

WILDMOOR ALLOTMENT HOLDERS' ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 7th November 2023
Croft Bar, Peachcroft Centre, 7.30 pm

APOLOGIES –

Ian Cade, Lynn Barrand, David Bartlett, Alastair Lee, Becki Luff, Imam Khan, Steve Phipps, Nora Roche, Cathy Whittle. 62 attendees at the meeting.

MINUTES from AGM November 2022 –

Minutes have been circulated by email to members and were accepted unanimously as a true record.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (Rob Harrower) -

- What three years we have had since I have been chairman; break-ins, Covid, extremes of weather, hot, cold, wet, and a drought. I have enjoyed my time and thank you all for the help assistance given. Now is the time for new blood. We have had changes to the committee in the last year, and new members joining. I thank those past and present for their contributions. Often a thankless task and many hours of their own time put in.
- Our new groundsmen Ellis and Ken have done great work over the year and drew compliments from the Mayor on the tidiness of our site and the approach road. We are still looking for a third groundsman!!!
- Congratulations to our winning plot holders. In the overall Abingdon competition, we won both the 10 pole and 5 pole awards. Mel Nash won the 10 pole and Chris Pagett the 5 pole. For our Wildmoor competition the 10 pole runner up was Alex Armstrong, and the 5 pole runner up was Yun Huang. Both Chris and Mel received a cup and plaque at the Abingdon presentations in October. Incidentally the presentation is open to all, so when we swipe the board next year, feel free to drop in and support our winners! Presentations of certificates were made this evening.
- At Drayton Allotments, their CCTV captured three men opening their combination locked gate. They then targeted specific sheds and stole £2,000 plus worth of equipment. Someone had clearly given them the combination. We are placing dummy cameras and this is an agenda item, but I would urge you to vote for a real camera or cameras to be set up at a point of entry purely to detect any UNWANTED visitors and also to allow the placing of the real camera to the committee's discretion. This would not be to monitor the comings and goings of plot-holders.
- We had a break- in to our sheds and Polytunnels in March and tools were stolen. Nearly every shed was searched and equipment placed on the track ready for picking up. Looks like a passing blue light made them run off.
- A good mower and strimmer has been purchased and is being used to good effect. There is more equipment we could buy to assist in the running of our site, if we had secure storage.
- The deer (and dear) fence has curtailed the nightly visitors, but one or two hoof marks have been seen recently, so the A34 side may have to be looked at this year.

- The hedge laying done by Mike Towndrow, the Earth Trust and team was superb and another year will make it look even better. Good for diversity, a good wind-break and pleasing to look at.
- I do not want to finish on a negative point, but we still have cars going too fast and electric ones creep up on you. Someone leaves the security gate unlocked regularly. If anyone has poorly fingers and has trouble using the lock please talk to the groundsman as there is a knack to shutting it properly, without the next person having to stand on their head to operate the lock. Not to mention allowing unwanted visitors into the triangle field.
- I arranged the order of 71 jumbo bags of mulch from Apsley Farm. In all five lorries with trailers delivered them. A very good discount was given. Hopefully someone will take this on next year.
- Special thanks to Julie Edge who saved my skin with her computer skills many times, and dealt with matters that did not reach me. Julie will be a difficult act to follow next year.

Next year will be better I promise. Adios Rob Harrower, Chairman.

