

EALING DEAN ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

SUNDAY 18TH JANUARY 19.30

NORTHFIELDS COMMUNITY CENTRE

PRESENT: Retiring Committee

Crispin Harris, Simon Coleman, Jon Wilkins. Christina Fox , Christine Charles and Kim Tompsett

MEMBERS OF THE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY who signed in. There were plot holders from throughout the plot, a mix of ages and both new and established holders.

We had a quorum.

Plots represented:

149A;149B;159;162;166;172A;175B;176A;177;189;190;191;192;193;198;

204;207;208;211;214;217; 218;225; 230B;232B;236B;239A;240B;243A;243B.

SECTION A SUMMARY OF THE REPORTS FROM THE COMMITTEE

There was a welcome from Christina who explained that this was the Society's First Official AGM as the previous meeting was the establishment of the society.

ACTION POINT: The date of the AGM is not our financial year end which is April or the Allotment Tenancy Year end so it may be that our AGM needs to move later in the year. That would also mean that the current plot holders would be electing the committee for the year of the tenancy they are in rather than over two years.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

When the year end has happened(?) and the accounts have been audited they will appear on line but Kim gave a summary of sources of income and the bottom line of the accounts at the time of the AGM.

INCOME

- The Bank Account is with Lloyds. Because there were lots of problems opening the account we received compensation from them of £330
- The Lord Mayor's Clean up Fund gave us £1500 towards the Radbourne Walk project.

- We had a personal donation of £250 from a business man in Loveday Road. (Radbourne)
- Ealing Council gave us £1000 (Radbourne)
- Pathways has given us a Maintenance Grant of £3254 .
- Total £6334

EXPENDITURE

- We have spent £2638 on Radbourne Walk including buying a Chainsaw and a Strimmer
- £1826 on the Allotment including a Lawnmower.
- Skips have been shared between both projects. (In essence two on each)
- Insurance for the RHS Affiliation runs to the calendar so in effect we have paid two lots in one year.£338

This gives us a current balance of £1532.

SECRETARY'S REPORT.

STATS

We started with 133 people on the waiting list

There are currently 73 people waiting.

The reduction was due to cleaning up the list - contacting everyone to check if they still wanted a plot.

Six who were offered a plot have asked to be deferred – three because they have had babies since they got on the list.

So that means the person at the top of the list has been waiting since June 2011

We have signed up 30 new tenants since May 2014

We now have a site that has 100% occupancy

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We did three full site inspections

Sent out 15 non-cultivation letters

There were two terminations – one for non cultivation and the other for stealing and antisocial behaviour.

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We ran....

10 volunteer days with plot holders and people on the waiting list

and 14 days with Community payback participants.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

As well as Simon overseeing the Maintenance projects he records and adds the progress and the development on the web site. He gave a Summary as follows;

- 4 skips
- Creation of a Communal area with donated shed, a metal recycling area and a place for deliveries
- Osterley Garden centre is giving us free palettes and delivering them
- We have started repairing the Long Walk and created a grass mowing team
- Notice boards have been repainted
- We have started the pump project as a resource when the water is turned off
- The leaks in the water system are being repaired.
- The first Saturday in the month (except for January) are volunteer days.

Simon is also researching the history of the site and creating material on the web site.

JON'S REPORT ON THE WEB SITE.

Jon has taken over the Maintenance of the web- site and is creating a map for its navigation.

- We are using it for information, including the minutes, contact and blogs
- Jon is looking to raise the profile of the Allotment Society whilst maintaining confidentiality and accessibility for the Members of the Society.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.

Some of you that might not have been able to attend that first meeting might be wondering why we needed to form this society. With the lack of proper management there was a worry that we could lose the plots we all love. Plots were not cultivated and many not rented out and were overgrown. Plot 243 was on the spreadsheet as uncultivateable.!!!

Did it matter if the plots were getting shabby? If you stand in Northfield Avenue - on one side you'll see our allotments and on the other flats. Go back to 1970 and you would have seen allotments on both side. If we allowed this poor management to carry on we felt we could loose the plots forever. And some of us decided that we couldn't let that happen.

So why form EDAS? So that instead of being a bunch of individuals who happened to be ploholders on the same site - we could be a coherent group that could represent ploholders and the allotments. Once EDAS was formed we could ensure proper management and maintenance of the site.

But that meant we had to get Pathways to agree to self management - we had to show them that we were properly organised and the best way to do that was to form the society. In fact Pathways did pay for a one day course to show us how to form a society.

As it turned out it also meant that it helped us when we applied for grants. If you are a group with a constitution, a committee and a bank account with two signatures you are seen as more reliable and can apply for many more grants than a group without a constitution and a committee

So at the last meeting of around 40 ploholder here on the 14th January we agreed the constitution and elected a committee

On the 4th of June we signed an agreement with Pathways agreeing to the duties we would do and what they would stay responsible for.

