

**Hotwells & District Allotments Association Ltd**

Registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014

Registered No: 6359R

*Registered address: 2 Kennel Lodge Road, Bower Ashton, Bristol BS3 2JT*

[www.hwdaa.co.uk](http://www.hwdaa.co.uk)

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**Hotwells and District Allotment Association**

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting 6<sup>th</sup> Jan 2018**

**Present:** Roger Coffin (chair), Stephanie Beavan, Lesley Woodward, Phil Cass, Bob Corfield, Peter Tucker, Steve Fay, Peter Vowles, Roy Davis, Anneke van Eijkern, John Lansdall, Jenny Hendy, Paul Finch, Kean Lamb, Graeme Dowling, Carolyn Robinson, Iggy Fung, Richard Bartelot, Cheryl Bartelot, Annabel Storrar, John Smith, Stan Morgan, Dot Morgan, Hilary Montgomery, Robert Griffin, Elaine Griffin, Paul Finch, Simon Rowden, Graham Rowden, Gil Hendricks, Ang Farr, Chris Kay, Zoe Kay, Jane Barber, Patricia ? John Parke, Barbara Fowler, Elizabeth Jackson, Simeon Tenev, Chris Crook, Jan Chesher, Jenny Bhambri-Lyte, Chris Hanmer, Angie Tonge, John Tully, Tom Ward, Charlie Bolton, Jane Stevenson, Craig Dunsford Sarah Dunsford, Patrick O'Neill, Gillian Turner, Y Kasurov,

**Apologies:** David Thornley, Lyndsay Newman, Claire Wilmot, John Holland, Janet Hathway (Bristol City Council), Alan Miller, Diane Milbank, Terry Hoskins

**1. Welcome**

Roger Coffin opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and noted the high attendance.

**2. Minutes of 2017 AGM**

Acceptance of the minutes of AGM of 7<sup>th</sup> Jan 2017 was proposed by John Lansdall, seconded by Stephanie Beavan and agreed unanimously by the meeting. Minutes signed by Roger Coffin (chair).

**3. Matters arising from Minutes**

No matters arising not dealt with elsewhere in these minutes

**4. Awards**

In the David Thornley's absence Roger made this year's presentations: The Harry Green Shield for best plot to Simon Rowden of White City and The Eric Grimes cup for best newcomer to Chris Kay of Alderman Moore site.

**5. Chair's Report**

Roger Coffin presented his first annual report as new chair as follows:

*"This report is intended to provide an overview of the main activities of our allotment association during the year from 1 October 2016 to 30 September 2017.*

*Growing conditions this last year have been very good and we have witnessed high yields of crops especially soft fruit, apples and pears. Overall a good year for gardeners.*

### **Membership**

*We currently have 513 tenants on 553 plots, 35 tenants holding more than one plot. During 2016/17 we issued 99 new tenancy agreements which was in line with the previous year. Our overall waiting list stands at 90 though this is moving all the time as our Site Reps do a great job in re-letting plots within weeks of them becoming vacant.*

*Waiting lists for BA, WC are still open but AM, KL1, KL2 and MD remain closed. We currently have 7 plots ready to let on AM and 1 at KL1 but this is a constantly moving number.*

*My thanks to Peter Tucker, our Plots Secretary, who manages the letting process for the Association very capably.*

*The demographic of our tenants remains much as before, over 90% living in the surrounding areas, predominantly BS3 and BS8 (Hotwells, Clifton, Southville, Bedminster, Ashton and Ashton Vale). Most of our tenants have Internet access and we hold email addresses for in excess of 90% of our total membership. This enables us to use email almost exclusively for messages to be disseminated about a range of topics which we believe to be relevant. This includes annual; rent invoices wherever we can - though of course this year we sent all invoices by post so that we could distribute the Centenary Leaflet as well. We are now processing new tenancy agreements by electronic means and chasers following our annual review of plots will also be sent electronically.*

*We are very aware of our responsibilities concerning protection of the data we hold for all tenants and we are registered under the Data Protection Act and our Treasurer is currently the sole custodian of that data.*

