

## Minutes of LRRHAA Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, 8 November 2023 • 19:30 • Rose Hill Community Centre

### Officers in Attendance:

Ian Matten	Co-Chair
Nick van Hear	Co-Chair
William Beinart	Trustee
Catherine Gibb	Trustee
Arnold Harpin	Treasurer
Lorin Watt	Secretary
Garth Bottomley	Committee Member
Devendra Khimding	Committee Member

1. **Apologies.** Adrienne Hopkins & Paul Wavell
2. **Minutes of the 2022 AGM** were approved and signed off by Ian Matten.
3. **Matter Arising.** No matters were outstanding from last year's meeting.
4. **Chair Report** (Ian Matten). LRRHAA and other Oxfordshire allotment associations experienced **break-ins** in 2023. We also had some pilfering of tools and produce. A log is kept of these incidents. Members are asked to report any theft or problem, however small. Few **working parties** were held because there was not a great deal of maintenance work to do. The only major task was replacement of a 40-metre section of piping where it seems a digging fork had punctured the original. The chair highlighted some rules and good practices we need to observe:
  - Members should not trespass on others' plots, even if they appear deserted or neglected;
  - Footpaths should be maintained between plots, and the area between plots and roadways trimmed and kept tidy by the neighbouring plot holder;
  - The gate should be kept locked, and anyone requesting entry without a key challenged;
  - Water catchment is required on all sheds;
  - Litter should be taken home, not left on or beside plots;
  - Water should be used sparingly and only when necessary;
  - Members are asked report unusually damp ground that may signal a leak.

**Thanks to** Colin and Terry for tending the grass, those helping with shop deliveries (often at short notice), Arnold for accounting, rent collection and sorting out the plumbing, Lorin for administration, Phil for liaising with Feltham, and William for working helping with water conservation efforts and collecting pallets and water butts.

5. **Treasurer Report** (Arnold Harpin). The healthy surplus of £ 657.04 reflects higher rent income due to efficient re-letting by Paul, an increase in strimmer use over rent years, and lower-than-expected water usage, despite the leak. Members were reminded that the odd legacy term "committed surplus" refers to the balances carried over from previous years; the "uncommitted surplus" is the current year's surplus. In connection with the suggestion, also proposed last year, that the LRRHAA account be converted to interest-bearing, Arnold explained that we had expected to open a new account as a Cooperative (see 9 below) this year. The committee had agreed that time-consuming paperwork to alter the current account's status was not warranted.

6. **Lettings Report.** Paul was unable to attend, but reported there are now 13 on the waiting list and that we recently gained two new members.

7. **Secretary Report.** None was required.

8. **Shop Report.** Lorin thanked all the volunteers who keep the shop open as a service to members. This year saw a profit of £ 96.00. The committee decided not to request a donation from the shop this year because the Association's current surplus seems adequate to needs. Cathy pointed out that shop profits may be a little lower than usual due to recent investment in stock.

9. **Lease and Association Structure Update** (Nick van Hear). The Oxford and District Federation of Allotment Associations has been negotiating new lease terms on our behalf with Oxford City Council since before September 2021, when our old lease ran out. Although several areas of disagreement have been resolved, responsibility for maintenance of site infrastructure (mainly fences) remains a sticking point. The possibility of a joint insurance policy for all sites to cover accidental damage was queried at the most recent ODFAA meeting. It is now clear that OCC will deal only with sites that are incorporated. At last year's AGM we agreed to apply to incorporate as a Cooperative. This is still the plan. The ODFAA has helped not only with negotiations, but by bringing down costs and preparing templates for the rules governing coops. We are likely to need a General Meeting sometime in the second half of 2024 for members to approve the legal status change.

10. **2023 Water Campaign** (William Beinart). Following the last year's AGM, subsidized water butts were made available at £ 20.00. The take-up on this offer has been disappointing, especially given that only about one in five sheds properly collecting water has more than one butt. WB rehearsed the benefits of collecting rainwater: (1) less dependence on mains water reduces our water bill, which is by far our biggest cost; (2) collection is more environmentally-friendly than the use of mains water; (3) water collected by individuals is not subject to seasonal (Nov - April) or daily (11:00 - 15:00) restrictions, so it is possible to look after early sowings. It is desirable to have personal reserves should water ever be officially restricted due to drought. Constraints were also mentioned: Those working half or quarter plots that do not have sheds understandably may not wish to invest in special structures, nor does the association welcome a proliferation of sheds. WB has been investigating alternate means of collecting water and has also spoken with other local associations about their solutions to this common resource problem. Rostam noted that we can try to ensure incoming members are aware of the differential water requirements of plants. Further suggestions for means of conserving and collecting water are always welcome. Arnold does monitor usage periodically throughout the summer to identify any anomalies, such as might arise from leaks or damage to pipes.

11. **Changes to Constitution/Rules.** No changes were proposed.

12. **Election of Officers** (Cathy Gibb). All but one of the current committee members stood for re-election and were confirmed. Many thanks to Terry, who stood down, for his past service. Two new members were unanimously elected: William Alden and Rostam Saadat. Welcome to both! William and Cathy agreed to stay on as Trustees as long as needed this year.

13. **Appointment of Auditors.** The accounts have been audited by Cathy; one additional member will be asked to review them.

14. **Recommendation for 2024-25 Rents.** No change to the current rent of £ 32.00 per full plot was proposed.

**15. AOB.**

Philippa mentioned that she has pallets she would like to use for water collection, but has had a problem recruiting a builder. If there is anyone who might help for a modest fee, kindly get in touch via [Irrhaasecretary@gmail.com](mailto:Irrhaasecretary@gmail.com).

One very large cherry tree needs to be taken down and quite a few other trees around the site need to be cut back before they become problematic. Once leaves have fallen, Paul and Ian will identify the trees needing attention. We have the funds to use a specialist where necessary.

Phil, who has liaised with Feltham, a construction company working locally, explained that it is best to make a specific request for assistance, whether in cash or kind. He will ask them to deliver more pallets to us for members' use.

**16. Date of next AGM.** Wednesday, 6th November 2024.

**2023-24 LRRHAA Committee**

Ian Matten	Co-Chair
Nick van Hear	Co-Chair
William Beinart	Trustee
Catherine Gibb	Trustee
Arnold Harpin	Treasurer
Paul Wavell	Lettings Secretary
Lorin Watt	Secretary
Dzmitry Batrakou	Committee Member
Garth Bottomley	Committee Member
Devendra Khimding	Committee Member
Rostam Saadat	Committee Member