# SOUTH HARPENDEN ALLOTMENT & GARDENS SOCIETY

#### MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 11 AUGUST 2021 AT THE TED ALLEN ROOM, ALLOTMENT CENTRE, DARK LANE, HARPENDEN

#### PRESENT:

**Committee members**: Mike Cobley (MC), Carole Pamphlett (CP), Roger Glanville (RG), Gill Hicks (GH), Geoff Bateman (GB), Rod Cooley (RC), Keith Davison (KD), Alex Davies (AD), Fraser Gordon (FG), Jane Keech (JK), Jim Machin (JM), Syd Marvell (SM) John Myres (JMy), Roger White (RW);

**Society Members**: Stephan Barnard (SB), Tina Crawford (TC), Patrick Fisher (PF), Paul Gardiner (PG), Jon Grundy (JG), Peter Loveland (PL), Helen Loveland (HL), Tom Lloyd (TL), Kim Lloyd (KL), Ed Marshall (EM), Alena Marshall (AM), Sarah Norwood (SN), Liz Stratton (LS);

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

**APOLOGIES:** Linda Gahagan, James Gallagher, Dominic Houlihan, Hazel Upton, Jenny Stevenson, Marcia Dorey, Roger Dorey, Irene Boogerman, Albert Callaewert, Gwen Callaewert, Brian Cooper, Svetlana Emelianova, Peter Goucher, Michael Hughes, Doris Hughes, Walter Russell, Mike Stratton, Chris Wilson

#### CHAIR: Mike Cobley

The Chair welcomed all those attending the much-delayed AGM as there was not one in 2020 due to the pandemic. The Society is now in its 52<sup>nd</sup> year and going very well and it's great to see some younger people joining and attending the meeting.

#### 1. Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting

The 2019 AGM Minutes were presented to the meeting and agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting. **Approved.** 

#### 2. Matters arising from Minutes

None.

#### 3. Proposed amendments to the Society Rules

**Rule 3** – proposal to add a category of Essential member to enable members without a plot to perform an essential role for the Society e.g. our Treasurer who is currently unable to keep her plot due to ill health. It was suggested to amend the wording in the rule to add the word "committee" into the suggested wording. This change was agreed by a unanimous vote.

**Rule 7** – an additional point to be added as part of the tenancy agreement. This has come about after someone was stealing produce from someone else's plot and there was nothing in the rules to stop this happening. This additional point was agreed by a unanimous vote.

**Rule 8** – An additional point to refer to the Society Termination procedure to make the procedure clearer. This additional point was agreed by a unanimous vote.

**Rule 10** – An additional point to clarify there can only be one structure per plot. This used to a rule that disappeared from the rules by mistake. SN suggested a pond shouldn't be classed as a structure. She has installed a pond recently, which has added so much joy to her and her family and has increased the amount of wildlife on her plot. JM suggested the size of the plot might be a factor. SN suggested this should be up to the individual. Other attendees agreed that ponds bring so much to the plots and should not be treated as a structure. There was also a discussion regarding greenhouses and it was agreed these could be allowed but no glass can be used in them. It was decided to change the rule to say only a shed or a polytunnel/ greenhouse (no glass) on any one plot. This was agreed by a unanimous vote.

**Rule 11** – Proposal to add the Deputy Chairman as an additional Trustee. This additional point was agreed by a unanimous vote.

**Rule 11** – An additional paragraph to cover online bank transfers. PL asked that the wording be changed to say "Treasurer's monthly report". This additional point was agreed by a unanimous vote.

# 4. Trustees Reports

## 4.1 Chair's report – Mike Cobley

See report attached to minutes.

## 4.2 Secretary's report – Gill Hicks

See report attached to minutes.

## 4.3 Treasurer's report – Carole Pamphlett

See report attached to minutes. The Treasurer confirmed the Committee had accepted the Accounts for the past two years and they had been independently reviewed and need to be approved at the AGM. The detailed accounts can be found in the report attached to these minutes. JMy thought it was worth reminding that water is one of our highest expenses and to encourage people not to waste it.

The meeting was asked to approve the Accounts as presented. Proposed by GH and seconded by MC - **approved by unanimous vote.** 

#### 5 Officers' & Other Reports:

## 5.1 Database Manager / Lettings Secretary's report – Jim Machin

See report attached to minutes. JM stated that since March 2020 there have been many more lettings than in the past and the plots are now completely full most of the time. JM is in the process of giving up his roles and Alex Davies will be taking over. They are currently performing the role together and AD will take the lead in the next few weeks. MC said that JM will be very much missed when he steps down.

