

Minutes of Annual General Meeting of LRRHAA Nov 5th 2012

Present: I Matten (President) C Sharp (Chair) R Russell (Secretary) A Harpin (Treasurer) A Scriven (Field Secretary) D Penwarden (Trustee) P Hart, N Van Hear, B Block, C Grimley Evans, J Grimley Evans, D Barton, M Fernandes, A Young, L Laubeova, Zehua Liu, T Kirkby, K Barton, C R Adams, C Cavey, W Rees, J Jopling, T Pike, B Whaley.

1. Apologies: A Benfield, C Gibbs

2. Minutes of last AGM Read and Approved

3. Chair's Report: The Chairman welcomed and thanked all those attending emphasising that it was important that members of the Allotment attend these meetings as the Committee needed their input to manage the overall running of the site. All allottees are welcome at the regular Committee meetings – but not many have taken up the offer which was a pity. .

The allotment is now very nearly full and we have a waiting list of 3 with several existing allottees awaiting larger plots. New allottees that are not existing allottees will be offered a ½ or a ¼ plot in the first instance with priority for larger plots going to those who wish to up-size.

Money The Committee applied and failed to get a grant from the Council for general improvements, but was given £220 “section106 money” which has been spent on the hire of the digger for the wildlife area and some of the pond liner.

Working Parties. There was a successful working weekend last month with a turnout of 16 and most of the tasks were completed. All allottees must play their part in keeping the site neat and tidy as we are required to do by the terms of the lease. If any allottee has half an hour to spare at any time and feels at a loss for something to do, just contact Adrian and he find something that needs to be done.

Social

- Thank you to Manuela and Pearl for organising the Summer party and thank you, too, to all those who helped out before, during and after.
- There was no winter party this year for various reasons and the Committee felt that on balance there should be only one allotment party, in the summer on the site.
- The Allotment was open for the Iffley Open Gardens Sunday and several visitors turned up to walk round.

Theft and security

There's been a bit of theft this year but not too much vandalism. Please remember to let Cathy or Adrian know of incidents: we do need to report them to the Police. Security is important, so please ensure that the gate is left locked at all times and that the container and shed are never left open

when unmanned. Challenge anyone you don't recognise this is especially important as there are too many buckshee keys around.

Untidy Plots

The committee have written to several allottees about the state of their plots and of these, some showed improvement and the others which did not were invited to leave. We will continue to monitor the level of cultivation and write to those whose plots are very untidy, uncared for, or uncultivated. The Committee would like some volunteers to assist with the walk round "audit" of the site ever six weeks or so. This is how other allotments do it and there's no reason why ours should be any different.

Audit

The workload involved in the audit or check of the accounts has been severely eased by the checkers being appointed at the AGM to allow them to check the books month by month. David Penwarden and John Dean have done it this year and John Grimley-Evans and Bob Block have volunteered to take on the task until September 2013.

Prizes

The Committee entered the site for the best Allotment prize and to our surprise won! Michael collected the Alderman Knight Shield for First Prize and a cheque for £25 at the Town Hall. At the same time Bill Whaley won the prize for the best allotment plot. Well done to everyone who helped to keep the whole site tidy and to Bill whose plot has been an inspiration to all.

The Shield will be on display in the shop and a photo opportunity with as many allottees as possible and the shield will be arranged.

Thanks

Finally, the Chairman thanked the Committee for all their support over the past year and singled out Cathy who despite relinquishing the Secretary's post still worked like a Trojan behind the scenes and Adrian who has been a tower of strength as Field Secretary. The Wildlife area takes a lot of effort to keep clear and Colin and Robin have done wonders with the strimmers. They've also laid the path and now the pond needs to be completed. Thanks too to Phil for constant scavenging of the local building sites.

The Chairman also formally thanked Norman Gurl for his long and steadfast contribution to the allotment. Norman is retiring after many years as a Committee member and latterly as a Trustee.