### **Capital Works and other improvements**

*The Association relies on funds from its annual tenancy payments supplemented by the income from our shop, to fund all improvements across our 6 sites, as well as carrying out all necessary repairs and maintenance. Our spending policy focusses on those projects which will deliver maximum benefit to the majority of tenants.*

*During the past business year we have carried out major improvement works:-*

*Replaced storage Containers*

*Security Fencing at BA*

*Compost Toilet at White City*

*Creation of hard standing car park at KL2*

*Whilst the Treasurer will cover much of the detail here it is fair to say site management is our biggest expense given we look after 6 sites.*

*The spending programme for 2017/18 is every bit as ambitious involving improvement of our assets - we look to replace around 10 sheds this year along with a programme of repairs to those sheds which are worthy of repair. This was on our wish list for last year but several other projects got in the way though the identification process is well underway.*

*In view of the serious break in at Alderman Moore's in December we will be enhancing our security. Whilst most of our equipment lost was covered by our insurers there will be net costs to the Association - under consideration are better security lights and solar cameras.*

*Other expenditure proposed involves a compost loo and extension of parking facilities at BA, creation of wheelchair accessible plots where possible, aggregate for carpark and enhancement to security gates at WC (these items have already been actioned since October 2017). We are also currently looking to buy plot number plates across the 6 sites as our numbering has become a bit hit and miss especially as we are now splitting large plots as they become vacant.*

### **The allotment sites**

*Numbers of plots*

AM 238  
BA 59  
KL1 71  
KL2 56  
MD 40  
WC 79

*All 6 sites we manage are in a good state, the majority of plots well tended with many outstanding examples of allotment gardening. Whilst it is a last resort we do evict where plots are not tended - this involves a series of reminders and chasers before we issue a final eviction notice.*

*We continue to carry out running repairs and general maintenance as and when across all sites. I am very grateful to Phil Cass, Site Rep at AM who oversees this process across all sites - his expertise and list of contacts is endless.*

*Our Site Reps give us outstanding service in keeping our sites in good shape together with a number of assistant reps. They meet prospective tenants, they are the first point of contact for all site related matters, keep their sites in good shape, mowing communal areas, cutting hedges etc. They give their time and expertise freely and without their support the Association would struggle to function. My thanks go to all the Site Reps and Assistants.*

*Plot inspections will take place from March through to August this year.*

### **Plot Rents**

*After an increase in rents last year we decided to freeze them for 2017/18 at the same levels. We continue to charge below Bristol City Council allotment rates and the figures are:-*

<i>Very small plot</i>	<i>£20</i>	<i>(£25)</i>
<i>Small plot</i>	<i>£36</i>	<i>(£45)</i>
<i>Medium plot</i>	<i>£49</i>	<i>(£65)</i>
<i>Large plot</i>	<i>£62</i>	<i>(£80)</i>

*The Treasurer will have something to say about possible rent increases for 2018/19*

### **The Shop**

*Whilst takings in the shop year on year were down slightly (c£20 per week) we continue to see a good level of sales with basic gardening products, seeds and seasonal products (potatoes, shallots, garlic and onion sets). We have also seen an increase in the sale of second hand tools which Steve Fay, our shop manager has encouraged. These are invaluable to new tenants. Our volunteers do a great job in keeping the operation buoyant and Lesley Woodward who operates the seeds side of the business does outstanding work in ensuring the range of seeds fits sales trends, new lines picked up from gardening publications etc. all at very reasonable prices. Big thank you to Steve, Lesley, Angie and the team of volunteers.*

### **Water Supplies**

*Our water bills this last 12 months have been slightly higher than the previous twelve months mainly due to a sustained dry period over the summer months. I am pleased to say our Site Reps do a sterling job in monitoring water levels and we are managing usage well. The increase in overall water costs is under 10% and mainly due to a refund we received in 2015/16 which of course was not repeated this year.*