#### 5.2 Distribution Manager Report – James Gallagher

See report attached to minutes. MC said James has only been in charge for a while but has some excellent advice due to running a garden centre. He thanked all the shop helpers; the shop has done really well and the card machine has made life a lot easier.

#### 5.3 Machinery Manager's Report – Roger White

RW took over the role last November and carried out winter servicing during the winter and is happy to carry on with the role. If anyone has comments or questions please contact RW anytime. There will be issues with our old machinery plus also with the change in fuel status with the new E10 fuel changing. Battery run machinery has been discussed and will look into this going forward. MC mentioned the problem with machine repairs at PH recently and it's very hard to get spares at the moment. PL asked about solar charging facilities in the long term. RW said this was something we had thought about and may be possible; RW is aware of a charity in St Albans who run solar equipment and will visit them in the future. There used to be a new members machinery awareness course but haven't done this since the pandemic. We may try to do a session later this year/early next year. We have some new mulching machines, which people will need to be trained to use.

# 5.4 Communications Officer / Webmaster' Report – Rod Cooley

See reports attached to minutes. MC thanked RC for his efforts behind the scenes with regard to updating the Covid policy during the pandemic.

# 6 Election of Officers and Committee for 2021/2022

• Refer to document, "Election of Committee Schedule SHAGS AGM 11 August 2021".

#### There were a number of elections and re-elections to be voted.

#### During the past two years the following have been co-opted to various roles on the committee:-

The election of Gill Hicks as Honorary Secretary was proposed by FG and seconded by JMy and duly elected by a unanimous vote.

The election of Roger White as Machinery Manager was proposed by FG and seconded by RG and duly elected by a unanimous vote.

The election of Geoff Bateman as Newsletter Editor was proposed by GH and seconded by MC and duly elected by a unanimous vote.

The election of James Gallagher as Distribution (Shop) Manager was proposed by MC and seconded by KD and duly elected by a unanimous vote.

The election of Alex Davies as Database Manager/Lettings Coordinator (in conjunction with Jim Machin for the time being) was proposed by JMy and seconded by RG and duly elected by a unanimous vote.

The election of Syd Marvell as Piggotshill Site Rep was proposed by MC and seconded by FG and duly elected by a unanimous vote.

#### One new volunteer has offered their services as a Site Rep:-

• Richard Mottram to be elected as an additional Site Rep at Aldwickbury. Proposed and seconded by members. Elected by a unanimous vote.

# Positions up for election amongst the Trustees at this AGM were the Honorary Chair and the Honorary Treasurer and the Honorary Deputy Chair.

- Mike Cobley to be re-elected as Honorary Chair.
- Proposed and seconded by members. Re-elected by a unanimous vote.
- Carole Pamphlett to be re-elected as Honorary Treasurer. Proposed and seconded by members. Re-elected by a unanimous vote.
- Roger Glanville to be re-elected as Honorary Deputy Chair. Proposed and seconded by members. Re-elected by a unanimous vote.

#### Officers due for re-election at this AGM and willing to stand for election:

• Jim Machin to be re-elected as Database Manager/Lettings Coordinator (in conjunction with Alex Davies for the time being).

Proposed and seconded by members. Re-elected by a unanimous vote.

- Linda Gahagan to be re-elected as Awards Officer
- Proposed and seconded by members. Re-elected by a unanimous vote.
- Jane Keech to be re-elected as Publicity Officer Proposed and seconded by members. Elected by a unanimous vote.
- Rod Cooley to be re-elected as Communications Officer/Webmaster Proposed and seconded by members. Elected by a unanimous vote.

#### The Site Reps due for re-election and willing to stand for election were:-

Hazel Upton at Aldwickbury Roger White at Aldwickbury Tom Chichester-Miles at Aldwickbury Keith Davison at Churchfield Jenny Stevenson at Cross Lane Dominic Houlihan at Cross Lane Marcia Dorey at Harpenden Rise Roger Dorey at Harpenden Rise Fraser Gordon at Piggotshill Geoff Bateman at Piggotshill Mike Cobley at Piggotshill John Myres at Topstreet Way

All the above were proposed and seconded by the members and were re-elected by a unanimous vote.