4. Treasurer's Report - Budget: The general picture is that the association's finances are extremely tight.

There was some confusion over level of the shop takings as the arrangement whereby the shop became independent in the middle of the period meant that some of that of the transactions had gone through the Association's books, while later ones were in the shop account. The Chairman

emphasised that the original £700 for the initial stock had come from Association funds and that the Committee had agreed that when the shop bank account reached a balance of £1000, excess should be paid to the Association, allowing Terry to retain adequate funds for stock replenishment. After the meeting the Chairman invited the Treasurer to produce a clearer statement of the shop finances in conjunction with Terry so that an accurate assessment of the shop liability to the Association funds could be ascertained. This has now been done and is attached with the balance sheet.

The Chairman also informed the meeting that the Committee had decided that there should be a "Come in handy pot" within the Association funds to meet any unforeseen contingency.

The shop has been very successful and Terry has provided an excellent service for which the meeting congratulated him. Having started with £700 loan, there was now about £1400 of stock and £1000 in the bank account. This meant that the much of the original loan has been repaid, with the remainder being held in the shop accounts as the trading balance to allow purchases for the 2013 season.

The Committee are agreed that profit from the Shop should be used against capital items i.e. the replacement of the tractor in due course and not to subsidise day to day running expenses.

5. Field Secretary's Report: Adrian Scriven expressed thanks to Colin Cavey, Robin Adams and Terry Kirkby for mowing and strimming on site. More volunteers are needed. Thanks also to those who turned up for the last work party, it was the best turn out yet and a great success! The water supply has been shut off for winter and site roads are closed until the spring, so no more manure deliveries are possible until then. Any weeds can be used to fill the ruts in the roads, please, and all plot holders need to ensure their pathways are kept cut. £105.99 was spent on petrol and £60.00 was taken from mower and strimmer hire charges. Much of the balance of fuel has been used in the preparation of the Wildlife Area.

6. Election of Officers: Ian Matten as President: Proposed by A Harpin, Seconded by T Kirkby.

Bob Block as Trustee: Proposed by I Matten, Seconded by B Whaley.

David Penwarden as Trustee: Proposed by P Hart, Seconded by W Rees.

Colin Sharp as Chair: Proposed by C Grimley-Evans, Seconded by R Adams.

As David Barton had resigned as a Committee member, Robin Adams put his name forward as a Committee Member: Proposed by C Cavey, Seconded by B Whaley.

Norman Gurl has stood down as a Trustee and Committee Member and Colin Sharp thanked him on behalf of the Committee and all the members for his many years of sterling work,

All other Committee members and officers to remain.

7. Rent Increase: Oxford City Council is conducting a rent review on all OCC allotment sites. The LRRHAA committee has provided the requested information, but has not yet been informed what criteria will be used or by how much the rent will be raised. There will be an announcement in September 2013 with new rates to take effect from 2014. The chairman proposed an increase of 5%

to LRRHAA rents payable in 2013 to stagger the effect of the likely OCC rent increase over 2 years. The proposal was carried with 2 against. The 5% OAP discount will still apply. Rent for a whole plot from September 2013 will be £23.00, half a plot £11.50 and a quarter plot £5.75.

8. Fees for work carried out by the Association on behalf of Allottees: Non-compliance with site requirements of, for example, water catchment and felling of unsuitable trees on plots, as well as post-tenancy clearance, necessitate extra work. There was agreement that this work should be paid for by the plot holder concerned. L. Laubeova suggested payment of a deposit, but it was felt that this would have to be large to cover likely costs. A. Young suggested structured charges for the work, and it was agreed that the committee would produce a plan of charges to be used henceforward.

9. Brewster Cup: C Cavey, R Adams, B Whaley and I Matten to choose this year's recipient of the Brewster Cup, to be awarded for the most improved plot.

10. AOB: Bill Whaley has been invited to attend an OCC course to become a Master Composter, with responsibilities to promote composting practices generally. Bill also made the offer of mentoring for anyone who wants, like him, to win the Allotment Association prize.

Millview Garden Centre in Wheatley offers a 10% discount to allotment holders, on proof of membership.

Thanks to all who attended!