

# **Kenilworth St John's Allotment Association 1983**

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**

**12 April 2021**

**Held on Zoom at 7.30pm**

### **PRESENT;**

Bob Shanks, (Chair), Ruth Harris, (Treasurer), Arthur Belgrove, (Plot Secretary) Janet Bates, Rhoda Bedington, Ken Chennells, Philip Gallaway, Sara Grafke, Dave Hutchins, Jurgita Liutkeviciute, Don MacFarlane, Diana Sandercock, Kelly Lucas, Peter Spencer and Rosemary Spencer (note-taker).

### **APOLOGIES;**

Tanya Webber, Toni Whelan, Stuart Williams, Jane Baker

### **WELCOME;**

Chairman Bob Shanks welcomed everyone and thanked them for joining the meeting

**MINUTES of 2019 AGM Meeting**, having been circulated, were agreed as being correct and were accepted, after a proposal by Bob Shanks, seconded by Arthur Belgrove.

*NB No AGM meeting was held in 2020 due to the Covid19 pandemic.*

### **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

### **PLOT SECRETARY'S REPORT**

In year 2019-20, 17 plots changed hands. This year 20 plots changed hands. 4 plots have been made into half plots and currently, there are 129 full plots, 44 half plots, all let. There is a waiting list of 25 people. Arthur thanked Chris Othen for the large amount of work which he had done in clearing plots which were previously unlettable. He has also done a lot of work at the top of track 1, which is now the ecological area.

Plot inspections are to be held on 25 April and 27 June at 10.15am. Arthur explained how the system works and will organise teams of people carry out the inspection. Volunteers are needed to assist.

### **SITE REPORT**

Ruth Harris said that a lot of money is spent each year on maintaining the site. The hedge is cut annually, and the ditch cleaned every two or three years. We spent over £1,000 on skips last year, removing stuff which tenants had brought on to the site and asked everyone not to bring anything on to their plot for which there was not an immediate use. It was suggested that we take a deposit from new members, refundable when they leave only if their plot is free of rubbish, or alternatively get them to remove the rubbish or charge them for doing so. It was pointed out that we had talked about these matters in the past, and the difficulties of enforcement when people leave through ill health or just refuse to co-operate. It was agreed that we will look at the tenancy agreement to see if it needs strengthening in this area. The plot inspections will look out for rubbish accumulations.

Our security is very poor. It is impossible to make the site completely secure, and whatever we do determined thieves and trespassers will come on to the site. The committee has discussed the installation of a sliding, electric gate operated by members having a fob. The cost of bringing electricity on to the site is in the region of £10k, and the gate about £7k. It was pointed out that in addition to the installation costs there would probably be considerable maintenance costs as the gate is open and shut so frequently. There was a discussion on this, and it was concluded that the outlay could not be justified when the items taken, such as rotovators, had a much lesser value. Tenants must secure their valuable belongings or keep them off site.

A 'No Entry' sign will be put up by the gate to deter trespassers. The boundary hedge has been improved by cutting and dropping dead trees to the hedge. Hawthorn or briar rose will be planted in any remaining gaps.

It was suggested that we have a secure container for where expensive items might be stored. Our existing shipping containers have been broken into before and are not that secure. It was not thought that this would work.

The school site will be developed for housing in the not too distant future, and how this will affect our security is not known and the matter must be kept under review.

We will have a 'marking day' when more valuable items can be marked, but this would not guarantee recovery in the event of theft. Smoke alarms might be installed by members which would go off in the event of a break-in.

**Gypsy Lane and the Main Drive.** There are a lot of potholes and tenants were asked to fill them in with the road planings by the gate on an ad hoc basis rather than having a working party when social distancing might be hard to manage. A further load of planings will be ordered soon. It was asked if the planings could be distributed on the various car parks down the main drive, as they are heavy to move. It was not thought that this would be possible, as they are delivered in a 20 ton truck. The football club has done a good job filling in holes in the past, but the present state of the track is down to us as the club has not been operating for a long while due to covid. We will ask them if they will help us distribute the planings nearer to the holes as they have a tractor on site and if not we will consider hire of equipment.

#### **TREASURER'S REPORT,**

Ruth expressed concern that the accounts have not been audited or checked for the past three years. The 2017/18 accounts are now being done this year on a voluntary basis, but she stressed that we really need a more permanent arrangement. After some discussion, Diana Sandercock volunteered to audit the books in future. The offer was accepted with alacrity!

We had £6,500 in the bank with all bills paid. We have received a very big water bill and decided to check if Severn Trent had read the meter as they claimed. When we looked at the inspection chamber where the meter is it was obvious that it had not been opened for many many years, and we believe that Severn Trent are billing us on the wrong meter. We are trying to get Severn Trent to do something about this, but not having much luck.

Ruth proposed the following resolutions which were passed unanimously:

- 1 That the committee be given discretion to increase the rents for 2022 should they think it necessary. We see no need for an increase at present but things may change and if the matter goes before an AGM it is a year before the increase can be charged. This was seconded by Arthur Belgrove.
- 2 That Diana Sandercock be appointed auditor. This was seconded by Peter Spencer.
- 3 The accounts for 2018/19 are currently being audited by Margaret Siggers, who acts as Treasurer for a group at St Nicholas Church. She has no direct connection with us, but works with Peter and Rosemary Spencer at the church. She has said that she doesn't want any payment, but Ruth felt that a token of our appreciation should be made. It was proposed that Ruth spend up to £40 on a gift. This was seconded by Arthur Belgrove.

#### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The following committee members have ended their three year term of office and have expressed their willingness to stand again; Bob Shanks, Ruth Harris, Peter Spencer, Nick Sumners, Tony Hickman, Chris Jordan and Terry Cripps. Ken Chennells was recently co-opted on to the committee and is willing to stand. Jurgita Liutkeviciute volunteered to join the committee. Chairman Bob Shanks suggested that we hold a block vote to include them all. This was agreed, proposed by Ken Chennells and seconded by Philip Gallaway. Passed unanimously

**HEALTH & SAFETY**

We have made the site as safe as we can to avoid the spread of Covid19, and are acting on the advice of the National Allotment Society. The risk assessment has been revised, and further work is being done on this following advice from Arthur. Plotolders were reminded of our safe working practices and procedures.

In late 2020 a trespasser came on to the site and tripped over a broken manhole cover. We were not aware of the breakage which has been repaired. Our insurers have been informed. We have heard nothing further from the trespasser, but a claim is possible. We have public liability cover.

**DISCUSSIONS**

Bonfires Janet Bates brought up the subject of bonfires. After discussion, it was agreed to advise plotholders to have them as rarely as possible and to heed weather conditions.

Surplus produce; Ruth suggested that surplus produce when available could be donated to a local food bank. This was agreed to be a good idea in principle, but would need to be reviewed and would need a person to co-ordinate.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

Bob Shanks closed the meeting at 8.45pm commenting that he thought that it had been a very successful meeting. Everyone agreed.

Signed .....

Date.....