

SOUTH HARPENDEN ALLOTMENT & GARDENS SOCIETY

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD ON 20 MAY 2015

AT THE TED ALLEN ROOM, ALLOTMENT CENTRE, DARK LANE, HARPENDEN

PRESENT - Committee members: Carole Pamphlett, Roger M. Glanville, Ralph Martin, Roger Gillett, Chris Overton, Keith Davison, Chris Wilson, Albert Callaewert, Jim Machin, Rod Cooley, Glenda Fish, Keith Roland, Mike Copley and Roger White.

SOCIETY MEMBERS: Patrick Fisher, Paul Gardiner, Peter Goucher, Peter Hicks, Dominic Houlihan, Helen Loveland, Peter Loveland Neil Bygrave.

H.T.C.: Sarah Norwood

APOLOGIES: D. Ebbels, Jenny Stevenson, Nic Hale, Keith Hill, Phil Younghusband.

CHAIR: Lin Norman

The Chair welcomed all those attending, in particular Sarah Norwood from HTC with responsibility to allotments and thanks MC for strimming the entrance area prior to the meeting.

Minutes of the 2014 AGM

- 2014 AGM Minutes were presented to the meeting and agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting.
- Proposed by Mike Copley, seconded by Jim Machin. **Approved.**
- PL proposed the Minutes be re-issued as part of papers prior to the 2016 AGM since he had difficulty downloading the file from the website. RMG and RC were surprised at this and will either rectify this issue or send as a .pdf file with papers.
(Action RMG/RC)

1. Matters arising from Minutes

Re 7.1 LN to write to HTC regarding the enforcement of removal of wayleave access to ex-plot holders. **Completed**

Re 7.2 LN to write to Grove School about parking near PH site entrance. **Completed and HTC plan to erect warning notices however they do not plan to erect bollards.**

2. Proposed amendments to the Society Rules

The Chair confirmed the main business of the meeting as regards the Society's Rules, was to agree a complete re-structuring of the "Rules" and asked RMG to present the proposal to the meeting.

RMG referred to the summary handout which had been given to delegates and presented the main points. He covered a number of events which affected the Rules as they stood, leading up to the decision by the Committee that a full review was necessary, described briefly the actions taken and finally covered the chief areas to be changed by formal amendments.

RMG also referred to the full copy of the Rules which had amendments along with new text shown in Red and also showed text which had been deleted scored out in order to assist in clarifying exactly what would be changed.

RMG asked the meeting then to move on to “Proposed Amendments to the Society’s Rules” sheet and asked for objections to individual proposals rather than taking a vote on each one. This was agreed

RMG introduced the various changes to be agreed for each of the proposals in turn and explained more fully the detail behind each.

DRAFT NEW RULE RELATING TO RULE 7 (PREVIOUSLY #6): TENANCIES AND PLOT RENTALS: FOR CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL BY THE AGM.

Refer to the attached paper “Proposed Amendment to Society Rules”. Changes in wording to various sub-clauses.

RMG asked if there were any objections to this new Rule.

PG asked about existing trees that might be close to pathways. LN indicated overhanging branches would need to be cut but this Rule was for the future.

The meeting accepted the Rule as described.

DRAFT NEW RULE RELATING TO RULE 8 (PREVIOUSLY #15): TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP: FOR CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL BY THE AGM.

Refer to the attached paper “Proposed Amendment to Society Rules”. Additional wording to cover revisions to the Termination procedure to be included in the Rule.

RMG asked if there were any objections to this new Rule.

LN emphasised the need for the Society to act on neglected plots as it usually led to a cost to the Society.

PG asked if after the inspections weed suppressant material could be employed to assist. LN agreed and confirmed further supplies were being obtained and would be used. In addition the procedure includes a tidy-up letter sent to the plot holder detailing action necessary.

The meeting accepted the Rule as described.

DRAFT NEW RULE 9 (PREVIOUSLY SUB CLAUSE 6(f): PROHIBITED MATERIALS: FOR CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL BY THE AGM.

Refer to the attached paper “Proposed Amendment to Society Rules”. New Rule relating to prohibited materials.

PG was concerned about the inclusion of glass and asked for clarification of the definition of acceptable glass. RMG explained the concern centred on the more extreme uses but if say old windows of toughened glass were used it should not pose a problem. CO added the main issue was plot holders leaving glass items on the plot after they have given up.

The meeting agreed clarification was necessary.