## Posts remaining vacant at this AGM:-

Honorary President Site Rep – Oakley Road Site Rep – Sibley Avenue

#### 7. Questions from Members

One question had been received from Sarah Norwood asking if we could change the rule about paint colour for sheds to include some more colours. A discussion took place on adding new colours to the list. The majority of the committee and members in attendance agreed that the restrictions on colours should be relaxed. A new rule will be prepared to cover this. JK mentioned the issue of sheds being broken into, but MC said this hasn't so far been a problem at our sites.

#### 8 Any Other Business

8.1 Walter Russell, a PH plot holder emailed in the following comment for AOB.

The cost of maintaining the paths around each allotment site seems to centre on the damage done to lawn mowers and this year it has been unacceptably high with inexperienced members damaging the machinery.

I would propose that the machinery be withdrawn from general use and volunteers, including committee members, be paid to cut all paths on a regular basis. Details on remunerations etc. to be agreed in committee. Plot holders can then be expected to trim the edges of their own plots. Hand powered mowers could be made available in sheds for general use.

Perhaps, these changes can be made for next year and a comparison can then be made on the cost of this year's machinery maintenance against the cost of remuneration to volunteers next year.

PL pointed out that under HMRC rules the Society is an Unincorporated Association and as such cannot have employees and any remuneration would break this rule. It was also pointed out that the Society fees also include use of machinery.

8.2 JM brought up the subject of locks for certain sites deteriorating but we're not able to find replacement locks and new locks would cost £3 per key. MC suggested locks with a code and it was agreed this would be a good solution.

There were no other items for AOB.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.55pm. MC proposed a vote of thanks for to CP for organising the refreshments.

The next AGM will provisionally be held in May 2022 (exact date tbc) at 7.30pm in the Ted Allen Room

# TRUSTEE, OFFICER & COMMITTEE REPORTS AGM 2021

# **CHAIR'S REPORT - Mike Cobley**

# 2020 - 2021 A DIFFICULT TIME FOR ALL OF US

I am so pleased to have had an allotment over the last 18 months as an escape from the pressures brought about by the pandemic (last time I mention the 'p' word). Our sites have never looked better, even battling with extremes of the British weather and this year fighting invasions of slugs, pigeons and parakeets and plots have been a real haven for escaping everyday pressures.

There has been an unprecedented demand for allotment plots since spring last year and any vacant plots have been quickly taken over. There has been a significant change in the demographics of our plotholders, now with many younger family groups with children happily involved digging, planting and growing fruit, flowers and vegetables. Grove School now look after a plot at Aldwickbury. With enthusiastic younger members the Allotment Society future is assured and some of our senior members can take a rest from the everyday running of SHAGS in the next few years.

Our entire existing committee is all up for re-election this AGM and I would like to thank everyone who has worked so hard to keep everything running smoothly. We all miss Chris Wilson from Sibley, who moved to Lincoln late last year, we sadly lost Alan Stevenson who helped Chris Overton with machinery servicing and of course our own 'Arkwright'- Roger Gillett who ran the shop until his catastrophic stroke in August last year. The shop continued trading throughout lockdown after lockdown and as soon as garden centres were able to open, after our own risk assessments, we have remained open with record sales, very busy at times. We wish James Gallagher a prosperous and profitable future running the shop over the next few years. We do need more site reps; currently we have vacancies for Churchfield, Sibley and Oakley Rd.

Later this summer we have some boundary work being carried out by Harpenden Town Council, with new fencing planned for Aldwickbury, Cross Lane, Harpenden Rise and Piggottshill. There has been a crisis with some of our machinery, especially at PH this season, but some of the mowers are 20+ years old. We are testing a mulching mower currently, which has proved very easy to operate, where previously many of our machines have been conventional lawn mowers and we are not trying to have grass cut like Wimbledon or Wembley!

Later this month we hope to have a 'Breakout Barbecue', further details to follow - all we need is sunshine - we have plenty of enthusiasm!

# THANKS EVERYONE!

# **SECRETARY'S REPORT - Gill Hicks**

I took over as Secretary from my husband Peter in January this year. Due to Covid-19 restrictions there were no monthly committee meetings from April 2020. Instead the committee were kept informed via monthly written reports from Officers and Site Reps.