SECRETARY'S REPORT (Julie Edge) -

- Firstly we must say a huge thanks to Rob for holding the fort over this last three quite difficult years. He has been a hard-working and supportive Chairman and we wish him well in his future allotmenting!
- We have held 7 committee meetings since the last AGM in November 2022 – unfortunately the new notice-board has not been made this year, but we are hopeful that it will be put up this winter to allow us to put up the minutes of the committee meetings for transparency. We did used to hold the meetings at Abingdon United Football Club but it became impossible as it got busier, so now we hold them in the function room at the Kings Head and Bell.
- We carried out a tree audit earlier this year and most members have kindly kept their trees under control and we have had few complaints. .
- Plot numbers –the Mayor was able to judge numbered plots this year! However, they seem to have gone missing again so we would be grateful if you could all make an effort to put something visible at the track end of the plot.
- The ancient hedge along the inner track was kindly laid during last winter by volunteers and the Earth Trust – who all did a great job. We are going to buy some extra saplings (cost approx. £50) as well as our own home-grown seedlings, to fill the gaps and they will be put in this winter. Please could plotholders adjacent to this hedge keep any items at least a meter away from the hedge to allow light and air to get at these new seedlings.
- BBQ – as you know we didn't hold our usual BBQ this year owing to me being unwell at a critical time and we also felt that once every two years is probably all we are going to be able to organise – unless someone would be able to step up to the committee specifically with a BBQ hat on!
- Constant stream (pun intended) of emails about taps being left on and gates being left open. This has reduced since the notices were put up at the tracks. Speeding has also been an issue – please remind any friends or contractors who are on the plots that they also need to stick to the speed limit to preserve the track. Also a pair of very

dangerous looking knives were left on the shelf recently – these were removed and are in the safe keeping of Digger.

- We find we are often short of committee members to take on some minor roles and so there is an agenda item to ask for more help on the committee.
- Ian Cade has kindly taken over the website management. The website continues to be viewed around 70-150 times each month, with the new plot information and the rules being the commonest sites looked at.
- Ken Wood, one of our hard-working groundsmen has produced a leaflet for new plot-holders to help them work out what do to with a new plot. This is on the website and is being sent to all new plotholders.
- In discussion with the council, all the new houses round the ring-road and south of Abingdon are OX14 post-codes and are within Abingdon Parish, and so will be eligible for plots.
- Thanks to all plotholders who have expressed their support over this year.

TREASURER'S REPORT (Oli Harker-Faraon)-

The association has £11,448.24 (last year £10,308.39) in hand, £2,434.67 of this is held as deposits

Outgoings -	£480	NSLAG membership
	£463.11	maintenance and equipment
	£1,029.36	site rent
	£70	stationery and web domain
	£65.24	AGM refreshments
	£184.40	Insurance
	£342.50	General running costs
	£2,351.38	Castle Water

Total expenditure - £4,985.99

Income -	£6.27	Bank interest
	£2647	Rents
	£847.97	Abingdon Town Council grant
	£630.37	Seed profit (income £3564.83 – expenditure £2934.46)
	£605.65	Deposits (minus returned deposits)

Total Income - £4,737.26

Income minus expenditure = - £248.73, plus starting bank balance of £11,696.97 =
Balance of £11,448.24

The Association is in good health financially. We might consider longer term projects to utilise council grant funding, as well as external sources. Please could all try to reduce our reliance on water (as this continues to be our largest expense).

SEED SECRETARY'S REPORT (John Hardie) -

- This year was similar to last year though all the figures are slightly larger. 80 members submitted orders worth £3573.90. Because of the discount we can then claim off Kings Seeds this generated a profit of £628.22 for our accounts. I sent off the order on 10th October. The seeds arrived on the 26th October.
- Fruit bushes and plants should be delivered to me late November / early December. Seed potatoes will be delivered to me late January/early February 2024. I will contact people by e-mail or phone when they arrive and they will then need to be picked up from our house.

John Hardie, 15 The Warren OX14 3XD, e-mail: wildmoorss@yahoo.co.uk
tel: 520977 and 07553151665

Water Usage - I have kept a record of monthly water usage since 2018 though the record for 2021 is incomplete because the meter stopped recording in June and wasn't replaced until November. Water meters measure in units of 1000 litres or cubic meters.

Year	Volume	Cost	(price per cubic meter)
2023	382	£676	1.77
2022	893	£1376	1.54
2021	unknown (faulty meter last year – stopped working in June)		
2020	682	£927	1.35
2019	525	£713	1.35
2018	669	£856	1.28

These figures are approximate and don't include any standing charges but shows that a wet summer has saved us about £700 despite a significant increase in unit price.