### **Site Security**

*There have been two major incidents involving our sites in recent months though both of these fall outside the period we are currently reporting on. The incidents at WC in October where vandals breached the security gates and set fire to the compost loo, completely destroying it and AM in December where the shop and containers were burgled serve as salutary reminders of the vulnerability of our sites and we constantly need to be vigilant and aware of any weaknesses. These episodes will cost the Association many hundreds of pounds in replacements and increased security. Our perimeter fence at AM is now more vulnerable since the developers cleared the undergrowth on the parcel of land to be built upon and we are already in discussion with them concerning a much more robust fencing system. Hopefully at their cost, not ours.*

*The replacement of the compost loo cost us in excess of £600 but due to the unpaid hard work of John Holland, John Lansdall, Kean Lamb and John Nolan the fitting out is virtually complete. My sincere thanks go to these guys. Some work needs to be done outside our perimeter fence at White City, on the cricket ground side, but we are talking to the owners as this will reduce opportunity to anyone looking to get into WC.*

### **Accidents - Health & Safety**

*Pleased to say very few accidents/incidents. Our insurers require us to maintain a log of accidents and we ask all tenants to record any injury or problem so we can act accordingly to reduce risk. The reporting system to the Association is on the website. Worst recorded incident this year involved Phil Cass who received multiple stings after strimming a wasps nest.*

### **Local Developments**

*WC - Some activity on the strip of land adjacent to WC but no impact upon us. The Mayor made ref recently to a proposal to undertake wholesale changes to the flyover system which could impact our sites - no plans in place and we will keep close to any developments*

*BA - Railway line upgrade by Network Rail still no nearer. Any impact will be discussed with tenants in good time.*

*KL sites - Recent open meeting re development of Ashton Court Manor. We attended and whilst no firm plans are yet in place we have every expectation of zero impact on our KL sites.*

*AM - land adjacent earmarked for 130 house. We have seen much activity on this site but the impact on AM is currently limited to allowing the developers access to the land. We are working with the developers to ensure the disruption to tenants is minimised - we have asked for a screening system along the fence to shield us from the building activity. The boundary fences of the parcel of land are not secure especially since the Metro line has been built opening access from all sides. This leaves us vulnerable so it is a priority for the coming weeks.*

*MD - there is an outstanding issue of serious ivy growth along the wall adjoining Park Farm but I am pleased to advise we met with the Council a few days ago and they are to set out their plans to remove the ivy and repoint the wall. We also asked them to look at the large Ash tree overhanging our Meadows site with a view to it being cut back to reduce the impact on us.*

### **Events held during the year**

*Cream Tea - highly successful despite poor weather and turnout high (100+) - this was badged as our Centenary event.*

*History of White City - Very successful and informative talk - well attended*

*Potato Day - Great success again. Set to take place again on 13 January 2018*

*We now have an Event Co-ordinator having lost Jenny Jones part way thru 2017 following her relinquishing her allotment. Anneke van Eijkern has kindly agreed to take on the role and already we have workshops and talks booked for this year - Kings Seeds, No Dig workshop, New Tenant workshop.*

*My thanks to Lesley Woodward for her considerable work organising potato day and to Anneke for her enthusiasm and efforts so far. Lesley has also been our liaison with Kings Seeds for the talk in March and we will be publicising this in the next few weeks.*

### **Website**

*Our website is constantly updated and we encourage all tenants to make full use of it given the wealth of information it contains. It is now a secure site.*

*My grateful thanks to Bob Corfield for the work he does as our webmaster - this man is invaluable to us as he is also our Data Protection Officer - oh and he's also Treasurer!*

### **Awards**

*As in previous years we celebrate the achievements of our tenants in awarding:-*

*The Eric Grimes Cup for best newcomer - winner - Chris Kay on AM*

*The Harry Green Shield for best kept plot - winner - Simon Rowden on WC*

*Congratulations to these winners and to all our tenants who continue to keep the standard across our 6 sites extremely high.*

### **The Rules**

*As advised last year we are in the process of updating our rules to make them a closer fit for the activities of the Association - Bob Corfield is working thru these meticulously. We had hoped to have model rules from the National Allotment Society but they have yet to produce. We are however pressing on with our updating and whilst we had expected to be looking for ratification at this AGM we are not yet at that stage. We will report again next year. Suffice to say we are compliant and in*

line with the requirements of the Co-operative & Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 which governs organisations like ours.

