



Horfield & District Allotments Association

Company number 04672027

The Association is registered with the DATA PROTECTION AGENCY

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting
Monday 17th February 2020
At B&A Church Hall, 160a Gloucester Rd Bristol BS7 8NT**

Notice and Agenda for the Meeting were circulated to all members in the January 2020 newsletter. Tea and coffee were available prior to the Meeting

Present: Neil Pirie (Chair) and Committee members Pete Clee, Phil Hopkins, Steve Soffe, Roger Hake, Sarah Newns, Tony Jones, Joe Baxter, Wendy Hawthorn, Dominic O'Dwyer, Debbie Bradley. Richard Orton from Ashley Down Allotments Assoc attended as an observer. Approximately 55 H&DAA members attended (and one dog).

1. Apologies: Kirstin Whimster, Pete Bill, Kath Sadler, Joe Mc Sorley, Jamie Darke, Roger Chainey, David Lodge, Jill O'Dwyer, Ewan Watson, Chiara Mitchell, Luke Kreczko, Janet Hathway (BCC Allotments Officer)

2. Minutes of the 2019 AGM were distributed to all present and were accepted on a proposal by Tony Jones, seconded by Dick Probert.

3. Matters arising: Pete Clee responded to a question concerning the water supply to the Community Orchard, which is being addressed. Neil Pirie also confirmed that the AGM does not include a report on the Community Orchard as it is not part of the H&DAA.

4. Report from the Chairman on behalf of the Executive Committee: Written and presented by Neil Pirie.

- The padlock combinations on H&DAA locked field gates are changing on March 1st 2020. Members were reminded of the new number which is to be found on the Jan 2020 Newsletter.
- Members were reminded of the valued work undertaken by the Association's field representatives. The Chair thanked the representatives who retired this year - Phil Hall from Grahams, Katharine Alsop from Birchall and welcomed new representatives Helen McCreadie (Grahams) and Joe Baxter (Birchall). The other field reps were introduced - their contact details are found on the newsletter or through the website.
- In the past year the H&DAA has streamlined the policy for managing plots that do not meet the level of cultivation and maintenance required by the tenancy agreement. An appeal process has been introduced and three appeals were held in the last year – which have been successful in that management of those plots has improved.
- The Association has bought strimmers for Birchall Field and the Golden Hill site this year. A wall has been rebuilt on Graham's field. Member Jeremy Isles thanked the Association for money spent which has improved maintenance.
- Phil Hopkins is piloting new 10cm sq. plot number signs - if successful to be rolled out to plots on all fields. This will enable clearer identification of individual plots and also assist members in meeting the requirements of the tenancy agreement.
- Members were reminded that BBC *Springwatch* is looking for volunteers prepared to allow cameras into their garden to capture wildlife over a period of weeks. Details of who to contact are on the H&DAA website.
- Members were reminded that Ashley Down shop is open 10.30-12.00 Sats and Suns, for allotment supplies. Details are on the website.
- H&DAA currently has 19 plots vacant. There are waiting lists for each field. The Plots occupancy overall is 97%.
- The Chair outlined some dates of historical legislation pertinent to Allotments in the 20th Cent.

5. H&DAA and the environment: Lucy Vilarkin (member and author of the H&DAA plastics strategy) outlined her increasing interest and concern about the use and environmental impact of plastics over 20 years of gardening. Lucy has researched and written the H&DAA plastics strategy which includes positive steps to reducing and reusing plastics and ways of growing differently to avoid plastic use. She works alongside Charlotte Lloyd from Bristol University who is researching soil use and soil sampling. The strategy proposes initiatives to survey plastic use (probably via email); working alongside Bristol Waste to explore responsible recycling and disposal; creating one or more 'demonstration plots' to experiment with alternatives; establishing contact with local food partners. Lucy asked

for interested volunteers to sign up to become involved. Volunteers can also contact Lucy through the website, where the plastics strategy can be found.

Discussion included questions about where non-plastic growing pots can be purchased (St Werburghs City Farm or online); the dangers to wildlife (a bird was sighted on Golden Hill with a bottle wedged in its beak); where to take unwanted black plastic pots (some garden centres will take clean pots of specific sizes) - and reuse of pots within the allotment community. Concern was expressed that unwanted pots have been left outside allotment gates, probably in anticipation that they will be used by plotholders.

Tim Foster (H&DAA member) outlined a proposal (**Resolution 1**) that

'all bonfires should be banned from all H&DAA sites throughout the year, except for the Golden Hill community bonfire on 5th November'.