DE also asked about concrete.

The meeting agreed that such materials should be subject to the discretion of the Site Reps.

RW asked why “non-compostable material” had been deleted and it was agreed this should be reinstated.

The meeting accepted the Rule as described but with these further additions.

DRAFT NEW RULE 10 RELATING TO: STRUCTURES: FOR CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL BY THE AGM.

Refer to the attached paper "Proposed Amendment to Society Rules". A new Rule relating to all structures to be placed on plots.

There was considerable discussion about the wording of "General Points" in particular removal or not of structures when a plot is given up and apart from adding a rider "unless agreed by the Site Rep." the Chair asked for the rule to be allowed to run and to review if problems occurred.

RW asked about omission of the sizes and areas of compost bins etc. and in particular Plastic Growing Tunnels and asked for clarification as it was possible to cover an entire plot. After discussion it was decided to change Plastic Growing Tunnels to Cloches up to 6 feet high.

The meeting accepted the Rule as described but with the change of wording.

RULE 14 RELATING TO THE SOCIETY'S MEMBERSHIP OF NATIONAL SOCIETY OF ALLOTMENT AND LEISURE GARDENERS BE DELETED. FOR CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL BY THE AGM.

Refer to the attached paper "Proposed Amendment to Society Rules". Rule to be deleted.

The meeting accepted the Rule should be deleted.

DRAFT NEW ANNEX 1 RELATING TO SHEDS: FOR CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL BY THE AGM.

Refer to the attached paper "Proposed Amendment to Society Rules". Changes in wording and renumbered Annex 1.

RM enquired about the removal of the restriction on having a shed and a pond on a plot and LN replied that since both were only 6feet x 4feet this should no longer be a problem.

The meeting accepted the Annex as described.

DRAFT NEW ANNEX 2 RELATING TO PONDS: FOR CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL BY THE AGM.

Refer to the attached paper "Proposed Amendment to Society Rules". Changes in wording and renumbered Annex 2.

The meeting accepted the Annex as described.

CREATION OF NEW ANNEX 3 RELATING TO POLY TUNNELS: FOR CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL BY THE AGM.

Refer to the attached paper "Proposed Amendment to Society Rules". New Annex 3 based on Annex 1 and 2 but solely relating to Poly tunnels.

RW raised the issue of moving Poly tunnels since moving of sheds was subject to an application form to gain approval. LN replied that moving of Poly tunnels was necessary once soil was depleted hence point 8 allowing movement without further correspondence but should not cause a nuisance in a new position.

RW also referred to point 11 - storage of flammable materials – and questioned the precise wording which could allow use of such material say for heaters. It was agreed to amend the wording to prohibit heaters of any type.

The meeting accepted the Rule as described but with these further changes.

CREATION OF NEW ANNEX 4 RELATING TO BEE KEEPING: FOR CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL BY THE AGM.

Refer to the attached paper "Proposed Amendment to Society Rules". New Annex 4 related to Bee-keeping incorporating the new protocol adopted by the Society.

NB asked what would happen if someone was stung and the risks of anaphylactic shock and LN replied the risks were no different than for someone out walking. Warning notices would be erected in the area and CO emphasised the bees were to be sited in a corner of the site and protected by a fence.

The meeting accepted the Annex as described.

As no further points of order were raised the Chair asked the meeting for a proposer and seconder to adopt the revised version of Rules, subject to the changes agreed.

Proposed: CW Seconded: RC The meeting unanimously voted to accept.

4. Trustees Reports

4.1 Chairman's report – Lin Norman

- Refer to the document "Trustee, Officer and Committee Reports" for the full Chairman's Report.

The Chair focussed on some key points from her report, on the year which she felt had been a successful one.

The number of neglected plots was down on last year due largely to the efforts of Site Reps and in general site improvements had been made with in some cases the help of the Community Payback group.

The revision of the Health & Safety policy was completed and was now fully operational.

The Allotment Watch group had been joined although a coordinator was still to be appointed.

The Chair thanked the Committee for their efforts during the year and for the assistance of the Town Council in various forms over the year.

4.2 Secretary's report – Roger M. Glanville

- Refer to the document "Trustee, Officer and Committee Reports" for the full Secretary's report.

The Secretary admitted the new Termination Procedure had added the admin. workload over the last year but use of computer technology did reduce that work.

