

Alers Road Leisure Gardens Association

AGM Minutes - 21st April 2023

Present	Apologies for Absence
Adrian Hawthorne – Chair	Mary Harrison
Debra Collins - Secretary	
John Hollands – Treasurer / Site Co-ordinator	
32 Members	

Min	Item
1.0	CHAIRMAN’S WELCOME
	The Chairman welcomed all members to the meeting, new as well as old.
2.0	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS AGM
	No AGM for 3 years
3.0	MATTERS ARISING
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As no AGM for 3 years, nothing relevant for ‘Matters arising’.
4.0	CHAIRMAN’S REPORT
	<p>AH thanked all the Committee for their work and other members who help to support around the site such as Gerry, Eddy and John, and John Harrison who manages our website as well as others who volunteer their time and services. For new members, Adrian explained that as a delegated site, we rely on the committee and members, for the day to day running of the allotment on behalf of the Council. Any new ideas and offers of help are always welcome. Adrian thanked Debra for taking on the role of secretary.</p> <p>We are a healthy and thriving community of allotmenters, with a constant waiting list. We are proud that we have a couple of charitable plots on site. Last year we came 2nd in the ‘Best allotment Site’ category for the Ruxley in Bloom competition. We are looking forward to the growing season and aspire once again to do well in shows.</p> <p>This is a good time to have an allotment plot, to have good quality and tasty fruit and vegetables, it is a means of good exercise, and always a chance to try different cultivars. With the current cost of living crisis and the increases in cost of fresh fruit and vegetables as well as the reported shortages in the supply chain.</p> <p>The water bill is our highest expense and we would like to encourage collection of rain water as much as possible. If anyone needs any support on setting up systems there is always someone on site who can give you ideas.</p> <p>Any surplus produce can be left by the seating area to share with others. But please do not leave rubbish as this then needs to be cleared by others, which is not fair or acceptable.</p> <p>We have a website which is managed by John Harrison. It would be good to promote the website. Members can write articles for the website and newsletter both are a good source of information. Martin Williams has</p>

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	<p>recently joined the committee. He has kindly agreed to manage our Facebook page, any topics / information can be shared on this via Martin. Adrian reminded ploholders that 'Open Access' was always available at Committee Meetings where anyone can address the Committee on any topic and that concerns / issues can be written in the diary which is in the toilet block and will be addressed by a member of the committee. Debra stated that a list of committee meetings were given on the last newsletter. John Holland reported that nothing was written in the diary last year at all.</p>
5.0	SECRETARY'S REPORT
	<p>DC shared that there are 14 people on our waiting list. The site is currently full. A couple of people on the waiting list are current plot holders who are waiting for the other half of their existing plot if / when it becomes available.</p> <p>Dates for meetings are on the current newsletter. Minutes are uploaded on to the website once they have been agreed by the committee.</p> <p>We are sending newsletters etc via email, if you are still getting a paper copy if you are able to share an email address please let me know.</p> <p>If anyone would like to write anything for the newsletter to let Debra know. Debra reiterated that if there are any incidences or anything that the committee need to know about, it should be written up in the diary which is kept in the toilet block.</p> <p>Permission was gained by everyone present for a photograph to be taken by Debra of the meeting and for it to be uploaded to the website.</p>
6.0	SITE CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site log book is kept in the Toilet Block, it was not used at all last year. The book needs to be used to record any incidences or matters that you would like the committee to know about. • A First Aid Kit is stored in the toilet block • Machinery on site for members to use, just ask a key holder. You will need to book a time that's convenient for both. If you use the machinery, please could you clean it before returning it. • There is a lot of site maintenance such as the manure bins, and shed. Always same members who help with the day to day maintenance. John asked if others could please help around the site even if only near their plot. Ray Mudie, said he would be happy to help. • Toilet – valuable facility, needs to be used with respect, only pee, pooh and paper to go into the toilet. • Fire guidelines – reminder recently sent out to all members. • Sharing areas – If you have anything that you can't use or you want to share please put things for others eg. Produce / tool. Please don't dump items that need disposing of. Recently have had to get rid of 4 large chairs. This is not fair on others.

