

21<sup>st</sup> September 2021

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Witney Allotments Association (WAA)  
held on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021 at 7:00pm at the Bowls Club, The Leys, Witney.**

Item	Discussion
1	<p><b>Apologies</b> Ruth Taylor Lakeside Plot 47 All committee members present.</p>
2	<p><b>Acceptance of minutes of the AGM held on 03 April 2019</b> Minutes of the AGM held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019 agreed as an accurate record of the previous meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019.</p>
3	<p><b>Matters arising from the previous minutes</b> Proposed changes to the tenancy agreements – tenancies can be held jointly with close relative, but will only be entitled to one vote per plot. Dispute committee discussed – carried without opposition. Tenants have 40 days to pay plot fees and then face a late payment fee. Further non-payment of fees will lead to termination of tenancy. Terms and conditions voted in.</p>
4	<p><b>Chair's Report</b> I want to begin by thanking the Committee - Lynne Berry, David Barber, Brian Bloomfield, Barrie Fenton, Bob Bateman, Esther Leach, John Gannon and especially our Treasurer Rachel Barber – for their help and support throughout the year. Diane Newsham has done an excellent job after stepping in at very short notice to work as our Secretary and Andy Church who stepped in to be the deputy Secretary has also been doing a sterling job. Lynne has managed our waiting list most admirably and our Webmaster Paul Downes has been ruthlessly supportive behind the scenes. As well as the names mentioned here, a debt of gratitude goes out to the Site Wardens at all sites, Brian Sykes and Dave Mace. Last but not least, I would like to publicly thank Mary Killick for managing the WAA Committee, often in the face of adversity and even doing the Secretarial role too, before handing over to myself 1 year ago. I want to place on record my gratitude to them all for their unstinting support and hard work.</p> <p>At the last AGM in 2019 sadly, the Chair had to report that some committee members had been on the receiving end of rudeness and aggression from some tenants and I regretfully have to inform you that this bad behaviour has not gone away. However, it is a tiny minority of tenants who behave in this appalling manner; the vast majority of you are unswervingly courteous and polite. But I must remind tenants, as I have said many times throughout this year, that we are all volunteers on this Committee, giving freely of our time and effort. Indeed, if anyone considers that we are not meeting your exacting standards you can replace us here at the AGM now or even volunteer to join us and share the workload. But I would like to emphasise that it is unacceptable to be peremptory and terse to any of the people who volunteer their services. Indeed, it may come to pass that the Committee has to propose a rule change making forfeiture of</p>

tenancy the consequence of such behaviour, and it is something that is now seriously under consideration.

The impact of the Lockdowns is lost on no-one, the result of which has seen many families face severe hardship, ill health and most sadly the loss of loved ones and dear friends; I too fall into that bracket, as some of you may also do. Therefore, the fact that we have been unable to hold the usual run of community events, such as teas/coffees at Hailey Road and the planned similar events at the other sites too pails into insignificance. The impact of lockdown was also felt, with no competitions for the best kept allotment plot. However, we should not dwell on the past, but rather look forward with optimism and vigour. Everyone I know is keen to make every effort to rejuvenate this effort and make the allotment scene a thriving community-spirited pastime again. So as we move forwards, please make especial efforts to add that competitive edge to your horticultural efforts.

The new site off Curbridge Road, Windrush Place, is now open and all 55 plots have been let. Whilst it has only been open for a little under 2 months, all tenants are feverishly clearing their newly acquired plots of weeds and shaping their "small holdings" into well cultivated and productive areas. The site is well served with items such as a Composting Compound, a manure storage area, composting toilets, an equipment shed, a dedicated car park, a 6' perimeter security fence and a Community Hut for social events. The tenants are indeed extremely appreciative to have such a well-equipped site. It therefore goes without saying that the WAA extends particular thanks to the Witney Town Council and their team of dedicated staff who made this possible; in particular, I would like to place on record special thanks to John Hickman and Nicky Caley for making this site possible.

Notwithstanding the magnificent new site at Windrush Place, the WAA has been working feverishly with the WTC to make improvements across all sites. These improvements are ongoing and there are more to follow and include:

- A new 3-bay composting compound at Lakeside and an application under consideration for a new entrance gate.
- An application has been made for a new Asgard equipment shed for Lakeside.
- A new perimeter fence around the Hailey Road site, with new gates and locking mechanisms to be fitted.

An application has been made for a new Asgard equipment shed for Hailey Road. The WAA is working closely with the WTC to seek out possible sites for further allotments, so if anyone considers that they know of a suitable area, please let us know and we will pursue this with WTC. There are in excess of 190 people in Witney on the Waiting List for allotments, so the demand for new sites is at an all-time high.

