

PRETORIA ROAD ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 30th August 2025

at Pretoria Road Allotment Site – 10.30am

Committee Members Present:

Claire Nicholl (CN) – Chair
Derek Howell (DH) – Treasurer
Doug Blackwell (DB) – Secretary
Mary Hayward (MH) - Minute Secretary
Mike Stinchcomb (MS)– Committee Member
Libby Owen (LO) – Committee Member
Rob Martinique (RM) – Committee Member
Richard Pruett (RP) - Committee Member
Chris Rowell (CR) – Committee Member
Jenny Richardson (JR) – Committee Member
Mia Smart (MS) – Committee Member

Plot Holders Present:

Bala Ramasamy
Darren Bouden
Jackie Pruett
Rob Martin
Ann Hyam
Sonia Blackwell
Pauline Ashman
Di Sidwell
Agata Makulec
Dave and Sue Powell
Sam Adams
Mark and David
Winsome Barrett-Muir
Sean

Apologies: Steve Tombs, Chris and Sue Lawrence, Soo and Dave, Pete and Fran, Luke Rowlands.

Chair, Claire Nicoll (CN) opened the meeting and extended a welcome to everyone.

ITEM 1. The minutes of the 2023 AGM were adopted, and a copy was signed off by the Chair.

ITEM 2. CHAIR'S REPORT

CN reported that the site is currently at full capacity, with all plots occupied, including the no dig beds. There are currently 6 people on the waiting list.

CN recognised that the weather this year had been very different to last year and that the lack of rain had presented difficulties and challenges for most plot holders. The increasing number of water collection stations on individual plots was recognised and celebrated.

CN reported that Phase 1 of the Pollinator project is complete and highlighted that PTC Mayor, Dayley Lawrence, and local MP, Claire Hazelgrove, had both attended the opening ceremony at the allotment site.

CN thanked all those who had been involved in the project, with special mention to Rob, Rich, Kelvin, Doug and Derek.

ITEM 3. TREASURER'S REPORT

DH thanked CN for all her hard work on the Pollinator Project and for driving it forward and ensuring its completion. It was recognised that the work done towards the project will need maintaining.

DH distributed copies of the General Account and copies of the Fund-Raising Account for the year 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2025. It was acknowledged that both accounts were in credit and showed a healthy balance. **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.**

DH talked through the accounts highlighting the following:

General Accounts Funds are received from Rent, Water and Grants and used to pay PTC rent and for site maintenance and development. DH began by highlighting the supportive nature of PTC towards the Allotment Site and how the Council recognise the allotments as a huge asset to the local community.

Insurance costs – Thanks given to DB for sourcing a competitive deal.

Shop and Accounting – Thanks given to MS for all the support he has given.

Southern Brooks Grant – This has been used to buy a Lawnmower and a Gazebo. Still to buy guttering and install another water collection station.

Skip Hire (£300) – This was used during the pollinator project but also for rubbish collected from around the site.

Machinery – thanks given to RP for help maintaining machinery.

Cleaning - Derek extended thanks to Sonia B for regular toilet block cleaning.

Water Charges – DH explained the need to increase water charges as usage has risen and costs expected to rise by at least 20%. (To be agreed later in this meeting when new committee elected.)

Southern Brooks Grant – Thanks given to MS for securing this grant.

Asda Grant – Thanks given to CN for securing this grant which will be used to build an all-weather path around the site of the pollinator project.

Strimmer – committee have agreed to purchase new strimmer. DH to order.

Profit on General Account £3019 but £3000 is from Asda Grant for pathway.

Fundraising Account

Shop Audit – Thanks given to JR and DB and MS for guidance with this task.

Bonfire Event – Thanks given to RP for organising and coordinating.

Easter Event – Thanks given to JR for organising and coordinating.

Christmas Wreath Making – Thanks given to CN for organising and delivering this workshop.

Open Day – Thanks to all involved. Special mention of thanks to RM.

Thanks given to all members for supporting all the fundraising events.

Southern Brooks grant - This is ring-fenced for event funding. Plot holder asked, “Does Southern Brooks put a time limit on spending of grant.” Committee reported that it did not, but the society have agreed to put Southern Brooks logo on event advertising for one year.

CN thanked DH for all his hard work and commitment to the role of Treasurer.

ITEM 4. SECRETARY’S REPORT

DB thanked all committee members for their hard work throughout the year. He highlighted and celebrated the diversity within the allotment community as well celebrating the successful nature of the allotment site as a sanctuary for wellbeing, as well as being a place to grow and cultivate produce.

DB also acknowledge the good working relationship established with Patchway Town Council (PTC). He highlighted that the committee attend the quarterly PTC Parks and Open Spaces meetings to give an update on the Allotment site.

DB reported that he had had contact with the new committee at Blakeney Road Allotments. Blakeney Road wish to attend some of Pretoria Road meetings to swap ideas and share good practice. The committee have agreed this would be valuable for both sites.

Security – DB reminded plot holders to keep the gates shut to ensure a secure site and safe environment for all members.

Neighbours – DB reminded all to show respect for our neighbours who adjoin the allotment site. Although the site can be accessed 24/7, members were reminded to show consideration to people who live close by and be mindful of any noise. Regarding parking, members were reminded not to park on pavements or park across driveways.

