

WITNEY ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019

Witney Bowls Club – Station Lane – Witney.

Minutes of the meeting

1. Apologies for Absence

S Sutton, C Hovard, B Fenton, C Billington, T Arnold, A Kendrick, S Cotrell, J Fisher, T Brown

2. Minutes of the AGM held on May 2nd 2018

Agreed as a correct record of last year.

3. Matters arising from the minutes:

Lakeside toilet fence still be fixed.

Trees to be trimmed – JH to be contacted (RM to contact TC)

Water trough needs attention – Tenant to let MK which one.

4. Chair's Report of 2018/19

I want to begin by thanking the Committee - David Barber, Lynne Berry, Brian Bloomfield, Barrie Fenton, Claire Johnson, Mary Killick and Row Martin– for their help and support throughout the year and especially our Treasurer, Margaret Eadle, who as well as managing the finances has continued her battle with Castle Water over their estimated bills. Claire had done sterling work as our Secretary and Row has managed our waiting list and liaised with Paul Downes, our webmaster. I want to place on record my gratitude to them all.

Last year I had to report that some committee members had been on the receiving end of rudeness and aggression from some tenants and I regret to have to tell you that this bad behaviour has not gone away. I have, myself, been sworn at and had my integrity impugned and that does not feel great. It is a tiny minority of tenants who behave in this appalling manner; the vast majority of you are unfailingly courteous and polite. But I must remind tenants, as I said last year, that we are all volunteers on this Committee, giving freely of our time and effort. If we aren't meeting your exacting standards you can replace us here at the AGM or even volunteer to join us and share the workload. But it is unacceptable to be curt and rude to any of the people who volunteer their services. It may come to a time when the Committee has to propose a rule change making forfeiture of tenancy the consequence of such behaviour, although we are not proposing such a change this year.

I want to acknowledge too all the hard work Paul Downes has done in looking after our website which is now accessible on any device. Paul has done everything he can to keep the site up to date.

For the first time our Disputes Committee had to meet during 2018/19 to decide

on an issue brought by a tenant. The Committee would like to place on record our thanks for their very careful consideration of the issue and for their recommendations for our rules, one of which is to be considered by this AGM shortly. Adjudication in problematical matters is no easy task and we are grateful to them for the time and effort they put in to this process.

This year has seen some prodigious feats of gardening at Lakeside where plots that resembled jungles have been taken over, tamed and brought back into production. Efforts have also been made to create a community hub there and I would like to place on record the thanks of the committee to all who took part in that. The Hailey Road Community Centre has continued to provide tea, coffee and squash for tenants and their children, and has played host to a number of events involving the pizza oven and BBQ. Incidentally, our next event will be an Easter egg hunt for the children on the Sunday before Easter, with tea and cake for the adults from 3 till 5. I am aware that colleagues at Lakeside and Newland are hoping to arrange events on those sites too and the Committee will ensure that details are put onto the website as soon as things are confirmed by the organisers.

Last year I reported the discovery of asbestos at Newland, and that the cost of dismantling and removing this material by specialist company would be £900. In the event a tenant offered to remove the asbestos himself using the correct procedures and thereby saved us this cost. The committee paid all expenses incurred and gave him some gardening vouchers in gratitude for his efforts to do this. We have since discovered a small amount of asbestos at Hailey Road and will be taking steps to remove this soon.

During the year we have been involved with Witney Town Council in discussions about the proposed allotment site off Curbridge Road alongside the dual carriageway. We have given WTC our suggestions for how to create an inclusive community with plots for mobility impaired gardeners and appropriate facilities. When we get any definitive news we will place it on the website. WTC has also acknowledged that the fencing at Lakeside will require complete renewal at some point in the near future and that a proposal for this is going – slowly – through the Council's processes. They are also going to replace the vehicular access gate at Hailey Road to include a pedestrian gate so that we will be able to restrict access to the general public, although to achieve this we have had to make a financial contribution to the work.

This year Row Martin has offered to represent us on the Witney in Bloom group and we will let people know more about what is planned as details become available.