A digital recorder had been purchased which had enabled meetings to be recorded which was useful if the Secretary was absent and to hopefully improve the accuracy of Minutes.

The changes to the Rules had occupied much time but the Secretary felt it was important the Rules were important to all members and it was necessary that the process be as transparent as possible.

Finally the Secretary thanked the Committee for their assistance throughout the year.

4.3 Treasurer's report – Carole Pamphlett

- Refer to the document “Trustee, Officer and Committee Reports” for the full Treasurer’s report and Year End Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2014.

In addition to the document above CP also distributed to attendees a supplement which included the signed copy of the Receipts and Payments Accounts for the Society, copy of the Shop Accounts and a copy of the signed declaration by the independent examiner used to verify them.

In terms of the Society Accounts, CP told the meeting she could now present full comparative Accounts for the previous two years. In addition the contingency fund for the Shop and other buildings was now shown as a separate part of the Accounts. Since the building could not be economically insured this money was held in reserve against potential losses.

A further analysis of all site improvements for 2014 was also included by way of information.

CP confirmed that a surplus had been made by the Society and would be used against future projects, however this included some £500 already set aside to cover the delayed road improvements at the Aldwickbury site.

CP recounted the issue in late 2014 with a water leak at Churchfield site. Initially it was feared the Society could be liable for almost £1000 but fortunately HTC covered the costs.

In her explanation of the Shop Accounts CP remarked that it had been a successful year in trading for the Shop and drew the meetings attention to the transfer of £500 of Trading Surplus by the Shop to the Society whilst appearing in the 2014 Shop Account was not received by the Society until January 2015 so will only appear in the Society Account for 2015.

Also as the Financial Year End date had previously been changed in 2013 the comparative trading figures were for different periods and the Stock in hand value only representing 9 months.

RMG then asked the meeting for a motion to accept the accounts.

Proposer: Chris Overton

Seconded: Albert Callaewert

The Chair then thanked CP for her work over the last year in managing the Society’s finances so thoroughly.

5 Officers’ Reports:

5.1 Database Mgr. / Letting Secretary’s report – Chris Overton

- Refer to the document Trustee, Officer and Committee Reports for the full Secretary’s report.

CO told the meeting that the Society’s membership was now 347 with a further 99 Associate members.

There was a waiting list of 17 people (13 for Harpenden Rise Site), a drop of 5 on last year.

Letting activity remained brisk with on average 1 to 2 plots a week being let or re-let. A new procedure whereby initial contact was through Site Reps before CO covers the main administration was working well.

The database was up-to-date and specific site versions issued regularly to Site Rep's to update their knowledge.

CO passed his thanks to CP for her work in chasing up non-payers or late payers of rent this year.

5.2 Distribution Manager Report – Roger Gillett

- Refer to the document "Trustee, Officer and Committee Reports" for the full Distribution Managers report.

RG commented that business was very good this year and LN asked that thanks be passed to RG and all of the helpers who keep the shop open every Sunday morning.

5.3 Machinery Manager's Report – Ralph Martin

- No report available

5.4 Communications Officer / Webmaster' Report – Rod Cooley

- Refer to the document "Trustee, Officer and Committee Reports" for the full Communications Officers report.

RC briefly went through his report highlighting the regular monthly email newsletter and additions to the website including items of interest.

RC also emphasised a lot of effort had been put into maintaining an up-to-the-minute web-site featuring contribution in particular from David Whitbread of the Harpenden Photographic Society, news items such as the opening of the wildflower meadow; a trend that would hopefully be maintained.

5.5 Newsletter Editors Report - David Ebbels

- No report available

DE apologised to the meeting for not having a written report and hoped to provide one later.

DE went on to confirm only one Newsletter per year was now being issued, that at renewal time in March; the main reason for this was distribution. The March issue could be handed out at renewal weekends but the October would either need posting at high cost or hand delivery which was time consuming.

Costs for this year were much the same as last and expected to remain at this level for the coming year.

6 Election of Officers and Committee for 2015/2016

- Refer to document, "Election of Members SHAGS AGM 20 May 2015".

Committee member resignations: Ralph Martin (Dep. Chair), Pauline Payne (Machinery), David Ebbels (Site Rep – Harpenden Rise), John Molson (Site Rep – Cross Lane), Tracey Field (Site Rep – Oakley Rd)

The Chair gave a vote of thanks to all those retiring from the committee in particular David Ebbels who had served for some 15 years.

