

Highfield Lane Allotments



Minutes of the AGM held on the 17th February 2022

1 The meeting was opened by the Chairman at 7.54pm.

2 Members recording their attendance: C & M Smith (1667); D Barker (1720); A Maynard (1719), S James (1727), J Morley (1724 & 5), J & M Macquisten (1722), A Hollingshurst (1672); L Pritchard (1673B); D Astle (1712A); H Smith (1712A); K Woodward (1669); B Hollingshurst (1671); B Farnsworth & M Sutton (1682); S Potter & C Potter (1711) and R Fish (1705).

3 Apologies received from R Cox (1706).

4 Minutes of the 2021 AGM were read out in full by the Hon Secretary.

5 There was no matters arising from the minutes.

6 The 2020 AGM minutes were accepted: proposed J Macquisten and seconded by J Morley with all being in favour: The meeting Chairman signed the minutes.

7 There were no correspondence pertaining to the AGM.

8 The Chairman reported that there was not much to report. Thanks goes to the Committee while still in exceedingly challenging times they did a smashing job. Also, my thanks to fellow plot holders for helping and discussing matters which has helped. Water is a big cost for the site and some more IBCs are on their way which when installed will help with rainwater harvesting. A special welcome to the new plot holders and to those who have been able to attend tonight's meeting.

It was proposed by C Smith that the report be accepted; all were in favour.

9 To discuss any matters arising from the meeting Chairman's report. None were raised.

10 The Trading Secretary report.

The association has still not been able to find a new Trading Secretary, so a Trading Sub-Committee (Jenny, Ken, Adrian, and Colin) is providing the report for 2021

Following on from Mick having to give up the Trading Secretary's post the Trading Committee took over, with support from Mick (and our thanks go out to him), the operation of the site's shop.

There are three elements for the shop to operate smoothly:

Restocking: Ensuring that we have the right products for sale at the correct price. Colin has taken lead in this.

Financial: Ensuring that we have the best products at the best price. Profit from the shop supports low plot rents so more sales: more rent support.

Manning:

The shop rota is compiled by Jenny; and we currently have 3 sets of shopkeepers:

Jenny and Mavis

Adrian and Mavis

Colin and Mary.

In an emergency we have Ken along with Mavis.

We work out which are the best dates for each pair, however, should anyone else like to help, please see anyone on the shop committee and arrange a try to see if you like it. Mavis is always willing to pair up as she likes doing this task.

Thank you to all who work in the shop and to Jack for fetching the pallet loads of compost and manure.

11 Matters from the Trading Secretary's report:

B Hollingshurst thanks the Sub-committee for taking over the operation of the shop.

12 The Treasure circulated copies of the audited accounts and reported the following: -

Starting with the allotment accounts.

The accounts are for the period 1st Jan 2021 to 31st December 2021. This year we have £642.10 more expenditure than income.

You will recall that last year I told you the water company had sent low estimated bills, and that I estimated that we would owe them £570. That accounts for most of this expenditure. They have sent an actual bill to 13th November this year, so we are up to date.

CEFAS have again paid us £150 (the Centre for the Environment, Fisheries and Agriculture, based in Lowestoft.) Adrian provides them with a sample of root vegetables, and they check for radiation in the soil.

We had to pay out £100 to remove rubbish that had been brought onto the site and dumped.

Turning to the shop.

Both sales and the seed order have returned to normal levels, after the record sales last year. We received a discount on the seed order of £215.

The rent payable to the city council is due to increase this year to £685.50, an increase of £227.50. (£3 per plot)

We are still banking at the Post Office. The only problem is that they have limited facilities to pay in coins. They only take whole bags of coins, and they weigh each bag separately on the same scales they use to weigh parcels. I have visited our bank branch in town once this year to pay in bags of cash and can report that they only have one cashier, who only works in the mornings.

About the insurance, we insure with the agent recommended by NSALG. This year the underlying insurer has changed and there have been some changes to the policy endorsements.

Firstly, they ask are bees kept, and if so, this increases the premium by about £60. Now the thing is we already have insurance for the bees thru Ken, so we have declined the insurers offer. The policy Ken has thru the beekeeper's association provides more cover.