(EDAS) committee will look after

- the waiting list
- plot inspections
- non-cultivation (and termination) letters
- maintenance of the site.
- While Pathways will do all the other admin and rent collection.

Importantly we are there to represent ploholders -As far as we know there will be no rent increase

I started by saying we started EDAS to protect the plots and I hope you agree that in the last 7 months (since we took over) we have made a cracking start. There is money in the bank and hopefully there is more to come - We've been awarded £2750 in extra grant money and hopefully we will have more to come this year.

Simon and I applied for £1000 from the council – and I should thank David Highton for pointing us in the right direction to get that money. We currently have a bid in for more money to replant and sympathetically manage the hedge and the Radbourne Walk.

We have a site that has 100% occupancy; BUT NOT QUITE 100% cultivation – but that takes time.

Over a year ago one plot holder said to me why should he maintain his plot when no-one else is maintaining theirs. That attitude seems to be going as new plot holders enthusiastically start to remove weeds and tidy up uncultivated plots. People are starting to up their game. It is hard to have a bad plot if all your neighbours have a good one.

One thing I'm proud of is setting up the volunteer scheme. Christine and I visited Blondin Allotment to look at their composting toilet and they hold two volunteer days a year.

Community payback volunteers were very good at Clearing up or "Destroying Things"

As well as ploholders - I felt that it would be a good way to involve people on the waiting list – to give them a taste of what it is like to have an allotment .and perhaps even put them off once they realise that even a half plot it is a big commitment.

Not everyone agreed with using volunteers and I quote:

Please remove me from our email list. I am no longer interested in getting an allotment..... Letting people volunteer for work which you should be doing is digraceful. You should work harder in actually getting people allotments than waffling on about volunteering.It's just embarrassing.

Without the volunteering we would not have managed to get so many jobs done. I would like to thank any one here who has attended one of our volunteer sessions.

Yasmin – (and Simon) extra thanks for opening her house - making lunch for volunteers.

Then there is the committee – we don't agree on everything – which is a good thing. There is nothing worse than a cliquy committee who run it as their own mini empire. We always have good humoured and productive meetings. Not only that there are the ad hoc meetings on site to sort out problems as soon as possible.

When we had the break-in Christine walked the length of the site checking to see whose sheds had been damaged and liaised with the police. So I want to thank secretaries Christine and Crispin.

Thanks to Kim for her work as Treasurer .

I did want to mention that we sadly lost one committee member this year. Kim's husband Mark was a big character – he got the website up and running. But was involved in the original steering group meetings and all the committee meetings. if I remember one thing about him it was he always could find the funny side and the joke in a situation. It's a shame we never got to flex his barbeque skills.

Thanks to Jon for taking over where Mark left off, Simon for maintenance and to David, my husband, for taking photos and putting up with me talking about allotments especially as he has no interest in gardening.

So then what....

At the start of all this self management I received an email from a plot holder –

~~Anne Fabing~~-plot 152A

I love my Allotment at Northfields ,the people i meet when i'm there and the pleasure of growing my own Veg and Fruit .

I would love to see the Allotments being better maintained, and those allotments not been attended by owners asked to give them up, and empty plots being let more quickly, i'm sure the new proposals your putting forward to Pathways will make a big improvement .

Passion and dedication to improving what we already have should turn around a neglected site into a flourishing haven .

Hopefully she can see that we have made a cracking start on all the things she outlined

I can't promise i will be able to cut down hedges or clear footpaths but i will do my best to make our allotments a proud place to come to .

We do realize that not everyone can turn up for every event volunteer event – but I hope you will support us in whatever way you can whenever you can – in order to make Northfields the best it can be.

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SECTION B

Resignation of Committee members and Election of Officials.

The retiring Committee resigned and were all re-nominated and elected with the addition of Mardien Zoetmulder (and a co-opted Member?)

SECTION C

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Root stock of fruit trees. Common sense should tell plot holders that we should not be planting full-sized trees because of shade and inconvenience to other plot holders. Guidelines rather than a rule.
- If a plot holder wants bees they should seek advice from our plot holder with bees and also they need to do a beekeeping course. *ACTION POINT HOW MANY HIVES ARE WE ALLOWED?*
- Chickens are more doubtful because of the foxes on the site.
- *ACTION POINT. WHAT WOULD BE THE COST BENEFIT AND PRACTICALITY OF BULK BUYING NEMATODES FOR SLUG REPELLENT?*
- *ACTION POINT. WE NEED TO CLARIFY AND CHANGE THE RULING ON BONFIRES.*
- *GREENREDEEM POINTS CAN BE DONATED TO EDAS.*