The Secretary referred the meeting to the Election of Members schedule and detailed the various Trustee/Officers that were up for election at the meeting.

Ralph Martin was nominated as Machinery Mgr. and Chris Wilson as Awards Officer.

Sarah Norwood also mentioned Dorothy Mills who was a Vice-President of the Society but who had been unable to attend meeting recently. The Society had agreed for her to remain as honorary Vice-President.

In addition 2 new Site Rep's had been nominated:
Dominic Houlihan (Cross Lane) and Melanie Angus (Harpenden Rise).

Positions up for election amongst the Trustees at this AGM were the Treasurer.

- Carole Pamphlett to be re-elected as Treasurer

Committee Members due for election/re-election in 2015 and willing to stand for election:

Carole Pamphlett	Treasurer	re-elected
Roger Gillett	Distribution Mgr.	re-elected
Ralph Martin	Machinery Mgr.	elected
Chris Wilson	Awards Officer	elected
Hazel Upton	Aldwickbury	re-elected
Keith Davison	Churchfield	elected following co-option in 2014
Jenny Stevenson	Cross Lane	re-elected
Dominic Houlihan	Cross Lane	elected following co-option in 2015
Melanie Angus	Harpenden Rise	elected following co-option in 2015
Glenda Fish	Harpenden Rise	re-elected
Jim Machin	Piggotshill	re-elected
Albert Callaewert	Piggotshill	re-elected
Chris Wilson	Sibley Ave.	re-elected

The Treasurer and Officers were duly elected at this AGM by a unanimous vote.

Posts remaining vacant at this AGM;
Site Rep. – Oakley Rd.

7. Questions from Members

- On behalf of Rob Graham, a plot holder at PH site, Jim Machin raised the issue of locking the entrance gates of sites at all times, even when members are on site, to deter opportunists from gaining access to sites which might result in theft or damage. This had been raised before and requests for the gates to be closed included in monthly Newsletters, however RG wanted to know why it wasn't being pursued.

The Chair acknowledged this was an issue and asked that the matter be referred to the Committee for further discussion and to decide on future actions and policy.

The situation had originally emerged when it was found contractors were regularly dumping woodchip at PH site. Action was necessary to limit the damage and nuisance they were causing.

JM told the meeting following an email to PH plot holders the Police had been involved the incidents stopped.

DE actually welcomed the woodchip and regretted it had stopped but CO had recently approached HTC and received a load so this was felt to be the recommended route. MC agreed but emphasised such deliveries needed to be organised as tipping was often in the wrong location.

RMG was asked to add the item to the Agenda of a future Committee meeting. (Action RMG)

- RMG read out the following question received from Hazel & Richard Upton. "The Percy Bradbury Cup I understand was GIVEN IN THE FIRST PLACE TO BE PRESENTED TO THE BEST FLOWER PLOT. The Society is called South Harpenden Allotments and GARDENS Society. However this cup is being given as far as I know to another class (not sure what the class is to be called). As you know we have two excellent flower plots on AB and I think the Society should encourage plots to be taken on as flower gardens as much the same as taking on a vegetable plot. It would be good to encourage new members to take on a plot for growing flowers as well as vegetables as the perception seems to be that allotments are only for vegetables. The Society should promote the growing of flowers as well. We need to always encourage the bee population as much as we can. I would like to propose that if another class is needed surely we can buy another Cup to be presented accordingly. "

Chris Wilson, the new Awards Officer, responded informing the meeting the cup was originally bought by the Society, and as lettings were so low and Rules stated vegetable only were to be grown, the Society thought that to encourage numbers it would award the cup to the best flower plot.

Since then only 3 winners have been awarded the cup and CW felt this increasingly a poor use of the cup and for the last year has been discussing a proposal that the Society now broaden the scope of plots that might be judged in this class and the cup now be awarded for the most "attractive plot".

The meeting agreed and the Chair asked for a proposer that the Percy Bradbury cup now be awarded for the most "attractive plot" rather than the best flower plot.

Proposer: Chris Wilson Seconded: Peter Goucher

The meeting unanimously agreed to adopt this proposal for the 2015 competition.

8 Any Other Business

Peter Goucher asked that a vote of thanks be given to the Committee, Site Reps and all of the supporting members of the Society for the work they did. The Chair thanked PG for this gesture.

The next AGM will provisionally be held on Wednesday 18 May 2016 at 8pm in the Ted Allen Room

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.40.pm.