Secondly, they ask if we have a pond, there is no extra cost, but they will not pay any claims unless we have a one-metre-high fence around the plot to keep children out, also gates must open outwards, be self-closing and latch on the inside.

Thirdly machinery must be in a secure building or chained to an immovable object or two 150-kilogram bags of hardened concrete, so that rules out most of our buildings.

Changing the subject to the water company, we had problems with them misreading the meter and grossly overcharging us. It took a while to get that sorted.

Now they have decided to move to monthly billing and suggest we set up a direct debit. I am not going to do this as I do not think they are capable of billing us correctly. They certainly are unable to grasp the fact we switch the water off over the winter. So, we will see what happens. In the meantime, please try to use less water.

Turning to the rents:

- 1) The 2021 rent payable to the City Council is the same as the 2020 rent.
- 2) It will go up by £236 in 2022 (about £3 per plot)
- 3) Because of the seed order discount and shop profit we were able to reduce the rent from 14p per sq. metre to 12p per sq. metre. Use of the shop makes a substantial contribution to keeping the rents low.

Banking has proved difficult this year. Our branch in Allenton was scheduled to close in May, but closed in March, leaving just the main branch in town, where unfortunately the queues reached down St Peters St as far as Montague Burtons. I decided to try using the Post Office. This initially worked well, and **I would like to express my thanks to all who paid by cheque.** I just must put them together with a paying in slip in an envelope and give them in at the Post Office. (Special envelopes are provided by the Post Office). To pay cash in you need a bank card. Eventually, after some effort, I obtained a "deposit only" card from Barclays. You just give the cash in at the Post Office, put the card in the card machine, check the amount and press the green button. It is simple and it works.

13 From the Treasurer's report there were no questions raised.

14 The audited 2021 accounts were signed off by the Auditor. It was proposed by J Macquisten that the accounts be accepted, seconded by A Hollingshurst. All presents were in favour. The meeting Chairman, Proposer and Secorder signed the accounts.

15 The Treasurer thanked Sue James for her work as auditor. Sue has agreed to perform the duties of auditor for 2022. C Smith proposed the appointment to continue A Maynard seconded and all present were in favour.

16 Card Reader for the shop (from 2021 AGM). Discussion of the purchase of a card reader. Points made repeated last year's meeting. It was agreed that Bank details to be available in the shop for those who use an app on their phone for banking would now be able to make payments. It was also agreed that as things can move on quickly that we would discuss again next year.

17 The current officers and committee were thanked for their work and dismissed but continue until the end of the meeting.

18 The Allotment Members to appoint new officers and committee from the "members attending".

Written nominations were submitted for the following positions:

Position	Nominee	Proposed	Seconded	
Chairman	K Woodward	J Macquisten	A Maynard	
Treasurer	C Smith	A Maynard	K Woodward	
Secretary	A Maynard	J Macquisten	K Woodward	
Committee	J Macquisten	A Maynard	K Woodward	

The remaining appointments are to be made at this meeting. The Secretary was asked, at the last Committee Meeting, to remind people that should three meetings be missed, without a reasonable excuse, then that person would be deemed to have resigned from the committee.

Position	Nominee	Proposed	Seconded	Vote
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Trading Secretary	Vacant			
Committee	D Barker			
	A Hollingshurst			
	B Hollingshurst			
	J Morley			
	R Fish			
	D Astle			
Good Life Editor	M Macquisten			
Toilet Tech	J Macquisten			

All the above was elected by those present.

19 AOB:

- a) The meeting was updated about the defibrillator, which is held in the meeting room. Its battery is due for replacement: one was ordered in October and is due for delivery in June.
- b) The 2021 summer unauthorised access events were raised. A Maynard updated the meeting on the action taken last year and expressed support for the Police in our area as their response was very much better than other sites received. It was suggested that we should try and get funding to provide a better, more secure, fence to the Cemetery. This will be discussed at the first Management Committee meeting.
- c) Provision of an electricity supply was raised which could be used for heating the S&E Poly tunnel as well as providing additional power outlets for a security system.

20 The date for the first committee meeting of 2022 is for 09.30am at the Site Meeting Room Saturday 9th April.

22 The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 8.54pm