I cannot conclude this report without thanking our Site Wardens who do so much to make out three allotment communities work: Brain Sykes at Hailey Road, who not only maintains "The Wombles" but has done so much to help new tenants by rotovating plots, removing diseased trees and being so positive at all times; Barrie

Fenton at Newland for showing new tenants around and turning water off and meter reading; and Dave Mace at Lakeside for minor repairs and similar water control. Ideally we would like a second Site Warden for Lakeside so if anyone would like to volunteer for this please make yourself known at the end of the AGM.

And, finally, after 2 years as Chair, I shall be standing down and taking a break from front-line duty – and it has, on occasions, felt like being in the trenches whilst under fire from the enemy. However, I will continue to volunteer as a site representative for Hailey Road and support the Committee in our efforts to create a harmonious, friendly and respectful community of allotmenters.

Geoff Branner
3rd April 2019

5. Treasurer's Report: Please see report.
End Balance: £7944.30
The books have been audited.

6. Proposed Changes to the Tenancy Agreement

- a. *insert a new paragraph 3.2: "Tenancies may be held jointly with relatives of the first degree – husband/ wife/ brother/ sister/ son/ daughter/ parent – but this shall entitle them to only a single vote per tenancy at meetings. Joint tenancies may only be dissolved and the tenancy passed on to one party when the tenancy has been held jointly for a minimum of 3 years"; and re-number paragraphs accordingly.*
- b. *Add to 5.2 "except in accordance with rule 3.2"*
- c. *Add to 8.1.5: "save that a tenant in arrears for between 41 and 50 days may regain the tenancy by paying a late payment fee of £10"*

A - In the past there was only allowed 1 tenant per tenancy. This has arisen from disputes committee to be discussed this rule change. This has to be looked at so that it can not be abused which is why we suggest 3 years.

Proposal from the committee – carried without opposition.

B – 5.2 needs to be amended (only 2 people should be allowed on the tenancy) - carried without opposition.

C – tenants will have normal 40 days to pay – you will then have a late payment fee – and then if they have not paid they will be given a termination of tenancy.

Tenant – suggesting all newsletters by post. The floor expressed that they had no idea – carried without opposition.

Highly Commended Medals2018

G Butler Snr./ J Sibley / R Parker /D Forster/ M Chambers / C & L Billington / I Matsers / W Popplestone / S Sutton / Busby & Shakles / T Arnold /H Whittaker / L Simons / F Bateman / J Gilmore / M Harley / R & K Wrapson .

Site Runners-up 2018

Hailey Road Runner-Up 2018 Graham Mathias
Newland Runner-Up 2018 Stephen Freeman
Lakeside Runner-Up 2018 Robert Dow

Site Winners 2018

Hailey Road Winner 2018 Sheila Stevens
Newland Winner 2018 Heather Smith
Lakeside Winner 2018 Colin Hovard

Overall Winner 2018 – Mr Hovard - Lakeside

8. Election of Officers and Committee Members to serve for 2019/20

- a. Chair - Nomination and seconded - Mary Killick
- b. Vice-Chair – Nomination and seconded Lynne Berry
- c. Treasurer - Nomination and seconded Rachel Barber
- d. Secretary - Nomination and seconded Row Martin
- e. Tenant Liaison Officer - Nomination and seconded David Barber
Nomination and volunteered John Cooper
- f. Minutes and Agenda Secretary – Nomination and volunteered Lyn Jones
- g. Committee Members – Committee – Barrie Fenton, Geoff Branner, Tim Brown, Clare Johnson, Brian Bloomfield,
- h. Disputes Panel (minimum of 4) Rev Partridge, Sue Sibley, Colin, Judith Leegood, Peter Killick.

9. Presentation of Gift to out-going Treasurer and Chair
Huge thanks to Margaret Eadle for being treasurer for 8 years.
Huge thanks to Geoff Branner for being chair.

10. Any other Business:

Lakeside community shed not being used to date. Any suggestions.
Proud of what we have at Hailey Road.

Data protection act – we need to have permission or personal details to be used to consent if not you will need to go to the website and or notice board.

Thank you for your attendance

Attended by 58 members from all 3 sites.