

SOUTH HARPENDEN ALLOTMENT & GARDENS SOCIETY

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD ON 23 MAY 2018

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

PRESENT - Committee members: Carole Pamphlett, Roger Glanville, Rod Cooley, Linda Gahagan, Roger Gillett, Keith Davison, Chris Wilson, Jim Machin, Jenny Stevenson, Alan Stevenson, Fraser Gordon, Marcia Dorey, Nic Hale, John Myers, Roger White.

SOCIETY MEMBERS: Patrick Fisher (PF), Paul Gardiner (PG), Joan Graham (JG), Jane Keech (JK), Michael Hughes (MH), Peter Loveland (PL), Helen Loveland (HL), Joe Payne (JP).

H.T.C.: No-one from HTC was available to attend.

APOLOGIES: Chris Overton, Hazel Upton, Irene Boogerman, Albert Callaewert, Keith Rowland, Dominic Houlihan, Mark Sanders.

CHAIR: Mike Cobley

The Chair welcomed all those attending and asked if there were any matters under AOB that members wished to raise in which case the Chair was happy to deal with them at the beginning of the meeting.

No matters were raised.

1. Minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting

- 2017 AGM Minutes were presented to the meeting and agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting.
- Proposed by Jim Machin, seconded by Chris Wilson. **Approved.**

2. Matters arising from Minutes

- None

3. Proposed Rent increase to £30 / 5-pole plot

The Treasurer outlined the proposal (See attached document) to increase rents and summarised the reasons for it adding it was the first increase since 2014 and simply represented prudent forward planning.

Rising Machinery costs were the chief threat and whilst the proposed service interval strategy would offer savings the rent increase would be the most effective measure in raising revenue, which was necessary to maintain a programme for site improvements.

Chris Wilson argued that her site (Sibley Ave) had very little machinery and low costs to suit and felt it was unreasonable that SA tenants were penalised for the poor use and higher costs incurred by larger sites.

John Myers agreed and felt all members suffered because of the actions of the few.

Jenny Stevenson disagreed however and felt rents had been held since 2014 and the increase amounting to 58p per week was not unreasonable; higher costs were a factor and the increase should be accepted.

Rod Cooley sympathised with the views of CW and JMy but referred to the increase in water usage and charges and considered the rent rise would be useful in offsetting higher water charges.

Jim Machin raised the issue of high turnover of tenants at the larger site and the possibility of inexperience leading to misuse of machinery. Mike Cobley agreed and at the recent Site Rep's meeting it was agreed SR's would be more vigilant over who was using the machinery and how to attempt to combat misuse.

Rotovators, will be reviewed as they accounted for a large proportion of the maintenance costs and are unlikely to be renewed. Patrick Fisher thought if tenants wanted to use a rotovator they should supply their own. Jane Keech suggested a hire arrangement where tenants would "hire" a rotovator from the Society if they wanted to use one and pay a charge which would contribute to the overall maintenance cost. AS had considered this and transporting machines was an issue.

CW asked should we even supply machinery.

The Chair asked for a vote on the matter: 13 in favour 6 against and 1 abstaining. Based on a majority the proposal to increase rents was passed. The increase would come into effect from March 2019.

4. Proposed amendments to the Society Rules

None

5. Trustees Reports

5.1 Chairman's report – Mike Cobley

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

The Chair referred to the key points from his report and thanked the members of the Committee and all the SR's for their assistance over the year. Overall the Society is in a sound financial position and strong membership.

Referring to the relationship with HTC, the Chair admitted the concerns about their approach to boundary management appeared to be unfounded. After an extensive survey of all sites HTC were now offering funds to improve the situation and provide labour for a few days per year.

A former Chair Lin Norman and former Dep. Chair Ralph Martin had sadly passed either side of Christmas and the Society planned to erect a memorial bench, the appeal for which was already passed the halfway mark.

3.2 Secretary's report – Roger Glanville

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

RMG referred to a more normal year after the court case in 2017.

There had been 11 Committee meeting in the year, just August missed, owing to holidays.

RMG mentioned the upsurge in structure requests particularly polytunnels, however provided details are supplied most requests are approved without comment.

No Rules changes are planned for this year’s AGM.

There were some changes to the Committee, Chris Overton was being welcomed back in the Machinery post in conjunction with Alan Stevenson who had been co-opted onto the Committee. Several other Officers and Site Rep’s were up for re-election this AGM.

RMG confirmed he was standing down and thanked all Officers and Site Rep’s past and present for their assistance during his time as Secretary.

Finally, RMG made special mention of Lin Norman with whom he had been shared much Committee time and as a fellow Trustee. He paid tribute to her contribution to the progress of the Society under her stewardship and to the personal support he had received.

MC thanked RMG for his time as Secretary and presented him with a bottle of Red Wine and some Garden Vouchers in recognition of his service as Hon. Sec.

3.3 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 2017.

The Treasurer summarised some of the detail in the schedules both for the Society and the Shop and added that the Meeting was the occasion when the membership would agree and approve the Year-end Accounts for which members had been supplied with advance copies.

The year had seen a marked increase in basic cost of running all sites, particularly machinery and water. Rent income slightly lower so 2018 focus on tidying vacant plots. As a result, a small loss was made over the year.

The Treasurer thanked HTC for their continued support.

Accounts for the Shop were also included and since a further stocktake had been carried out the P & L figure was accurate.