LETTINGS SECRETARY (Andrew James and Ian Manthey) -

From November 2022, there have been 18 new lettings this year, which is slightly fewer than previous years. There are currently 162 plots – 53 full plots and 106 half plots; full plots have declined and half plots increased. Also we have made our first 1/3 plots on plot 91. There are now 10 on the waiting list, and the maximum amount of time they are waiting is around 6 months. There are 4 empty plots which will be let in the next few weeks.

AGENDA ITEMS -

1. CCTV cameras

Bernard Fletcher proposed and Brian Godfrey seconded. Several dummy CCTV cameras will be placed on poles around the plots as a deterrent. The discussion was about whether to place a single working CCTV camera at one of the gates. Long discussion and points brought up were –

- GDPR regulations to be checked by the committee – Brian Godfrey agreed to look into this for the committee
- Contact should be made to Drayton Road allotments to ask about their use

- An email should go out to the membership letting them know so they have chance to leave if they would prefer (although the camera will not look at the plots)

It was agreed that a single camera would be purchased – vote For – 47, Against – 2.

2. New Tree Rule

A rule change was proposed by Julie Edge, Bernard Fletcher seconded. After long discussion, there was almost unanimous agreement (1 against) that this rule would be included. The tree rule will now read –

Any fruit bushes or trees shall be of a suitable size so as not to cause a nuisance to other plotholders re position, height, light and root invasion. Dwarfing rootstocks including M27, M9 and M26 are suitable. **Trees should be pruned by the plotholder annually to a maximum of 3 metres in height.**

3. New Committee members

A plea was made to the members to help on the committee as several members have left. Tony Hammond has left after many years of service, and Lynn Barrand has stepped down. More Groundsmen are required to share the load, as well as a new Chair and a Secretary elect (to take over next November). Matt Ashmall (plot 2b) kindly offered to help the groundsmen. Alistair Derrick (plot 84b) also kindly offered to join the committee. There was no offer of a Chairman, although Tim Hunt would be willing to share the role again.

4. Second Chippings Bin at the near end of the Allotments

This was proposed by Vic Butler and seconded by Sam Egerton. It was unanimously agreed to proceed.

5. Should the lettings deposit increase to £50 for each new allotment?

This was propossd by Andrew James and seconded by Ian Manthey. This provoked a lot of discussion. The reason for requesting is to make it more valued by new members so that we may have fewer plots left in poor condition. Members were not happy that the price would be the same for full and half plots. Also that members who did not have ready money would be put off from growing vegetables. After a long discussion voting was as follows – For 20, Against – 23. Therefore the deposit will remain at £30.

7. Storage Container

Ken Wood proposed and Vic Butler seconded. The background is more attempts and thefts this year and more expensive equipment purchased. A detailed proposal has been prepared by Ken, and it will be sited at the far end of the allotments next to the chippings bin. It may be possible to ask the council for half of the cost within the £2000 grant – Treasurer asking. This was passed almost unanimously – 3 against. The committee will take this further.

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS -

Chair – Rob has stood down at this meeting and there was no uptake by a new chairman.

Office Holders -			Approved by membership
Chair	Tim Hunt	willing to share with someone	Yes
Secretary	Julie Edge	willing to continue for one more year	Yes
Treasurer	Oliver Harker-Faraon	willing to continue	Yes
Lettings Secretary	Andrew James and Ian Manthey	willing to continue	Yes
Seed Secretary	John Hardie	willing to continue	Yes
Groundsmen	Ken Wood Ellis Mead	willing to continue	Yes

Committee members willing to continue and approved by the membership –
Bernard Fletcher, Ian Cade.

New Groundsman volunteered – Matt Ashmall

New committee member – Alistair Derrick

Members stayed for a social evening, paid rents and picked up seeds.

The meeting was closed at 9.00pm and a date for the next AGM will be in the third week of November 2023.