



Henley on Thames Allotments Association

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held at 19.00 on Monday 15th October 2018 at Henley-on-Thames Town Hall

1. Apologies

Tony Robinson, Mike Hails, Gordon McBride, Anne Sandars, Sally McEwen, Andrew Hawkins, Heather Dixon

2. Presentation of last year's minutes

The minutes were passed as correct.

3. Matters arising

None.

4. Chairman's Report

A written report was circulated before the meeting in which Dave McEwen reflected on the successes and failures of the extended heatwave this year.

During the course of the year, Laura Dance had to step down from the role of Secretary, to be replaced by Sharon Oldham, who took over some duties in May and will take on the full role from the AGM.

Turning to the allotment sites, there are a few plots vacant on each site. Dave reported on the Committee's discussions around turnover and how to help new plot holders. On the issue of security, plans reported last year for a security gate and CCTV at Watermans had to be shelved because of cost; a heavy duty combination lock has been fitted. There remains a problem with the deer fence being vandalised at Watermans near the estate.

Deer fencing has been installed at Greencroft, however there are some problems with the gates - these will be refitted. Deer were spotted two days after the installation inside the fence - investigations are underway! After an independent survey, permission was granted for a diseased poplar tree to be felled. There was a burglary at Greencroft, with sheds broken into and small items stolen.

There was a brief discussion on the merits of security cameras at both sites.

Dave announced his retirement after 16 years on the committee. In this time, the number of plots has almost doubled, and a thriving community has grown. However, one consequence is that the role of the Site Managers has expanded and become crucial to the day-to-day running of the sites. Dave asked plot holders for their support to help ease the increased workload.

Dave thanked the current committee and also past committee members for their support, and recommended it to anyone thinking of getting involved. He also thanked Henley Town Council for their support



5. Treasurer's Report and Accounts

David Chilvers presented the accounts to the meeting. He noted an improved financial year: HTC's contribution has increased, running costs have stabilised; there has been a reduction in expenditure as no skips were required. This may not be the case in the coming year.

Despite the fact fundraising was slightly down this year (no contribution from the Cricket Club - required for poplar tree maintenance) the year ended £1100 up on 2017.

Margot Dapper has stepped down as auditor and a replacement volunteer is needed. David asked for people to contact him if they were interested in taking on the role.

As the accounts have not been audited, we cannot vote to adopt them, therefore we have to vote to accept the report - *passed unanimously*

Questions were raised about equipment: a chain saw has been purchased for Watermans; similar required for Greencroft, along with good strimmers for both sites.

In previous years, honoraria have been voted to the Secretary, Treasurer, Site Managers and the Assistant Secretary/Social Committee, in recognition of their time, effort and resources.

Motion – That honoraria of

- £100 each be paid to David Chilvers (Treasurer), Doug Richards (Site Manager Watermans), Lewis Every (Site Manager Greencroft);

- £75 each to Anne Sanders (Social) and Dave McEwan (Town Hall Liaison)

- £50 to Sharon Oldham (Secretary, six months).

Passed on a show of hands

One person was against the proposal, suggesting that the Site Managers be paid £200 each. David explained that £500 is part of HTC's contribution, and was increased two years ago from £75.

6. Secretary's Report

Sharon Oldham outlined the work she and the Town Council have been doing to ensure compliance with the new GDPR regulations. A letter explaining what it means to the HAA and plot holders has been sent, along with a GDPR Consent form - it is important plot holders sign and return this to the Council.

There are a few plots vacant on each site, with a large turnover due to people not realising the commitment involved, or put off by the daunting prospect of an overgrown plot. This has been discussed by the committee, and the following approach will now be taken:

- site managers to ask prospective plot holders about their experience
- allocate a starter plot unless they do have experience
- plots to be prepared so that the new plot holder can start straight away
- equipment - rotavators, strimmers, membrane - will be needed and volunteers to help with the work load. The Council have increased the small works budget and the association has built funds in recent years from successful fund raising events, so money is available to purchase the equipment needed



- revisit the idea of a mentor scheme to provide support to inexperienced plot holders
- provide new plot holders with a short, simple, "this is what is expected of you / where you can get help" document

Tony Robinson has volunteered to head a Watermans site review, working with Doug and volunteers to assess the state of plots across the site, and draw up a renovation action plan. Initial reports are hoped to be ready by the first meeting of the new Committee.

Rents increased this year (2018-19) by approximately 4.7%. They will be held for 2019-20.

7. Election of officers

The following members stood for election/re-election

Officers

- Secretary: Sharon Oldham
- Treasurer: David Chilvers

In the absence of a volunteer for the position of Chairman, the committee agreed to chair meetings on a rotating basis; roles performed by the Chairman will be taken on by the Secretary, and shared amongst committee members where possible.

Committee Members

- Greencroft: Lewis Every (Site Manager), Mandy Taylor (Web Manager), Peter Anderson
- Watermans: Doug Richards (Site Manager), Sophie Pentecost

The Chair has received expressions of interest from Tony Robinson (Watermans) and Barry Tindall (Greencroft)

Block vote: passed unanimously

That leaves a vacancy for a representative from Watermans, in addition to that of Chairman.

8. Social events report

Anne Sandars presented an outline of the events that had taken place this year and thanked all those who had supported them, either through helping or by attending.

Events had included:

- Social evening and seed swap
- Plant Sale
- Boat trip
- Mikron Theatre evening
- Marisa's 'Thank You'
- Watermans bonfire
- Christmas Dinner

Interest was expressed in going to Wisley for a specialist day, and possible brewery trips.

Anne is stepping down from the Committee. Dave expressed thanks for all her work in organising past social events, and reiterated the need for someone to volunteer to step into Anne's place.



This year's Christmas Dinner will be on 6th December; tickets on sale on 22nd October from Peter at Hobbs . £22. BYOB.

9. Website update

Mandy Taylor has been working on getting to grips with the website software and is looking to develop the site - she has circulated a request for plot holder contributions.

10. Presentation of silverware

- Watermans Best Plot - Tony Isaac
- Greencroft Best Plot – Martin Bidlake-Corser
- Watermans Best New Plotholder – Susan Kudo
- Greencroft Best New Plotholder – Moira Hankinson
- Community Award – Johanna Miller

11. AOB

- Seed Swap: HAA, Henley Town Council, Henley in Bloom and Henley in Transition are planning to hold a seed swap in March.
- Manure: has been ordered for both sites and will be arriving shortly.

12. Date of next meeting

The next AGM will be held in October/November 2019, with further details to be confirmed closer to the time.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.