

Royal Paddocks Allotments Annual General Meeting minutes

15 November 2018, 8 pm

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

Present: 60 plotholders recorded (names available on the register), including committee members listed below, the Hampton Wick community police who manage the Community Plot and Councillor Jim Millard.

Committee members:

David Harden – Chair	Jenny Bourne	Nick Baylis
Dylan Baxendale	Ashley Catto	Theo Christophers
Gill Hiley	David Lainchbury	Martin Scotton
Anne Wingrove		David Laughrin - Secretary

Apologies received from: Mark Buckley, Carol Dukes, Carol Pelzers, Karen Saywell, John Hourigan, Christine Thorpe, Dan Read, and Jane Harnden,

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 2017 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 He paid tribute to those who had continued to contribute to the life of the allotments including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The cafe team led by Anne Wingrove, providing a key meeting, information exchange and refreshment place for the allotment community.• The Social Committee led by Jenny Bourne, Janet Baylis and Ruth Walker who plan and put on events throughout the year including another highly successful recent Autumn Social.• The gate team led by Ashley Catto who lock and unlock the vehicle gates each night and morning helping to keep the site secure. Ashley was standing down from the Committee this year but had kindly agreed to continue his gate opening role.• The plot inspections team led by David Lainchbury who inspected plots 3 times a year to keep standards of cultivation up to those required by the lease and who choose the best plot awards. David had decided to relinquish this task this year and his sterling efforts would be much missed. Karen Saywell had valiantly volunteered to take over in the Spring.• Andrew and Susan Saunders who maintained 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Buckley and Carol Dukes for creation and maintenance of the website, along with Gill Hiley who co-ordinated communications, developed valuable briefing material for new plotholders, and supervised the allocation of plots and induction of new tenants so capably and sensitively. • Jon Anderson for maintenance of the bee area. • Nick and Dave from the local police who have made valuable strides in developing the Community Plot and have joined in willingly in social activities in their spare time. • Martin Scotton for the mammoth task of annual collection of rents for plots. • Nick Baylis for maintenance of the Seed Store and painstaking work on projects for a new incinerator and cost-effective improvement to allotment roads. • Chris Pocock backed up by Theo Christophers who keep the compost toilet in good shape. Theo had also now agreed to take the lead on the incinerator. • 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>For the range of other tasks, volunteers were welcome and new faces were always needed on work parties, helping with social activities and the café and joining the rota to keep the toilets clean. He wished all Plotolders another successful and actively involved year.</p> <p>David's full report is accessible on the RPA website.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Accounts and financial report</p> <p>In the unavoidable absence of the Treasurer, David H introduced the accounts which had been circulated at the meeting and kindly audited by Mike McMinn. These included a bonus financial contribution from the Sunday Mail for a fashion shoot on the site.</p> <p>He also drew attention to the longer term five year financial plan kindly prepared by Karen Saywell. He indicated that the figures showed that the Allotments continued to be in a healthy financial state with around £40,000 in the bank. This was necessary to support a number of necessary projects on the allotment roads and an incinerator which would be covered later on the agenda. The five year plan showed that these projects were supportable on conservative assumptions.</p> <p>The meeting endorsed the accounts unanimously.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Social Activities</p> <p>Jenny gave a full review of the wide range of social events that she, Janet Baylis and Ruth Walker and all her hard-working committee had arranged over the year, from the lively and entertaining Plotolders' Question time to the Plant Sale and the Socials. A new 20 question quiz devised by Mike Vesey had also been warmly supported and would be repeated next year. Involvement from all is welcome for next year's events as well as ideas for new events that plotholders may be able to lead. The final event for 2018 will be the Christmas Café on 16 December with mulled wine and mince pies! Dates for the 2019 diary will be confirmed in the New Year.</p> <p>Jenny's full report is available on the RPA Website.</p> <p>Anne Wingrove added her report on another highly successful year at the café, which had managed to deliver a much-valued service come rain or shine. The cafe had</p>

	<p>remained open every Sunday except the two weeks around Xmas, thanks to the efforts of a team of willing volunteer servers and homemade cake bakers. Anne thanked all those involved and urged others to join the team which was at the heart of the allotments and made a very welcome contribution to RPA funds. She could be contacted via the website.</p> <p>David H repeated his thanks to Jenny, Janet, Ruth and Anne and all the volunteers, noting that around half of the RPA income now came from social events and the café. This, the opportunity to get to know other plotholders and learn their tips and secrets were a key part of the RPA recipe for success,</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Presentation of Awards</p> <p>The awards were presented entertainingly by Councillor Jim Millard, who noted that it was interesting to present awards at a meeting where it could validly be said that if he took too long the deer cull meant those leaving late could be shot!</p> <p>The awards were as follows:</p> <p><i>Best Newcomer:</i> 1st. Plot 200 Robert and Jane McIntyre (Derek Mason Cup – presented by Tim Carter) 2nd Plot 174 Zoe Ellis and Richard Millgate</p> <p><i>Best half plot:</i> 1st. Plot 67b, Mary Downham (<u>Barbara Wood Cup</u>) 2nd Plot 153f David and Pamela Boyd 3rd Plot 194b Hugh Bailey</p> <p><i>Best full plot:</i> 1st. Plot No 83, Liz and Gray Rigge (RPA Cup) 2nd equal Plot 3 Vivienne Kemsley 2nd equal Plot 4 Carol Ager 3rd equal Plot 30 David and Jenny Gilbert 3rd equal Plot D Jon Tarlton</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Election of Plotholder Committee Members</p> <p>Plotholders standing for election were:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Dylan Baxendale, 180; Nick Baylis, 110f; Jenny Bourne, 27f, 28b; Theo Christophers, 148; David Harnden, 152; Gill Hiley, 50; David Lainchbury, 131f, 132b; David Laughrin, 19; Karen Saywell, 81b; Martin Scotton, 59; Andrew Stanley 120; Christine Thorpe, 49; Anne Wingrove, 127b.</p> <p>All the above were unanimously elected.</p>

