

PRETORIA ROAD ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 18th September 2022

at Pretoria Road Allotment Site

Committee Members Present:

Claire Nicoll – Vice Chair

Derek Howell – Treasurer

Doug Blackwell – Secretary

Mary Hayward - Minute Secretary

Terry Wall - Committee Member

Mike Stinchcomb – Committee Member

Norman Bradford – Committee Member

Jenny Richardson – Committee Member

22 Plot Holders attended the meeting.

Apologies: Les Brooks (Chair), Pete Knight and Lucy Mawby (Plot Holders)

Vice Chair, Claire Nicholl opened the meeting and extended a welcome to everyone. Claire acknowledged apologies from the current Chair, Les Brook. Claire extended thanks to Les on behalf of the Allotment Society for all the work he had undertaken during the many years he had been part of the Allotment Society and the Allotment Committee. Claire also extended thanks to Diana Sidwell (Minutes Secretary) for her all her hard work as part of the Committee.

The minutes of the 2021 AGM were adopted, and a copy was signed off by the Chairman.

Claire thanked everyone who had helped with the running and maintenance of the site during the past year.

Treasurers Report

Derek thanked all members present for attending today's meeting. He distributed copies of the General Account and copies of the Fund-Raising Account for the year September 1st 2021 to 31st August 2022. Derek acknowledged that both accounts were in credit. **A full copy of both Balance Sheets will be displayed with the AGM Minutes and can be viewed on the Allotment Notice Board and on the Allotment Website.**

Derek went on to say that for the first time in 10 years as treasurer, he was concerned about the finances of the society. He explained his concerns are due to the high increase in the cost for water, electric and petrol. Derek anticipates that the society's future electric and water bills would be considerably higher than this year. Derek also highlighted the need to increase the contingency money to allow for any unexpected events/repairs or price increases.

Derek suggested that water charges are increased by £1 per half plot and £2 per full plot. He also suggested that an increase of £3 be applied to the subscriptions charge (membership and Public Liability) for all plot holders. It was acknowledged that the committee had already voted to adopt the charges, but the members need to agree at AGM today.

It was felt that Pretoria Road Allotments offer very good value for money and offer a range of facilities not available on other allotments e.g. toilets, kitchen, shop, hire of equipment. It was also acknowledged that there were concessions for those with a BS34 postcode and pensioners.

Derek alerted members to the new equipment and parts purchased this year and the many repairs that had been carried out, largely due to the misuse of the hire equipment. Derek suggested that hire charges should be increased from today and adopted by members later in the meeting. Derek proposed an increase in the hire of mowers from £2 to £3 and the hire of the Rotavator would increase to £5. Doug acknowledged that the committee had already voted to adopt the charges, but the members need to agree at AGM today.

Derek explained that there would be no increase this coming year in rent charges from Patchway Town Council.

Derek then ran through the fundraising account. He highlighted that money had been spent on rebuilding one of the water collection stations. He asked members to come forward if they have skills which may be useful in the future in order to save money on carpentry, building work and electrics.

Derek stated that the society is looking to rebuild the front end of the building where the kitchen is housed and asked members to consider helping with the labour to help minimise costs. Derek suggested that an email be sent to all members nearer the time requesting help.

Claire thanked Derek for all his work during the past year, particularly with the repair of machinery. Derek thanked Keith for his help repairing the rotavator.

Secretary's Report

Doug thanked everyone for attending. He also extended thanks to Les Brooks and Diana Sidwell for their commitment to the society and for their hard work as committee members. It was acknowledged by all that both Les and Diana had been key members of the Committee and shown great commitment in their roles over several years - Les as Chair and Diana as Minute Secretary.

Doug also thanked Derek for keeping the Accounts and ensuring that the Allotment Society survives and continues to flourish. He also thanked the rest of the committee for the various tasks they have carried out on behalf of allotment society members.