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7.0	TREASURER'S REPORT
	<p>The 2022 accounts were shared with all attendees. John Hollands shared that our largest expenditure is for water, the bill was £3000 for last year. John explained the financial report and that the expenditure is what was expected. The association is in a strong financial position. John stated that the accounts are available for anyone if they wished to look at them.</p>
8.0	ADOPTION OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
	<p>The Annual Accounts were proposed by Roy Seymour and seconded by Ray Mudie. John thanked Kirsten Gibbs our Auditor and asked if she was happy to continue to audit our accounts, Kirsty agreed to audit the accounts for 2023, Adrian seconded this action.</p>
9.0	AFFILIATIONS
	<p>The meeting agreed to continue affiliation with the Bexley Federation of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners, cost is £5. John Hollands remains actively involved, but feels not efficient. In the past we have been affiliated with the RHS, however we get nothing for being affiliated. National Allotment Society (NAS), this would cost about £700 as we pay per member. We don't get anything for being affiliated. It was agreed by all members at the meeting that we would not affiliate with the NAS.</p>
10.0	ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE
	<p>Dave Knowles asked how many are currently on the committee. John explained there are 11 members on the committee. John named the members as below, and explained that there is a good mix of genders and ages Mandy Bearman, proposed voting the committee on block, seconded by Dave Knowles, there was a unanimous show of hands. Chairman Adrian Hawthorne Secretary Debra Collins Treasurer John Hollands. Committee members; Ray Mitchell, Eddie Haydon, Mary Harrison, Linda Hartard, Roy Seymour. John Young, Richard Collins, Martyn Williams.</p>
11.0	MOTIONS
	<p>2 motions received. 1st Motion – proposed by Ray Mitchell and seconded by Dave Knowles. 'Bonfires to be restricted to early morning and late afternoon, i.e.. Before 9am and after 4pm. This will allow plot holders to work their plot without being choked by toxic smoke'.</p>

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Eddy stated that this would not work for him as he does not drive and uses his bus pass which he is not able to use till after 9.30am, and he does not come up in the afternoon which means he wont be able to have any fires.

John Butt feels that this would be impractical. The smoke is due to trying to burn wet grass.

Steve said that people are having fires that break the rules, people need to follow the current rules before trying to set new rules.

John Hollands said that he had managed a large fire to clear large pieces where they have been clearing. It was a proper fire and did not have black smoke it needs to be managed properly.

JB – but time was not the issue.

Richard said that in the winter it can be dark at 4pm. Steve said that previously if someone was on site after dark the police would be called.

Janice Ward-Williams asked if we print the rules in any other language for members who do not speak English. Debra and John explained that there are too many languages, we don't have this facility and that it would be too costly

Outcome: 4 Members voted for the Motion, 25 members voted against the motion. Motion not accepted.

2nd Motion – Proposed by Linda Hartard

'It has become noticeable that enclosed structures covering the whole of plots are being erected.

A. They are antisocial, they cut plots off from one another preventing socialising. This affects the elderly especially.

B. Security and safety is at risk as it is not possible to see other plots

'Proposes that a maximum structure size should be imposed, netting not included in this proposal'

John Hollands said that the council in process of changing their tenancy agreements. This includes on size of structures etc so might be better to wait and see what they are proposing.

Chris – Are these proposals existing already or are they new. Are you allowed to build a fence around the whole plot.

John Holland – The rule is not in existence at the moment.

John Harrison - is the new tenancy agreement being sent to all plot holders in the borough. If so, will people be compensated if they have to remove current structures. How does the new rules apply to delegated sites.

John Hollands - The new tenancy says retrospectively. They are in the

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	<p>process of changing licence agreement. The Tenancy Agreement should dovetail with licence.</p> <p>John Young – Asked if we could discuss as a committee at each of our meetings and keep everyone updated.</p> <p>John Hollands said he has replied on a personal view not representing the association. If others would like to read it, it will be placed on the website and the Committee would be happy to take any comments / feedback.</p> <p>John Hollands told Linda that he understood her proposal but would be best to wait for local authority to finish with their tenancy proposals. Proposal to be noted and will keep updating.</p> <p>Linda asked could we not have set rules as a committee. Adrian said we could have but not now whilst the tenancy agreements are being looked at.</p> <p>Dave Knowles asked if we could stop any new structures being erected.</p> <p>Debra felt this would be difficult to manage as people could argue that others have large structures and not sure where we would stand legally.</p> <p>Outcome: Proposal noted and would be revisited with updates</p>
11.0	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution: John Hollands. The constitution has been in place since 1991. John has drafted a new constitution. He will have it placed on the website for everyone to look at and for it to be brought back for next year's AGM for adopting. • Bexleyheath Horticultural Society: John Hollands. The show last year was good despite the weather. However, there was only 14 entries. John made a plea for more entrants in the show this year. The show is on the 9th September 2023. There is going to be new classes – easier classes. At the moment only members can show, but the public can come and see the show. • BHS outing: John Holland. Outing is on the 17th September 2023. It is to King's seeds. There will be a guided tour including information on how to cultivate the seeds. In the afternoon a visit to Hyde Hall. Cost is £10 a ticket. There are 52 places, 20 places already sold.
	END – MEETING CLOSED 21.00