

Royal Paddocks Allotments Annual General Meeting minutes

9 November 2017, 8 pm

Hampton Wick Royal Cricket Club, Bushy Park, Hampton Wick KT1 4AZ

Present: 67 ploholders recorded (names available on the register), including committee members listed below, and Councillor Gareth Evans.

Committee members:

David Harden – Chair	Gill Hiley	Jenny Bourne
Carol Dukes – Treasurer	Theo Christophers	Christine Thorpe
Ashley Catto	Martin Scotton	David Laughrin - Secretary
Nick Baylis	Dan Read	

Apologies received from: Jane Harnden, Nicholas Hembury, Vladimir Gorbach, David Lainchbury, Rob and Laura Newbould, Merrill Strange, and Elaine Sturman.

1.	Welcome from the chair and apologies – David H thanked all for attending and the Hampton Wick Royal Cricket Club for use of their premises. He listed apologies shown above.
2.	Minutes of the 2016 AGM – the minutes were agreed.
3.	Matters arising from the minutes – there were no matters arising from the minutes..
4.	Chairman’s annual report – David Harnden David H reported on the year’s activities and achievements, including the notable tenth anniversary of the compost toilet. The pioneering work of Chris Pocock in researching, designing and maintaining the toilet and installing solar panel, pump and piped water was a triumph! This typified the special efforts made by so many in the allotments community to keep the site thriving. Notable contributions were made by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The cafe team led by Anne Wingrove, providing a key meeting and refreshment place for the community.• The Social Committee led by Jenny Bourne and Ruth Walker who plan and put on events throughout the year including the recent Autumn Social, widely regarded as the best ever.• The gate team led by Ashley Catto who lock and unlock the vehicle gates each night and morning helping to keep the site secure.• The plot inspections team led by David Lainchbury who inspect plots 3 times a year to keep standards of cultivation up to those required by the lease and who choose the best plot awards.• Andrew Saunders who maintains the hedge on the southern border of the site, which now provides an effective screen from the public footpath reducing the number of break-ins to the site.• Ray Hulm for maintenance of the pumps.• Mark Buckley and Carol Dukes for creation and maintenance of our excellent website.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jon Anderson for maintenance of the bee area • Martin Scotton for the mammoth task of annual collection of rents for plots. • Nick Baylis for maintenance of the Seed Store • All those who join the communal work parties and volunteer to help at events, and who quietly mow the communal areas and fix the gate locks. <p>All the Committee Members had contributed significantly during the year. David apologised to all those he had not had time to credit, but he wanted to make a special mention of Jenny Bourne for her work, with a little bit of help from her friends, in turning a non-descript area near the entrance gate into a welcoming flowerbed – an inspiration and encouragement to all.</p> <p>There were lots of plans in hand to continue to make improvements to the infrastructure of the allotments where needed, as had been achieved in the past year. In this connection, it was helpful that the Royal Parks had agreed to maintain the trees abutting Church Grove in future and had helped erect some owl boxes along the wall next to the cricket club. The owls should help keep down the rodents. For the range of other tasks, all volunteers were welcome and always needed on work parties, helping with the café and joining the rota to keep the toilets clean. He wished all Plotolders another successful and actively involved year.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Accounts and financial report – Carol Dukes</p> <p>Carol, giving her final Treasurer’s report as she was standing down from the Committee this year, reported on a healthy year of activity. The accounts had been circulated in advance, so she concentrated on the headlines: income of nearly £12,500; expenditure of just under £5000 and a surplus of somewhat over £7000.</p> <p>There were some technical reasons why this picture slightly overstated the financial position, as two Autumn Socials happened to be included in the current financial year, boosting income. But the fact remained that balances had been helped by the record returns from the café and social events in 2017. The concern about the outlay in the past for the rebuilding of the Seedstore had been overcome. The way was now clear to spend in the future on some of the pending projects.</p> <p>On the conclusion of her report, David H thanked Carol for her major contribution over recent years. The improvements that she had brought in, including payment by Paypal, had been hugely helpful. She would be much missed for her impeccable accounts and cheerful presence. Fortunately, she had agreed to stand by as a reserve committee member if needed in the coming year to keep Committee numbers at the required 10.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Social Secretary Report – Jenny Bourne</p> <p>Jenny gave a short review of the wide range of social events that she and her enthusiastic committee had arranged over the year, from the lively and entertaining Plotolders’ Question time to the Plant Sale and the Socials. As ever, success depended on all those who contributed – from those who grew some extra seedlings to stock the plant sale to those who put up the tents, ran the stalls and judged the entries at the socials. The success of the café too was hugely dependent on Anne as its organiser and the volunteer servers and bakers. More volunteers were always needed.</p>