Finally, the WAA is constantly on the lookout for more volunteers, in particular Site Reps and Site Wardens across all of our 4 sites. So, if you consider you have the necessary attributes and enthusiasm to become part of a very hard-working team, please approach anyone of us at the end of the AGM and we will gladly invite you into the team.

Thank you all for listening.

Barry Jessel

21<sup>st</sup> September 2021

5	<p><b>Treasurers Report</b> This report covers two years – 2019 and 2020.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2019</th> <th>2020</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Opening balance</td> <td>£7,994.30</td> <td>£8,689.04</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total expenditure</td> <td>** £3,310.26</td> <td>** £4,881.74</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total rental income</td> <td>£4,055.00</td> <td>£4,293.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Closing balance</td> <td>£8,689.04</td> <td>£9,174.74</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>** 2019 figures do not include a water bill of £847.49 received late, hence expenditure for 2020 appears higher.</p> <p>A review of rental fees is not required for 2022 as the year-end balance allows us to sustain ourselves without an increase. This will be reviewed again and brought to the AGM if an increase is recommended for 2023.</p> <p>The addition of Windrush Place will mean additional income and expenditure so future accounts will reflect a fourth site.</p> <p>Tenants were thanked for making their payments online.</p>		2019	2020	Opening balance	£7,994.30	£8,689.04	Total expenditure	** £3,310.26	** £4,881.74	Total rental income	£4,055.00	£4,293.00	Closing balance	£8,689.04	£9,174.74
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6	<p><b>Election of Officers and Committee Members to serve for 2021/22</b> Chair - Nomination and seconded - Barry Jessel Treasurer – Nomination and seconded - Rachel Barber Interim Secretary - Nomination and seconded - Diane Newsham Deputy Secretary - Nomination and seconded - Andy Church Committee Members – Barrie Fenton – Newland Bob Bateman - Newland Brian Bloomfield – Hailey Road Dave Barber – Lakeside Esther Leach – Windrush Place John Gannon – Lakeside Graham – Hailey Road Disputes Panel (minimum of 4) Sue Sibley and Colin Newitt confirmed they are happy to continue. LB to provide contact details for BJ to contact Judith Le Goode, Peter Killick</p>															
7	<p><b>Items for discussion</b></p> <p>a. Communications at sites BJ to arrange for screenshot of meeting minutes to be added to website to ensure plot-holders are kept up to date with WAA developments. Communication to be improved at sites by using noticeboard and notices in community sheds. Emails cannot be used for important updates and communications as not everyone uses emails. Facebook accounts were suggested but rejected as past accounts were misused and abuse aimed at committee and account administrators.</p>															

	<p>Mobile phones for site reps were discussed and rejected as this had been trialled before and had again led to volunteers being subjected to abuse. Letterboxes are available on all sites to get messages to site reps.</p> <p>b. Community equipment Inventory of equipment being carried out and gradually buying basic level of equipment for each site – petrol mower and strimmer. RB advised WAA should be able to absorb costs, including maintenance and insurance costs, without impacting on rents in the near future. Storage will be needed for communal equipment – Asgard sheds, which are solid steel and cannot be broken into, to be installed on all sites, where space allows. Already installed at Windrush Place and Newland – Hailey Road and Lakeside have been applied for, but during the meeting Hailey Road stated that they did not want an equipment shed, so this application will be withdrawn.</p>
8	<p><b>Vote of thanks to outgoing Vice-Chair</b> Presentation of gift to out-going Vice-Chair, Lynne Berry. Huge thanks to Lynne for the remarkable job she has done. Lynne has managed the waiting list and has always been our expert on the rules, regulations and terms and conditions of the WAA.</p>
9	<p><b>Any Other Business</b> Hailey Road having fence and digital lock installed and looking into having replacement for the five-bar gate. BB to let plot holders know code as soon as he can.</p> <p>Policy on bonfires Neither Witney Town Council or NSALG could give definitive answer – tenants to refer to the WAA terms and conditions for information on the months when bonfires are permitted. It was noted that bonfires should never be left unattended and that plot-holders should always ensure that they are considerate of the sites' neighbours.</p> <p>Site toilets Emptying of communal site toilets was discussed and it was agreed that it is not the site reps responsibility to empty the toilets.</p>
10	<p>Vote of thanks to Brian Bloomfield for organising and setting up the venue for the meeting.</p> <p>Thank you to all who attended. Attended by 29 members from all 4 sites.</p>

*B Jessel*

B Jessel

Co-Opted Chairman of the Witney Allotments Association (WAA)