

WITNEY ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 1 MAY 2012

Present: Geoff Branner (Chairman), Andy Howells (Vice Chair), Maggie Perrin (Secretary)
Margaret Eadle (Treasurer), Caroline Brett, Mark Richmond, Daphne Hill, Ray Harris

Tenants: See attached list

Apologies: Juliette Smith, Dave Mace, Mr and Mrs Warren

Geoff welcomed tenants and Councillor Duncan Enright to the meeting and thanked the trustees of Cogges Farm for hosting the event.

1 Minutes of meeting held on 7 July 2011 were approved.

2 Matters arising – there were no matters arising

3 Chairman's Report

“Well we got there in the end. Trying to negotiate with Witney Town Council has been a bit like swimming through treacle, but finally, after much hard work by Andy Howells and Maggie Perrin in particular, we got our agreement.

“As I informed the Association nearly two years ago, we have left all major liabilities with the Town Council and only taken on those which would never leave us with unaffordable bills. In addition we have seen some improvement made, such as the removal of a large leylandii hedge that was sucking the life out of the adjacent plot at Newland, installation of water at Newland and some boundary repairs.

“As before, the committee has met monthly throughout the year to carry forward the affairs of the Allotment Association and I would like to thank all of them: Maggie Perrin, Secretary, Margaret Eadle, Treasurer, Andy Howells, Vice-Chairman, Caroline Brett, Daphne Hill, Ray Harris Alan Lawrence, Dave Mace and Mark Richmond for their help, support and wise counsel.

“Rules for voting: in essence it is one vote per tenancy so joint holders of a plot or half plot have one vote between them, holders of more than one plot still only have one vote.

“Appointment of Auditors: The committee has so far failed to find an alternative auditor since the last one recently withdrew his offer. We are therefore looking for a volunteer - who can be an allotment holder but NOT a committee member – to take on this task. If anyone would be prepared to do this please let Maggie Perrin know at some point after the meeting. In the meanwhile I am formally proposing that the meeting remits to the Committee the authority to appoint the auditor.

“Setting of the Rent for 2013: The committee is very conscious of the considerable difference in rents charged at Lakeside, compared with Hailey Road and Newland and next year we will be bringing forward a detailed proposal of how we can reduce that discrepancy during the period of our lease. In the meanwhile because of the difficulty in creating an accurate budget without the experience of running the finances for a year we are proposing only a minor change. One additional cost we now have is membership of the National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners who in

return give us free legal advice, a seed discount scheme, discounted Association Insurance and a Website with specialist advice. This fee is £2 per allotment tenancy. We are proposing that for 2013 the Lakeside rent should remain at its current level and **include the NSALG** fee and for Newland and Hailey Road it should be the current level plus the £2 NSALG fee.

“Associate Members - Under the constitution we also need to set a fee for Associate Members. The Committee is proposing that we set the fee at NIL for this year since we have yet to decide what benefits Associate Members will be entitled to. We will bring forward a proposal about Associate Members to the Next Annual General Meeting.”

4 Treasurer’s Report

The treasurer reported a balance of £1107.92 before collection of rents. Start up fees to date £235.49

5 Transfer of Lease from Witney Town Council

The transfer of the lease took place on 1 April 2012. Trustees are Andy Howells and Maggie Perrin

6 Appointment of Auditors

Proposed: That the meeting remits authority to the Committee for the appointment of auditors

Proposed by: Geoff Branner
Seconded by: Tim Partridge and Martin Pearce
Carried nem con

7 Rents for 2013

Proposed: That there should be no increase in the rents for Lakeside and that Hailey Road and Newland tenants should pay additional £2.

Proposed by: Geoff Branner
Seconded by: Caroline Brett
Carried nem con

8 Election of Officers and Committee

Chairman	Andy Howells	Proposed by Geoff Branner Seconded by Caroline Brett
Secretary	Maggie Perrin	Proposed Geoff Branner Seconded Caroline Brett
Treasurer	Margaret Eadle	Proposed Geoff Branner Seconded Maggie Perrin
Committee	Daphne Hill Ray Harris	HR LS

Mark Richmond	HR
Mary Killick	LS
Barry Fenton	NL
Dave Mace	LS

Dispute Panel	Tim Partridge	LS
	Linda Evans	LS
	David Barber	LS
	Janet Garrison	LS
	Judith Legood	NL
	Mr C Newitt	HR

9 Any Other Business

- 9.1 Mrs Jones Plot 19 Lakeside asked what action was being taken about plots which are not being worked. She also expressed concerns re the overhanging boundary hedge and ditch between Lakeside Flats and the allotments on the north side of LS.
- 9.2 Other Lakeside tenants expressed concern regarding plots being used to store timber and building supplies.
Geoff Branner responded that tenants need to notify the secretary in writing about such concerns, giving details and plot number.
Caroline Brett explained the legal implications pertaining to the eviction of tenants, namely that tenants cannot be evicted during the growing season which runs from 6th April to 29th September.
- 9.3 Concern was also expressed re the problem of pests and vermin at Lakeside. The committee is looking into the costs of carrying out pest control.
- 9.4 A tenant queried what had happened to the £400,000 allocated for new allotments in the town. £4000 of this money has been spent on maintenance at allotment sites (this is believed by the committee to be closer to £20,000). Councillor Duncan Enright said that a close eye was being kept on the remainder of the monies to ensure it is spent on the acquisition of new sites.
It is understood that the 80 new allotments included in the development plan for North Curbridge will be funded by the developers and not from the £400,000.
- 9.5 In response to a question about where people live Geoff Branner stated that, in view of the current waiting list, tenants who move away from Witney would not be eligible to extend their tenancy nor would non-Witney residents be eligible to join the waiting list.
- 9.5 Andy Howells proposed a vote of thanks to Geoff Branner the retiring Chairman
Maggie Perrin, Secretary was presented with flowers and wine as thanks for her work during the year.

Date of next meeting Wednesday 1 May 2013