9. Roads

Nick Baylis explained the research and discussions with potential contractors that he and Gill Hiley had been taking forward to ensure that proper cost effective repairs could be done within budget to the roads on the site. This was an area of some difference of opinion amongst plottolders. Some people thought that cars should be banned entirely, and others fiercely argued their right to deliver material and gain access to the site. Road access was certainly needed for some deliveries. The approach adopted had been to seek the best solution that would deal over time and in phases with the worst areas of road in a way which offer lasting improvements for occasional car access, for pedestrians and for cyclists. This prioritised the area near the gate where flooding had regularly caused problems and envisaged lesser work immediately on levelling the route to the Seed Store.

Nick explained that three tenders had been secured and one was favoured by the Committee. He would put further details on the website and notice would be given when the work was due to start in the early Spring because road access would be restricted for about four weeks. He was grateful to Jim Hourigan and Gray Rigge for offering to help with supervising the work.

In discussion, the proposal was generally welcomed, and it was thought sensible that the work should be done in stages, with all areas of the site receiving appropriate attention as was necessary over time and as funds allowed.

10. Bonfire Ban and Incinerator Upgrade

David H introduced a discussion of the ban on bonfires on the site which the Committee had reluctantly imposed. He accepted that this was contentious but the Committee had little choice following a succession of complaints from neighbours in the cricket club, the King's Field café, neighbouring flats, and other plottolders. The key incident had been an occasion when despite regular warnings a number of very smoky bonfires had been lit and one had led to a severe loss of visibility on the local road. There had been a real risk of an accident.

The Committee had taken advice from the local authority, who wished to reduce the smoke emissions across the borough and had seen the latest RHS advice on encouraging the use of composting most vegetable waste. The Committee aimed to encourage more use of composting and to this end a talk by a top RHS expert - Guy Barter, the RHS Chief Horticulturalist – had been arranged for 12.30 on Sunday 18th November. Other options would include burning in a communal incinerator and plans to replace the current one were far advanced. Thirdly there was the option of using communal dead hedges like the one near the bee area. But the Committee was always open to comments and suggestions.

In a short discussion, there was considerable support for the line that the Committee had taken. One plottolder questioned whether there had been sufficient incidents of abuse to justify a total ban, and one plottolder suggested that individual incinerators might be an option. But a clear majority of those present supported the proposed policy, provided that the communal incinerator upgrade was pursued as fast as possible. It was also suggested that waste could be taken to put in the Council's green recycling bins and the option for a communal shredder should be further explored, perhaps using a generator for power if this could be done without excessive pollution. It

	<p>was suggested that such a generator might be available at little or no cost from a local source.</p> <p>In conclusion, David H thanked plotholders for their comments, indicated that a new incinerator would be ordered as soon as Council approval had been secured, and said that the most likely site for it would be where the current incinerator stood. He encouraged plotholders to attend the RHS talk on composting.</p>
<p>11. Any other Business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) <i>Water supply:</i> it was agreed that the Committee should consider tasking one or two people to look at future options if changes to the climate endangered the site's access to pumped water. (ii) <i>Rabbits:</i> it was noted that an occasional and rare sighting of a rabbit or two on the site had been noted in the summer. This appeared to have been after the death by apparent poisoning of two healthy foxes on the site. Fortunately, at least one new fox had been seen and no more rabbits, but plotholders should be alert to the need not to leave poisons accessible on site, and not to use coffee grounds, which were poisonous to foxes, around their plots for slug control. (iii) <i>Box moth:</i> a plotholder alerted others to the threat of the box moth. (iv) <i>Location and timing of AGM:</i> one plotholder complained about the timing and location of the AGM up a dark lane on a weekday winter evening. It was suggested that a daytime meeting at a weekend should be considered. It was agreed to review options that are compatible with the requirements of the majority of plotholders and of the RPA constitution. (v) <i>Hedgehogs:</i> a plotholder wanted to urge the encouragement of hedgehogs on site. This was supported though it was noted that they could become victims of careless strimming. (vi) <i>Community access to spare plants:</i> a plotholder suggested that spare plants and seeds should be made available for community use in Hampton Wick. It was recommended that the means for such donations should be advertised on the Allotments notice boards. <p>After a vote of thanks to the Chairman, the meeting was closed.</p>

AGM ended 9.15 pm