

Alers Road Leisure Gardens Association

AGM Minutes - 4th April 2025

Present	Apologies for Absence
Adrian Hawthorne – Chair	Jane Phelps
Debra Collins - Secretary	Eddy Haydon
John Hollands – Treasurer / Site Co-ordinator	Ray Mudie
14 Members	Roy Seymore
	Gerry Hockley
	Janice Ward-Wilson
	Paul Harrison
	Sarah & Lawrence Steele

Min	Item
1.0	CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME
	The Chairman welcomed all members to the meeting,
2.0	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS AGM
	Minutes from last year were all agreed as accurate and signed by the Chairman. Proposer: Hugh Voice Seconder: Steven Boxall
3.0	MATTERS ARISING
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No matters arising from the AGM in 2024
4.0	CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
	<p>AH again thanked all the Committee members, particular thanks were given to Debra and John for their roles and for John's expertise. Other members of the allotment site give their time to help clear vacant plots – surprisingly not all plots are left in a pristine condition. They also help maintain equipment and the site in good order. We have all seen Eddy cutting the fairways with the ride on mower.</p> <p>Also thank you to non-committee members John Harrison for maintain the website and producing monthly statistics for the committee, and also to Gerry for helping with maintenance and plus much more on the site.</p> <p>Looking forward to everyone having a productive growing season. March was reported to be the brightest March since 1910, when records began with 185.8 hours of sunshine, comfortably beating the previous high of 171.7 hours set in 1929. March was also a very dry month. There are pluses and minuses, supposedly less snails, but more watering.</p> <p>We had some success in the Ruxley in Bloom. Dean Ludlow, plot 92b, came 1st in the newcomer category and Bexley Mind, plot 80, was 1st in the full plot category.</p>

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	<p>Water costs are increasing and this is one of our biggest costs, also council have raised the rents this year. John will talk further about both of these matters. We need to be collecting as much rain water as possible and be considerate when using the water from the tanks.</p> <p>There are still some issues with the new buildings adjacent to our site which John is trying to resolve.</p> <p>Just a few polite reminders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dogs should be kept under control• Cars should not speed on the site, someone recently nearly had an accident because of inconsideration.
5.0	SECRETARY'S REPORT
	<p>DC shared that the site is currently full and that we currently have 15 people on the waiting list. This is made up of 9 new prospective plot holders and 6 current plot holders waiting for specific plots. Currently the wait is approximately 3 - 4 months.</p> <p>Some minor thefts from plots, this is very annoying and leaves a very uncomfortable feeling amongst everyone. The most recent one is glass panes from a greenhouse, It is important that all thefts or incidences are noted in the site diary that is kept in the toilet block, so we can see if there is a pattern or if this is escalating.</p> <p>A reminder that there should be no more fires until the winter. We have had complaints from neighbours, particularly towards the end of March, possibly more fires as members were trying to get all done before the deadline.</p> <p>If anyone would like to write an article for the newsletter or the website. This could top tips, information about varieties that you have found to be good or some that have not grown so well. There are lots of new allotmenters on site that would be grateful for help and support. This also encourages more people to look at the website whenever there is any new content.</p> <p>A cultivation survey will be completed from the week beginning the 21st April, One area that is always raised as a concern are the paths. Just a reminder that paths need to be kept clear and in good condition.</p> <p>The best way to contact me is via email as I work full time. The email address to contact me is secretary@alersroadallotments.org. I am not able to check the emails every day so if urgent please text me on 07951 723874 and I will get back to you as soon as I am able.</p>

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6.0	TREASURERS REPORT
	<p>John Holland explained the accounts, which were shared with everyone on the back of the agenda.</p> <p>We had a successful year, we have been able to cover all of our expenditure from rents.</p> <p>One of the old mowers has been repaired 3 times, rather than repeatedly repairing this one we have bought a professional mower.</p> <p>We are currently in discussion with the council over the payment we make to them for the site. Our licence from 1991 states that we have to keep our rent in line with the council rate by 2p. This can be 2p below their rate or 2p above their rates. We keep ours below the council rate. We have to pay council money 6p per Sq metre regardless if all plots let or not, this is £1750. This was supposed to make allotments cost neutral.</p> <p>We are currently in breach of this as the council increased their rates but did not inform us. The first we knew of this, was when we received their invoice. John contacted the council to say the invoice was wrong and was then informed of the increase. The increase is £800. We had already sent out our rent invoices at the old rate. John has been trying to speak to someone at the Local Authority to discuss this without success. John is also asking for evidence that the increase means that the council are still working within the 'cost neutral' amount.</p> <p>John contacted our local councillors, as Adrian, Debra and himself live in this ward. The councillors took the matter up. The Chief Officer apologised, and has since contacted John to arrange a meeting. John asked for a date to be agreed before she went on Holiday. This wasn't arranged and the Chief Officer is away at the moment.</p> <p>This means that rents will have to go up in September to cover the costs, particularly as the water costs have also increased.</p> <p>John has also taken this matter up with the Bexley Federation. The committee will continue to work for the benefit of the site and try and get this matter resolved.</p> <p>Jake Chia questioned the key deposit on the accounts. John explained that the key deposits doesn't belong to anyone. The amounts paid is differing historically with the increase in amounts. The amounts paid vary from 50p – Current £10 amount. The key deposit and Machinery reserve is a balance sheet item. The key deposit money is a liability as key holders may give up and ask for their key deposit to be returned.</p>