### **The Committee**

*John Holland stood down as Chair at the end of September after 5 very productive years which have seen the Association make further good progress.*

*Our committee continues to meet on a monthly basis and items of interest or importance to tenants will continue to be published as and when. The newsletter in its current form has now ceased following the Winter edition as our editor Stephanie Beavan has decided to stand down. Future items of interest, notifications of workshops and talks will be done on an ad-hoc basis going forward by the Treasurer. My sincere thanks go to Stephanie who has worked hard on the Newsletter for the past 3 years. All committee members give freely of their time and without them the Association could not function - my grateful thanks to each and every one of them for the work they do and for the support they have given me since I took over from John.*

### **Our Centenary**

*As you will know last year was our centenary year which was marked by the publication of a leaflet come wall chart documenting the history of the Association. This has attracted much attention and compliments and I would like to thank John Holland for his considerable efforts in producing this. In addition we held our third Cream Tea which was well attended and was a great success. Lots of tenants provided their own jams and lots of people mucked in pouring tea and serving scones. There are still a number of the Centenary Leaflets available and if anyone needs a supply for libraries, garden centres etc. please let the Treasurer know.*

### **And finally.....**

*On behalf of our tenants I would like to thank John Holland for his considerable contribution as Chairman of the Association for the past 5 years. In addition I wish to reiterate my thanks to our Committee and other volunteers for their ongoing support and hard work on behalf of the Association. I commend the Committee for re-election 'en bloc' "*

After the chair's report a question was raised about the scope and content of the revised website. Bob Corfield said he would restore some of the outdated links, and reported that the website is now secure.

## **6. Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Accounts**

Bob Corfield presented the annual accounts with his report and analysis of income and expenditure:

### Rents

As in other years, HwDAA announces any possible increase in rents for the following financial year. There was no increase in rents for 2017/18 year but in 2018/19, the next financial year, the **maximum** increase for rents would be:

- Large £70.00,
- Medium £53.00
- Small £40.00
- Very Small £22.00

Bob stressed these are the maximum figures. The actual increase, if any, has not yet been decided.

#### Invoices by email.

This saves HwDAA a lot of money in postage and this method will be used again this year. New members will be invited to send Bob (Treasurer) their details so that the list of invoices by email can be updated sometime in June or July. Tenants who registered previously don't need to re-register. A list of all those who are already registered, with plot numbers, will be put on the website.

#### Shop

The financial year 2016-17 has seen the Shop once again give a good income although profit is a bit down on the previous financial period.

#### Accounts

In general HwDAA ended the financial year in a good state financially and this year can continue with some major infrastructure work such as the shed replacement programme, and look at spending even more on security in light of recent security issues.

#### **7. Audit of accounts**

The chair gave thanks to Iggy Fung who again provided an internal audit of the accounts. The chair proposed continuing this arrangements and this was unanimously agreed by the meeting.

#### **8. Approval of Accounts**

Approval of the accounts as presented by the treasurer and audited by Iggy Fung was proposed to the meeting.

This was agreed unanimously.

After the treasurer's report Sarah Dunsford asked why rent for a half plot is slightly more than half the rent for a whole plot. It was explained that HwDAA follows the rental pattern and ratios used by the council.

#### **9. Election of President**

David Thornley is willing to continue as president and this was unanimously supported by the meeting.

## **10. Election of Committee**

Committee members had submitted nomination forms before the meeting and were unanimously re-elected.

## **11. Any Other Business**

Elaine Griffin (AM) raised issues about the development of the old Alderman Moore site, the consultation processes, clearance methods, access, conservation and wildlife impacts. This was followed by some discussion of HwDAA's role, summarised as overseeing interests of tenants and existing allotment sites. One member referred people to Bristol City Council's planning portal for the adjacent developments. The website could be used to share contact details.

A member felt a renewed 10 year lease with BCC was short. Roger Coffin explained that most such leases were becoming shorter and this was standard for allotment sites.

The meeting ended at 3.15pm

**Provisional date of next Annual General Meeting Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2019**