

## ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS, HAMPTON WICK

**Minutes of the annual meeting of the Management Committee, held on Monday 21 November 2016 at 8pm at 82 Langham Road, Teddington TW11 9HJ**

**Present:** Councillors Mark Boyle, Gareth Evans, Jerry Elloy; Plot holder representatives David Harnden (Plot holders' Committee chair), Carol Dukes (Plot holders' Committee treasurer), Dan Read, Susan Saunders, Janet Baylis (Management Committee secretary)

**Apologies:** Councillor Kate Howard

**1. Election of officers:** Chair: David Harnden proposed Mark Boyle. Vice-chair: David Harnden proposed Dan Read. Secretary: Susan Saunders proposed Janet Baylis who has agreed to take on this role, seconded by David Harnden. The meeting agreed unanimously to these appointments.

**2. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2015:** The minutes of that meeting were considered by those who had been present (Cllrs Elloy and Evans, David Harnden, Carol Dukes, Susan Saunders and Dan Read. They were agreed to be a true record (proposer Jerry Elloy, seconded by David Harnden).

**3. Matters arising from the minutes:** There were no matters not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

**4. Plot holders' Committee chairman's annual report:** David Harnden, chair of the Plot holders' Committee, reported.

2015-16 has been a quiet year, in the main business as usual. Thanks to the volunteers who give their time and make a contribution in many ways: Plot holders' committee; Social committee who run the weekly cafe and social events during the year; the cafe and social events volunteers; Newsletter, *The Plot holder* and the website; the pumps, gates and hedge-laying teams.

A new initiative was the well-attended *Plot holders Question Time* in January, a great success and added to our calendar of social events for 2017. Another highlight was the filming on the plots for an episode of the BBC 3 sitcom *Josh*, starring Jack Dee and Josh Widdicombe. As well as the excitement it generated amongst plot holders, we also received a £500 payment to Allotment funds.

We have a waiting list <10 with the waiting time to be offered a plot now less than a year. It is for consideration that we decide to extend the catchment area for new plot holders which currently is Hampton Wick and South Teddington.

**Use of £500 windfall payment:** David explained that the matter of what to do with the £500 windfall resulting from the *Josh* filming had been discussed and agreed by those attending the 2016 AGM. He provided some wording to explain what has been decided.

The motion at the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016 AGM was “To allow the Plotolders Committee to use its discretion to spend the £500 windfall (from the filming of the BBC 1 programme *Josh* in 2016) in areas that might be open to debate under a strict interpretation of the Constitution”.

The Constitution says that “All monies raised shall be applied to further the interests of the association, in accordance with the aims” and that the aims are “To manage and maintain the Royal Paddocks Allotments for cultivation by members”. The aim of the motion was to give the Plotolders’ Committee more freedom concerning this £500. As an example, the chairman noted that a long-standing plotholder facing serious financial difficulties might not be able to be helped with the annual rent under a strict interpretation of the Constitution. Giving the committee limited discretionary powers over the £500 would allow it to intervene in such cases.

The motion was approved subject to a number of safeguards:

- these discretionary powers apply only to this £500 windfall
- the money cannot be spent on any current Plotolders’ Committee members
- any expenditure would have to be approved beforehand by the Management Committee [it was agreed at the Management Committee meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016 that the plotholder members of the MC would abstain so that the decision would be taken by the 4 councillors]
- In the event of a tied decision, the councilor who is chair or vice-chair of the Management Committee will have the deciding vote on any spending decision. [postscript amendments from Mark Boyle and David Harnden, circulated to MC and agreed via email]
- the chairman would report on any such spending to the next AGM, although names may be withheld to avoid embarrassment

The Management Committee agreed to these safeguards.

**5. Plotolders' Committee treasurer's annual report:** Carol Dukes, treasurer of the Plotolders’ Committee reported.

Our income and reserves are in healthy balance. Income for the year to September 2016 was £9000 from 3 main sources: rent and related income of £5600; Seed Store Café net income of £2,500; and from social events, £600 (Includes income from Autumn Produce Show 2015 but not 2016 which will be in the 2016-17 accounts. Carol reminded the committees that social events are not primarily run as fund-raising activities. Nevertheless, they make a significant contribution to income each year.

Expenditure is stable: £2,500 in 2015-16 compared with £2,100 in 2014-15. Insurance costs were £870 including some prepayment for next year. £200 was spent on shelving for the Seed Store and £400 on hedge-laying.

Our surplus for the year is £6500, bringing our bank reserves to a very healthy £22000. Reserves have recovered well since the high expenditure years of 2012-13 and 2013-14 when we rebuilt the Seed Store. Carol made the suggestion that with such healthy surpluses we may want to consider donations to nominated charities in future years.

Carol outlined several infrastructure projects that we should address in the new few years. Projects will be financed from reserves and sufficient for what we plan to do. Projects include: repair work to pumps many of which have seen better days; road repairs and replacing the incinerator, again in poor repair. In addition, there are a number of trees by the perimeter wall along Church Grove and Park Road which are in need of attention. Dan Read raised the question of who is responsible for any damage or health & safety issues caused by trees on the allotments. A tree surgeon is to be engaged to survey the trees and it was suggested that we should contact the Royal Parks about the issue as well.

**6. Royal Paddocks Allotment archive:** Janet Baylis, reported on the archive project

Janet has taken over responsibility for the archive which dates from 1918. Susan Saunders gave a home to the archive which comprises the constitution, Management committee minutes, accounts and correspondence. As a result it escaped destruction in the 2009 Seed Store fire.

Following a suggestion that we digitise the archive, Janet has started an indexing project to scope what we've got and will then seek advice from local expert sources including Richmond Libraries and Museums, and Jam Yesterday, Jam Tomorrow about next steps. Only then can we make a decision about digitisation & other ideas. Whatever we decide to do it is likely that we will have to self-fund the project. Between 1918 and 1921 there are several centenaries we could celebrate and we've already identified some interest amongst ploholders in setting up a group to take forward the various options.

**7. Date of next annual meeting:** The next annual meeting will be held at 8 pm on Thursday 30 November 2017, at Susan Saunder's home, 82 Langham Rd.

**8. Any other business:** the Chair gave a vote of thanks to Susan Saunders in appreciation of her role as Secretary to the Management Committee over 15 years. Agreed by all.