Fellow plot holders – Children and dogs welcome on site. DB reminded all to respect our fellow plot holders.

Society Functions – great to see so many here today. Supporting functions really helps to maintain the allotments.

Constitution – it will be proposed later in the meeting to have a 5-year term, with a maximum of 2 terms, for key committee positions (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer). However, these members may be able to stand for another position. There are currently 11 committee members.

In response to a member question, CN confirmed that currently there is no limit on the time served on the committee. She acknowledged that perhaps it is something that we may wish to look at in the future for committee members who do not hold key roles.

DB thanked all members of the society for their support during the year.

CN thanked DB for all his work as Secretary and thanked all members of the committee for their support and commitment during the past year.

ITEM 5: Adoption of Officers

Derek Howell reported that he no longer wished to stand as Treasurer or remain on the committee. However, he acknowledged that he would be happy to support the new treasurer during a handover period for advice and encouragement. DH also stated that he would also be willing to support on site when time allows. CN thanked DH for the 14 years he had given to the role of Treasurer and for his dedication and commitment to Pretoria Road Allotments. JR also congratulated DH on the superb job he had done in his role as Treasurer.

The following members were proposed, seconded and elected as Committee Members for the following year:

Claire Nicholl – Chair

No Nomination - Treasurer

Doug Blackwell – Secretary

Mary Hayward - Minutes Secretary

Mike Stinchcomb – Committee Member

Jenny Richardson – Committee Member

Richard Pruett – Committee Member

Chris Rowell – Committee Member

Rob Martinique – Committee Member

Libby Owen – Committee Member

Mia Smart – Committee Member

DB to email members regarding the role of Treasurer.

Following a question from a plot holder regarding the role of committee members, DB highlighted the importance of having a committee to ensure that any decisions made are group decisions and not just the decisions of the key members (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer).

Any Other Business

1. Fundraising and Events

As mentioned previously, DB to send out email to all members requesting volunteers to be part of a sub-committee to help organise, coordinate and run events.

Wider help also needed to ensure the success of the pollinator area. This includes such tasks as weeding, grass cutting, researching and applying for available grant funding for future projects. DB to include this in email to all members.

For members who do not wish to commit to a committee, help would be appreciated at any of the events held throughout the year.

2. Pollinator Project Update (CN)

CN confirmed that Phase 1 of the project has been completed and all agreed that the area looks wonderful.

CN reported that the area was opened at a ceremony attended by PTC Mayor and MP Claire Hazelgrove.

CN highlighted the picnic area available for all members to use, 70 British heritage fruit trees and the no-dig beds that are now all rented and have yielded much produce for plot holders. CN talked of the links developed with local schools and the groups of children who will be using the site to learn about healthy eating and where food comes from as part of their DT curriculum. The schools will use produce grown on site to create healthy dishes with the children.

CN reported that school children had visited the site before the school summer break and were involved in tasting fresh produce. CN asked plot holders to donate any excess harvest as the schools will be able to use this in the school kitchens for their lunch menus.

CN thanked **all** involved in the project.

Following a comment from a member, to ensure all requests for support are heard, it was agreed that a copy of future newsletters will be posted on the site noticeboard. Newsletters will also continue to be emailed to members too.

3. Proposed Amendments to existing constitution

DB thanked LO and CR for their work on this document. This document was emailed to all members prior to the AGM. DB identified the key changes as follows

- Committee member details will no longer be displayed
- Key committee members may serve for 5 years in office. (Two terms of office maximum.)

DB invited comments regarding the above. A question was raised about the term Vice Chairperson being omitted from the new document. LO and CR confirmed that removal of this term would not prevent a Vice Chair being elected in the future, should someone wish to take on this role.

A vote was taken to adopt the new Constitution and unanimously agreed by those members present.

4. Water Taps/Water Stations

Reminder given to leave a border around all water stations to allow for any maintenance and prevent damage. Cost of new stations approximately £1000.

Thanks given to plot holder, Pete, who has helped to maintain all the water stations without charge. The society has covered the cost of parts used.

5. Increase in Water Charges

DB proposed that to cover the increasing costs and increasing use of water, all plot holders should pay £2 extra per half plot, raised bed or no dig bed. Full plots would pay an extra £4.

This fee also supports the use of water for the kitchen and toilet facilities.

The committee will continue to look at harvesting water across the site and, as such, members are now obliged to harvest water when erecting a new structure of their plot.

A vote was taken to increase water charges by £2/£4 and was unanimously agreed by those members present.

6. Questions and Comments from Plot Holders

A member offered to maintain the wheelbarrow planters that are situated near the raised beds and offered to tidy the raised beds and surrounding area when necessary. The member also highlighted uneven and cracked pavements in this area. The committee agreed to look at this as part of regular Health and Safety inspections.

DB informed members that PTC will soon begin maintenance work on the boundary area with Scott Park. An email will be sent to members who have a plot edging Scott Park to let them know the date for this work and to remind plot holders of the 2-metre wildlife corridor along the back line which must be kept clear at all times.

CN thanked all members for their attendance and invited all to stay for tea and cake. The meeting was then closed.