	<p>Ruth Walker was as ever a tower of strength and efficiency in co-ordinating the Produce Show competitions at the Autumn Social, which was widely regarded as the best ever, thanks to both the weather and the excellent support from everyone.in creating just the right relaxed and warm atmosphere. The only area for attention might be drumming up a few more children's entries for the scarecrow competition. But the judges for the sunflower competition and the biggest and best pumpkin had been impressed by the entries and the green fingers of our youngsters and had themselves contributed hugely to the fun of the event, as had the very successful raffle. The contribution to allotment funds had been amazing.</p> <p>Jenny also wanted to single out the unveiling of the brilliant mural painted by Bethan for the Seedstore Café wall. This brightened up a dull corner and had been widely praised.</p> <p>The final event for 2017 will be the Christmas Café on 17 December with mulled wine and mince pies!</p> <p>Involvement from all is welcome for next year's events as well as ideas for new events that plottolders may be able to lead.</p> <p>Dates for the 2018 diary will be confirmed in the New Year.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Presentation of Awards</p> <p>Presented by Councillor Gareth Evans:</p> <p>Best Newcomer: 3rd. Plot 136b, Faith Painter 2nd. Plot 201, Dennis Hawthorne 1st. Plot 69f, Mary Downham (Derek Mason Cup)</p> <p>Best half plot: 3rd equal. Plot No 14f, Nicholas Hembury 3rd equal. Plot No 86b, Ian and Jo Shillaker 2nd. Plot No 44b, Carol Pelzers and Gerald Haase 1st. Plot No 39b, Peter Caughey (Barbara Wood Cup)</p> <p>Best full plot: 3rd. Plot No 93, Ray and Barbara Hulm 2nd. Plot No 4, Carol Ager 1st. Plot No 83, Liz and Gray Rigge (RPA Cup)</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Election of Plotholder Committee Members</p> <p>Plotolders standing for election were: Dylan Baxendale, 180; Nick Baylis, 110f; Jenny Bourne, 27f, 28b; Ashley Catto, A, H; Theo Christophers, 148; David Harnden, 152; Gill Hiley, 50; David Lainchbury, 131f, 132b; David Laughrin, 19; Dan Read, 155; Karen Saywell, 81b; Martin Scotton, 59; Christine Thorpe, 49; Anne Wingrove, 127b.</p> <p>All the above were unanimously elected.</p> <p>It was also agreed that there should be a Reserve Committee member:</p>

Carol Dukes, 77.

9. Any other Business

- i) David Harnden asked the plotholders to consider a motion: to allow the Plotholders' Committee to charge Plotholders an additional fee of £10 for erecting a Plot number sign if they consistently failed to provide their own and site it visibly. Any refusal to pay would lead to eviction. The proposal was needed to help inspections. After a brief discussion, this was approved without opposition.
- ii) One Plotholder raised concerns about conditions of a specific plot. It was suggested that the plot inspection and eviction process was active and would pick up such neglect, but individual concerns could be raised with the Chairman or Chief Inspector.
- iii) A number of Plotholders noted that the RPA funds were healthy and suggested that the reserves policy needed reviewing and the time had come to spend some money on areas that needed to be addressed like the entrance road, the incinerator and so on. David H said that there had been ongoing discussions about a number of these issues and money had been spent in the past year on pump spares, café tables and benches and some other equipment. He hoped it would be possible to make further progress in ongoing discussion with the Royal Parks, who needed to be consulted about these infrastructure projects, over the next year. Some could be expensive and the reserves would be likely to be needed for these.
- iv) A request made last year for skip facilities to be available from time to time on site was repeated. David H said that while a one-off arrangement for rubbish to be removed from the site had been carried out in the last year by a contractor, there were no current plans to hire skips. It was felt that this might lead to damage and rubbish being brought to the site. But the issue would be kept under review.
- v) It was noted that manure deliveries from the Royal Stables had been missing recently. It was confirmed that this was an expected gap in the schedule because of the location of the horses.
- vi) A suggestion was made that a communal shredder should be installed to help dispose of plant waste without burning. It was noted that there were problems over this not least the lack of electric power on the site and the danger of spreading plant diseases, but any feasible ideas could be explored.
- vii) A question was raised about the waiting list for plots. This was relatively short at present and new applicants could expect an offer within two or three months of going on the list.

After a vote of thanks to the Chairman, the meeting was closed.

AGM ended 8.55 pm