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	<p>Mike Foley stated that lots of water is wasted. He watched someone fill their wheelbarrow with the water. By the time they had got to their plot they had lost a considerable amount. John Holland said that we should all take responsibility and tell them that this is a waste as water is a huge cost to the site.</p>
7.0	ADOPTION OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
	<p>John thanked the auditor Kirsten, who is happy to continue to audit our accounts.</p> <p>Accounts were adopted: Proposer – Mike Foley Seconder – Linda Hartard</p>
8.0	SITE CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT
	<p>It is important to write any incidences or thefts in the log site book /diary. People often mention things in passing but difficult to always remember all the details but If written down, accurate details can be recorded.</p> <p>We have stores of glass, wood, screws etc if anyone is needs these. John has been salvaging things for years. So please approach and ask if you need anything.</p> <p>Machinery: There is a list of keyholders on the shed. We aren't always on site or if we are on our way home we can't always stop to open the sheds. If possible if people let us know in advance we can arrange for someone to open the sheds for you. We have lots of equipment such as cultivators, mowers etc. When you borrow the equipment please clean it before returning it. It is not fair to expect someone to clean up after you.</p> <p>Manure & Woodchip: These are available to plot holders for free. We pay for it from our funds. Currently we are struggling to get any woodchip. If anyone knows anybody please let John know.</p> <p>New building: There are some concerns. Some things have not been finished e.g. the fence needs to be taken down for some work to be completed. This only affects a couple of plot holders but they are waiting to be able to use the areas of their plots again, but don't want to start and then have this all disrupted again. John is trying to sort this out. He has spoken to the boss who should be contacting John this week to let him know what is happening.</p> <p>The site is looked after by plot holders, mainly Gerry, John and Eddy. The water is back on. It appears there is a very small leak somewhere on site but we have not been able to find it. If anyone sees a leak or wet patch</p>

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	please report it straight away so that it can be repaired.
9.0	AFFILIATION
	Bexley Federation of Allotments – The federation have been in contact with the National Federation of Allotments legal department as they are frustrated with the Local Authority and are seeking legal advice.
10.0	ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE
	<p>All committee members have agreed to continue. Committee voted on block. Proposed by Steven Boxall and seconded by Jake Chia, there was a unanimous show of hands.</p> <p>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, Ray Mudie</p>
11.0	MOTIONS
11.1	<p>Paul Harrison (plot 101) sent an email asking if it is worth getting a Chipper / Shredder/ mulch for the site. This would help cut up big roots and stems and reduce the need to burn them.</p> <p>John Holland said that he had looked into one that maybe suitable for the site.</p> <p>John Butt felt that this would be a very dangerous piece of equipment particularly if left unsupervised.</p> <p>Steven Boxall that this may be a health and safety concern and we would need to look into the site's insurance cover.</p> <p>Kirsten Gibbs asked if it would be possible to arrange for someone to visit the site regularly with one.</p> <p>Motion: do we buy a machine for the site?</p> <p>Motion not carried. Adrian agreed that this would need further research.</p>
11.2	<p>Ruxley in Bloom: Debra asked if we wanted to enter Ruxley in Bloom as a site again this year. It is a lot of work for the committee but does not seem to have the support of plot holders. Individual plot holders could still enter their plots.</p> <p>Steven Boxall asked does the site just need a few areas or are there lots of areas that are an embarrassment.</p> <p>John explained that Eddy mows the grass and drive ways. People do lot look after the end of their plots or the pathways. It needs more people to help with these areas. Often people walk past rubbish rather than pick it up. People are no longer interest in the site as a whole but just the area they are cultivating.</p>

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	Motion: Do we enter the Ruxley in Bloom Competition for 2025 Motion vote was to not bother for this year.
14.0	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Linda Hartard won the raffle.
	END – MEETING CLOSED 21.00