

## **ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS, HAMPTON WICK**

**Minutes of the annual meeting of the Management Committee (MC), held on Wednesday 20 November 2019 at 8pm at The Lion pub, 27 Wick Road, TW11 9DN**

**Present:** Councillors Robin Brown, Jim Millard and Monica Saunders

Plot holder representatives: Karen Saywell (Plot holders' Committee vice-chair and MC secretary), Andrew Stanley (Plot holders' Committee treasurer), Martin Scotton

- 1. Apologies:** David Harnden (Plot holders' Committee chair) and Susan Saunders
- 2. Election of officers:** Chair: Jim Millard proposed Monica Saunders. Vice-chairs: Karen Saywell proposed Martin Scotton. Karen Saywell took the role of Secretary.
- 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2018:** The minutes were confirmed as a true record by those who had been present (Jim Millard, Monica Saunders, Andrew Stanley, and, through written advice, David Harnden).
- 4. Matters arising from the minutes:** Karen Saywell raised the subject of how to recognise the upcoming centenary of the granting of the Royal Warrant in 1921. It was agreed that this was something for the RPA committee to plan. The councillors confirmed that they would support.
- 5. Plot holders' Committee chairman's annual report:** Karen Saywell, vice-chair of the Plot holders' Committee, reported that 2019 was a very positive year with achievements including:
  - Completion of a major project to repair the access road on site
  - Installation of aluminium pump signs with 'how to use' instructions
  - Reroofing of communal shed by entrance gate, installing guttering and water barrels;
  - Continuing work on the hedge of native species planted along the southern side of the allotments
  - A work day by the volunteers from St John's, as part of their Love Hampton Wick weekend, to help on plots whose tenants had difficulty with some of the more physical tasks;
  - Organising several on-site talks/events for the benefit of plot holders
  - Creating containment for free communal manure
  - Arranging a supply of free pallets for plot holders to build compost bins on their plots;
  - Setting up a Water Group, which produced a report intended to stimulate thought and discussion on the future of water on our site, as well as showing how to harvest water and use it in the best way possible.

A summary was given of the different groups of volunteers who continue to contribute to the social aspect (café volunteers, social committee), day-to-day functioning (gate volunteers, inspection team, lettings and rent collection) and ongoing maintenance (pump team, compost toilet maintenance, work-day volunteers).

Monica Saunders asked about plot use and turnover. Martin Scotton confirmed that there was currently one vacant plot, awaiting re-letting. Karen Saywell explained the inspections approach that ensures, through a system of 3 inspections a year that

plot-holders who are struggling are recognised and helped to reach the appropriate decision, including 'down-sizing' or handing back their plot.

Robin Brown asked about the progress of the Community plot and Karen Saywell confirmed that it was working well with the community police additionally making themselves available for questions at the Seed Store café each Sunday, and helping out at social events and on work parties.

- 6. Plotholders' Committee treasurer's annual report:** Andrew Stanley, Treasurer of the Plotholders' Committee shared his report with all. He highlighted the deficit for year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 of some £15k which was due to the completion of the 'tracks project' project which involved work to improve the drainage and surface of the entrance road plus levelling of main routes on site, costing some £24k. Andrew advised that the current 5 year financial plan demonstrated that the required £10k reserve for unforeseen costs could be maintained given the ongoing contributions from rent (£5k); Sunday volunteer café takings (£3k) plus social events (£1k). The question of potential rent rises was raised at the RPA AGM, but it was not considered a necessary step for now unless major expenditure items are identified for the future.

Robin Brown asked if the Association was an unincorporated association and what the liability of the Committee might be. Andrew advised that the Association was covered by the RHS Public Liability insurance recommended for allotment associations.

**ACTION: Andrew Stanley** to check and advise back the liability of the committee and its members as an unincorporated association.

- 7. The RPA and Council policy regarding chemicals (pesticides,etc.) and fires**

The new RPA Chemicals policy, as endorsed at the RPA AGM, was shared. Karen summarised it, underlining the importance that it gives the Plotholders Committee the power to act when a plotholder's misuse of chemicals affects neighbouring plots. Karen confirmed that the policy would be kept under review given the ongoing focus in this area.

Andrew explained that the Plotholders committee had a plan to spend around £4000 on replacing the existing aged incinerator on site with a modern one, but that this was on hold awaiting further understanding of any potential Council policy regarding fires that might impact the decision. Karen advised that RPA had implemented a ban on bonfires in 2018 and had advised plotholders that replacing the incinerator was one of the actions that would be taken to compensate plotholders. Holding talks on composting and creating a 'dead hedge' for larger branches were also introduced. Karen provided the technical detail of the proposed Proburn Waste Incinerator which makes it virtually smoke-free and burns material to 1% of its volume. When asked what role the council might have in implementing policy for RPA, Robin advised that it was no more than that for someone's private garden.

**ACTION Monica Saunders** to check what plans the Council have re taking any action or implementing policy and any timelines that would adversely impact the

decision to spend £4000 on upgrading the incinerator.

**8. Fourth Councillor on the Management Committee**

It was recognised that Kate Howard no longer listed her appointment to the RPA MC on the Council website. Robin, Jim and Monica agreed that there should be a fourth council representative and thought that Martin Elengorn might be approached.

**ACTION: Monica Saunders** to contact Kathryn Thomas to ask for a replacement for Kate Howard for the RPA MC.

- 9. Date of next annual meeting:** The next annual meeting will be held at 8 pm on Wednesday 25 November 2020, location to be decided nearer the time.

**10. AOB**

Karen briefed the meeting on the situation of 4 RPA ploholders who had not paid their rents which were due on 1<sup>st</sup> October for the coming year despite several reminders by email. RPA regulations say:

*The yearly rental must be paid in advance. It is due on the first day in October in each year and must be paid during that month. If this is not done the Management Committee reserves to itself the right to re-let the plot to another tenant after giving seven days' notice in writing to the occupier.*

All 4 ploholders had failed an inspection in 2019 and received a subsequent 'letter of encouragement'. Only one of the plots appeared to have been worked on recently. After discussion, the MC agreed that all 4 plots should receive written notice in line with the regulation, with a month's delay for one plot because of understood mitigating circumstances.

**ACTION: Karen and Martin** to work with the RPA secretary to action this decision