Doug explained that he regularly carries out plot inspections and tries to offer ways to support members who are finding it difficult to maintain their plot. This is usually done by phone or email.

Doug explained that although a plastic tax was paid by members last year to help provide a skip to clear the large amount of waste on site, some of the money for this came from allotment funds. Derek reiterated that rubbish on site is a big and costly problem. Derek reminded members that all rubbish should be taken home and disposed of.

Doug reminded members that waste wood can go on the bonfire site and green waste can go on the compost site. Doug stated that although most members comply, he frequently sends email reminders about fly tipping, and anyone found dumping rubbish will be excluded from the society.

Doug stated that there are 3 vacant half plots currently available and 1 full plot. Derek stated that he is currently trying to clear overgrown vacant plots and asked members to volunteer if they can, to help with plot clearance.

There is currently a waiting list of approximately 7 people and more plots may be available after rents have been taken.

Doug asked members to notify the committee if there is a change of address, telephone number or email. To update the information held, plot holders will be asked to provide this at the time they pay their rent.

Adoption of Officers

It was stated that Les Brooks was standing down as Chair and Di had already stepped down as Minutes Secretary. The following members were proposed, seconded and elected as Committee Members for the following year:

Claire Nicholl – Chair

Derek Howell - Treasurer

Doug Blackwell – Secretary

Mary Hayward - Minutes Secretary

Norman Bradford - Committee Member

Mike Stinchcomb – Committee Member

Jenny Richardson – Committee Member

Keith Meredith – Committee Member

Richard Pruett – Committee Member

Chris Rowell – Committee Member

Jake Gray – Committee Member

Jody Frayne - Committee Member

Following adoption of the new committee, the earlier suggested increases to equipment hire, water and subscriptions charge were proposed and adopted by all members present. **(These new charges will be sent to all members, displayed on the allotment notice board and will appear on the allotment website alongside the AGM minutes.)**

Any Other Business

1. Use of Machinery

Derek highlighted the need for safety when using allotment machinery. Members must wear safety equipment such as a visor and harness when using the strimmer. Members should read the instruction manual prior to using equipment to ensure correct and safe usage.

It was agreed that the committee would discuss further at the next committee meeting. This would include offering members a training session and developing procedures for signing out of equipment and agreeing to safe use.

2. Proposed date for Bonfire Evening

Friday 4th November was agreed as a suitable date for the Bonfire Evening. Plot holders, James Allen and Elizabeth Owen, offered to distribute posters to local schools to advertise this event.

3. Community Orchard

Members were notified of the need to tidy and maintain this space. Volunteers were requested and a date will be set in November for those able to help to work together to tidy and prune this area. This will be sent via email to members after the next committee meeting.

Claire highlighted the development of a new orchard area where 5 new apple trees, donated by Thatchers, have been planted.

Doug proposed that the area be extended to include more apple trees. 1 of the trees would be marked with a plaque in recognition of all the work undertaken by Les Brooks during his many years of service as part of the Allotment Society and a member of the Committee.

Members were asked to consider donating an apple tree that could be planted in the new orchard. Claire suggested that a Heritage Variety of classic British Apple tree would be ideal, and this could be a cider apple, dessert apple or a cooking apple.

Doug asked member to look out for the South Gloucestershire tree scheme that they ran last year. If running this year, Doug asked member to consider using their voucher towards an apple tree for the allotment orchard.

A member stated that the Woodland Trust are currently taking orders for trees.

4. Other items

Claire suggested we investigate obtaining discounts for the society such as entry to shows, exhibitions and training. Members expressed interest in this idea.

A member enquired about the water pressure of the water tap at the end of Plot 25B. It was agreed to investigate this and check for possible water leak.

A member asked if it was possible to keep the water on for a bit longer this year as it had been such a dry year. This was agreed by the committee.

A member suggested all taps should have a crate for watering cans so that excess water can be collected in a container beneath the crate.

Claire thanked all members for their attendance and then closed the Meeting.