The proposal arises from personal and environmental concerns. Instead of burning and creating unnecessary CO₂, prunings can be snipped up and used as a compost additive, twigs can be used to construct a sanctuary for wildlife, green waste can be composted and perennial weeds killed through drying or black bagging and composted.

Diseased waste can be disposed of through the council waste service or through a very hot heap. Old pallets and planks can be used for constructing compost heaps and wildlife areas.

Summary of discussion - focused around the difficulties in creating a successful hot heap; in disposing of treated wood; of managing large quantities of material. An alternative solution was proposed – using shredders to get around the problems. The H&DAA has a shredder – however it is cumbersome and noisy. Large branches can be shredded, but green waste clogs. Shredders can also cause pollution.

The Chair outlined the alternative resolution, recommended by the H&DAA Committee, (**Resolution 2**) that:

'bonfires should be banned on all members' individual plots on all H&DAA sites, but that a limited number of communal bonfires, organised by Field Representatives' be allowed on specific days between Nov 1st and Feb 28th each year'

Summary of discussion – the Community Orchard would like to continue with bonfires x 2-3 in the winter as they generate a lot of cuttings; they have gone to a lot of trouble to control and reduce weeds. The hedging Team has a huge amount of waste – this is stored until an appropriately timed communal bonfire. Clarification was made that communal bonfires would be held on individual *fields*, bonfires on individual *plots* would be banned. Large bonfires create far greater heat, thus burn faster with less smoke. Concern was expressed that bonfires create a lot of smoke and as such present a health issue particularly to individuals with lung conditions. A cap on the number of communal bonfires was suggested – however, as these would be under field representative guidance, and as volunteers their time is limited, the number of bonfires would inevitably be kept to a minimum.

6. Resolutions. Tellers were appointed and members were asked to vote on Resolution 2, followed by Resolution 1:

Votes against Resolution 2 totalled 28 (including proxy votes)

Votes in favour of Resolution 2 totalled 28.

Votes against Resolution 1 totalled 34

Votes in favour of Resolution 1 totalled 30

In light of the closeness of the vote totals, the Chair referred the issues back to the next Committee meeting for further discussion.

7. Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report

Copies of the Statement of financial position and the Detailed Income Statement to year ended 30/9/2019 were circulated. Phil Hopkins (Treasurer) informed the meeting that the accounts show the Association to be in a healthy financial position.. Ongoing costs such as boundary repairs have been met and in the year ahead there will be further costs including maintenance of haulways. The accounts were proposed for acceptance by Peter Newley and seconded by Rose Boswell – and accepted by the meeting. Copies of the report can be obtained from the Treasurer. The meeting agreed to reappoint Stone and Co as auditors .

8. Election of Directors: There are currently nine Directors, three of which - Joe McSorley, Pete Clee and Jamie Darke - who have served for three years, have agreed to continue. There are no new appointments.

9. Community Garden Report: A brief report was given by Pete Clee. The Harvest Fair was well attended despite the rain, as was the Nov 5th bonfire. There were two successful wreath-making days before Christmas. Volunteer attendance at the Community Garden remains strong.

The recent storms have severely damaged the 'Tower of Power' and the stanchions beneath are rotten. Pete is researching options for an alternative source of power.

10. BCC Allotments Officer: Janet Hathway was unable to attend the meeting but sent a report. There is no further news concerning the renewal of the Lease- 'The current situation is that the lease is being "held over" which means that H&DAA hold the land on the same terms and conditions until they are changed. An improvement would be to have all 4 sites in one lease (which would give substantial savings in legal costs) and to extend the term to 25 years' .

Janet also drew attention the Allotments Forum. 'This group is made up from volunteers who are tenants from BCC managed and Association managed sites. The topics for discussion include city-wide issues such as rent increases. A sub-group has been working on updating the Allotments Strategy; a 10year plan informing the future direction and development of allotments throughout the City. This is still in draft form and will be sent out for consultation in due course. The Forum meets 4 times a year on the third Wednesday of January, April, July and October in the evening at City Hall. If you are interested in joining or would like to know more, please email the Secretary allotmentsforum@outlook.com' .

Copies of the full report can be obtained from the H&DAA secretary.

11. Presentation of prizes: The Chair introduced Phyllis Brooks who presented the prizes. Prizes were awarded as follows:

Ted Hill Challenge Cup (for the plot holder making the most progress in the 1st year of tenancy) was awarded to Clare Deering of Birchall field.

The Phyllis Brooks Award for outstanding service to the Association was awarded jointly to David Lodge (in his absence) for his supportive work on Birchall field and to Phil Hall who retired in 2019 after many years as Field Representative on Grahams Field.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked Committee and members for attending and closed the meeting at 9.20pm.