CP confirmed the Committee had accepted the Accounts and they had been independently reviewed by a competent person which saved the Society the fee of an outside auditor.

RC queried the increase in “Publicity” and CP explained this was chiefly attributed to flowers and other PR costs during presentations.

CW asked why the costs for “Electricity” had doubled. MC had no obvious answer, there had been more workshop activity and CP added the supply to the TA Room was no longer turned off regularly. RG suspected the Shop had been heated more. MC agreed to monitor usage over the coming months to look at the trend.

The Chair thanked CP for her work over the last year in managing the Society's finances so thoroughly and CP asked the meeting to approve the Accounts as presented.

Proposed: Jane Keech Seconded: Rod Cooley

Approved.

4 Officers' Reports:

4.1 Database Mgr. / Letting Secretary's report – Jim Machin

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

JM highlighted the number of vacant plots and emphasised how this both raised the number of vacant plots and eroded rental income.

JM also proposed changing the point of measurement from the rental year (March – March) to AGM – AGM (May – May) as by May the membership numbers were more stable, unlike renewal when there is a lot of transition.

JM also noticed the number of members was declining as more current members took on additional plots. This showed a need to increase membership.

Re the database; greater use of email and online payment for renewal and as a result, rent renewal days may be reduced. This did have a detrimental effect on early takings and RG was unsure if they had now caught up.

MC touched on the GDPR legislation which affected the Society and RMG explained the Society had approached HTC outlining the present situation and documents involved asking for their guidance and was waiting for their response.

MD asked that this also included SR's contacts and a lengthy discussion followed emphasising the uncertainty SR's felt about the potential communications that they normally made. RC indicated a common form of words with EHGC was desirable and MC would be following up with HTC.

The Chair thanked JM for his efforts.

4.2 Distribution Manager Report – Roger Gillett

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

RG thanked the membership for their support during the year and had nothing further to add to his report.

The Chair thanked RG and all the helpers who keep the shop open every Sunday morning and for all the other work behind the scenes to maintain this valuable resource for the Society.

4.3 Machinery Manager's Report – Chris Overton/Alan Stevenson (co-opted)

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

AS covered his report and explained in detail the way the new strategy that Chris Overton and AS were implementing. Overall this included a different approach to fault resolution, a change to servicing intervals and a review of individual site holdings. The chief aim to reduce costs.

4.4 Communications Officer / Webmaster' Report – Rod Cooley

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

RC covered the main points from his report for the meeting.

The Chair thanked RC for his efforts for maintaining the site given his other commitments.

4.5 Newsletter Editors Report – Irene Boogerman

- No report available

5 Election of Officers and Committee for 2018/2019

- Refer to document, "Election of Members SHAGS AGM 23 May 2018".

Committee member resignations: Roger Glanville (Hon. Secretary).

The Secretary referred the meeting to the "Election of Members" schedule explaining that Officers were elected for a two-year term and the positions shown in Red indicated the various Trustees/Officers that were up for election at this meeting.

Roger Glanville was standing down as Hon. Secretary and had been nominated to stand for Deputy Chair. There were no nominations for the post of Hon. Secretary.

Chris Overton and Alan Stevenson were nominated for joint-Machinery Mgr.

During the year Alan Stevenson had been co-opted as joint-Machinery Mgr. and offered himself for election.

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

- No nominations for Hon. Secretary.
- Carole Pamphlett to be re-elected as Hon. Treasurer. re-elected

The Treasurer's re-election was proposed and seconded by members and duly elected at this AGM by a unanimous vote.

Committee Members due for election/re-election at this AGM and willing to stand for election:

Roger Glanville	Dep. Chair	elected
Chris Overton/Alan Stevenson	Joint-Machinery Mgr.	elected
Rod Cooley	Communications Officer/Webmaster	re-elected
Jim Machin	Lettings Coordinator/Database Mgr.	re-elected

Site Rep's

Roger White	Aldwickbury	re-elected
Mark Sanders	Aldwickbury	re-elected
Mike Cobley	Piggottshill	re-elected
Keith Rowland	Piggottshill	re-elected

The Officers were proposed and seconded by members and duly elected at this AGM by a unanimous vote.

Posts remaining vacant at this AGM;

Hon. Secretary
Site Rep. – Oakley Rd.

FG asked whether a new post of Public Relations Officer should be created and proposed the job role should be added to the list of Officers in the Rules and nominated JK and MD to jointly hold the post. The meeting agreed and JK and MD both agreed to accept the nomination and were duly elected.

Joan Graham pointed out that should any issue connected with the Society, arise in the future this meant that the press for instance would contact this individual initially whereas they should be going via the Trustees and as such the post should be simply called Publicity Officer and not PR Officer.

This point was accepted and rather than present an issue it was agreed that JK and MD simply look after the publicity and present any proposals to the Committee for approval.

6. Questions from Members

RMG informed the meeting he had received no written questions from members and invited any further questions from those present.

- KD asked if any more hedge-cutting was likely and MC confirmed it was too late. John O'Connor had done half in November last but had failed to complete all sites. MC had been told the contract was under review, but it was an ongoing situation.

7 Any Other Business

- CW produced the refurbished awards trophy to be presented at the 2018 Awards evening and in addition reminded members that 2019 was the Society's 50th Anniversary and asked how we could mark the occasion. MC agreed the matter would need to be discussed.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.55.pm.

The next AGM will provisionally be held on Wednesday 2 May 2019 at 8pm in the Ted Allen Room