018.
- Arising from this, the new Committee will, as its first task, develop a Code of Conduct which will be presented to the Society for incorporation into our Constitution. If adopted, all society members will be asked to sign up to it.

Treasurers' Report **Sophie Parrett and Alastair Kennedy.** Report circulated.

The Society remains in good health financially with a cash reserve of £12,832 at 31 March 2017, an increase of £2,120 on last year.

Sophie asked for spending proposals for the forthcoming year. This should not be for facilities and services the Council should provide & we also need to consider health & safety issues (eg maintenance of equipment).

¹John Hynd (Priory) Suggested a proper concrete base for the logs/compost and wood chip area. It would require drainage.

²The possibility of a toilet on allotment sites was mooted. This raised questions about daily cleaning.

³It was suggested that the Society gives a donation to charity. A unanimous decision was made to donate £500 to the Grenfell Tower fire fund.

⁴Tree pruning: the Council will only cut down or prune trees if they are diseased or dangerous, so there is little or no tree management around the allotment sites. Some sites have trees that are in serious need of pruning. Richard Blackwell (Priory) proposed money could be spent on this.

⁵Maintenance of Society wheelbarrows: buy spare wheels for replacement and additional wheelbarrows with tyres which don't need pumping up.

Allotment Committee Susan Moore and Aileen Izett. Report circulated

Susan outlined the role, explaining the benefits of working as a job share. She and Aileen spend between 25-30 hours a week on various aspects of the role, providing all-year cover, some seasons obviously being busier than others. They have liaised or met with Pete Lewis, the Allotment Officer, David Allister Head of Parks and his successor Yvonne Kelleher.

31 plots have been let since last AGM with new plot holders having 6 months' probation.

393 people are on the waiting list, 56 added since June 2016.

Following inspections, 12 warning letters have been sent out expressing concerns over the conditions of the plot.

Work to check the data on the Waiting list is still up to date has resulted in 46 names being removed.

Susan reported that 2016-17 had been a most difficult year in terms of the joint secretaries receiving abusive emails and concurred with the Chairman that we needed a code of conduct to be able to manage this better when it occurred.

Membership Secretary. Janet Bostock. Report circulated.

- Approximately 2/3 of plot holders are members of the Society.
- Membership discussion ensued – how do we encourage people to join? Should membership be compulsory if they have an allotment, as they still get most of the benefits?
- Susan and Aileen encourage new plot-holders to become members when they get their plot. This has been successful.
- Site-Reps to encourage plot holders to join.

5. Enhancing the Constitution

As referred to in the Chairman's report; the first task of the new Committee will be to review the Constitution to ensure it is fit for purposes and meets our current requirements. Any proposed changes will be brought to a Society AGM or Special Meeting.

6. Appointment of Committee.

- After 2 years, Duncan Hoadley is standing down as Chair. John Padgett (Hertford) was proposed as the new Chairman (David Izett, seconded by John Bentham) and returned unopposed.
- The existing Committee were each prepared to stand again. A block proposal by Sheena Clark, seconded by Paul Edelin
- Minutes Secretary: Sheena Clark (Triangle) was proposed by Susan Moore, seconded by Brenda Lattimer.
- Halina Kessler (Triangle) agreed to help Nicolette King with Society Events (helper is not a committee role).

AOB.

- Site Reps Although not on the Committee they work alongside the Committee, attending meetings and taking part in discussions. All existing site-reps have agreed to remain in post. Donal Dougal has informed the Chairman that he will stand down as Priory site rep. in September 2017. Mark Gourlay was duly elected as the second Site-Rep for Priory site.
- Code of Conduct: Proposed by Alex Clarke and seconded by John Hynd, this was agreed unanimously.
- Mary Enache informed the meeting that there is London in Bloom competition she was keen for the Society to be involved in. She will provide more information via the Newsletter and website.
- Sheena Clark raised the issue of allotment gates being left open (ajar not just unlocked) It was reiterated that padlocks should be kept locked at all times in the interests of safety of individual plot holders and the security of produce and tools.
- Presentation to the Chairman:**
Sophie thanked Duncan for his guidance, time and effort in steering the Committee through all the numerous issues that have arisen during his two year tenure, including attending BRAG meetings and reporting back from them. Thanks are also due to Duncan's wife, Emma, for all her support and help. Sophie wished Duncan and his family well in his new location, presenting him with a small gift on behalf of the Society.

There being no other business the meeting was closed and members invited to enjoy the light lunch and drinks.