We were able to start committee meetings safely again in May 2021 and have had three meetings so far this year. There won't be one in August due to the AGM, the next one taking place in September. Prior to each meeting a Trustee meeting takes place to agree the agenda and to discuss other priority matters.

There has continued to be a steady number of requests for sheds and polytunnels on plots. Virtually all are approved but they come with conditions as per the rules.

We were unable to have an AGM in 2020, so this year all the committee are up for re-election with a number of new officers who have been co-opted until we were able to elect them at this AGM, myself included.

Six rule changes have been proposed and will be discussed at the AGM.

# **TREASURER'S REPORT – CAROLE PAMPHLETT**

SOUTH HARPENDEN ALLOTMENTS & GARDENS SOCIETY							
Year En	nd Receip	ts and Paym	ents Accounts				
For the	Year End	ling 31st Dec	cember 2020				

PAYMEN	TS			Year 2020				Year 2019		
Site/Shop I	Maintenance	)	£	653.33			£	970.27		
	ve/Projects		£	71.45			£	2,364.51		
	- part payme	nt	£	2,000.00						
Machinery				Zero			£	2,145.00		
	Maintenance	e/Service	£	1,688.92			£	2,348.62		
Machinery			£	271.21			£	398.23		
Sec/Admin			£	203.44			£	455.65		
Water Rate	s		£	2,893.04			£	1,761.05		
Rates			£	716.91			£	613.58		
Electricity			£	405.15			£	356.07		
Newsletter	1			n/a			£	77.70		
Insurance			£	481.52			£	481.52		
Health & S	afetv		£	120.00			£	60.98		
Society Aw			£	67.46			£	286.53		
Publicity/Pl			£	105.00			-	~		
Donations			~	n/a			£	50.00		
Rent refund	ds		£	79.50			~	00.00	-	
Shop refun			£	87.50					-	
RHS			£	35.00	-					
Manure pu	rchase		£	300.00			£	300.00		
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RECEIPTS	\$		~	10,110.40	-	10,173.45	~	12,000.71	~	12,000.71
	Town Coun	cil Grant	£	3,100.00	-		£	3,100.00		
Allotment F			£	11,782.60	-		£	11,106.18	-	
Associate I			£	185.00	-		£	182.00		
Other Incor			£	60.00	-		£	57.50		
Manure inc			£	418.00	-		£	345.00		
	rom Member	e Shon	£	500.00	-		£	500.00		
Rent refund		зопор	£	30.00	-		-	300.00		
Shop refun			£	92.50	-					
	n for shop ro	h	£	900.00	-			n/a		
Contributio	in for shop it	201	£	17,068.10		17,068.10	£	15,290.68	£	15,290.68
	Surplus fo	r the year	L	17,000.10	£	6,888.67	L	15,290.00	£	2,620.97
	Surpius to	r the year			L	0,000.07	_		L	2,620.97
Outings F	und		New	record in mair	. f	de				
Expenditur			NOW	record in main	Tur	us	-£	650.00		
RHS Affilia					-		-£	35.00		
Sub total	tion-Paid				-		-£	685.00	-	
					-					
Income Outings Fu	and total for f	2010			-		£	833.00	0	140.00
Outings Fu	ind total for 2	2019			-		L	148.00	£	148.00
Dive Beler	an hild from				-				£	2,768.97
		m previous year		40.000.00	_		0	0 405 77		
S.H.A.G.S			£	12,003.20	-		£	9,185.77		
Outings Fu			0	00.00	-		£	65.00	-	
Petty Cash	1		£	33.89	0	10.007.00	£	17.35		0.000.40
	TOTAL		£	12,037.09		12,037.09	£	9,268.12		9,268.12
YEAR END	JIOTALS				£	18,925.76			£	12,037.09
									-	
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MONIES H	unde								£	
SHAGS Fu									P	
SHAGS Fu Outings Fu	ind	k as at 24/42/20	120		0	10 007 05	_		£	
SHAGS Fu Outings Fu Balance in	IND HSBC Ban	k as at 31/12/20	120			18,887.85			£	12,003.20
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statement of Assets held in H	arpenden Buildi	ng Society			
Building and Contingency Fund					
he Society maintains a ring-fenced fig	aure to cover				
ninsurable assets such as the Comm		d			
tock, plus machinery and sheds with					
Contingency Fund	£ 4,000.00				
Accrued net interest to 31/12/2019	£ 2,650.66				
	£51,650.66				
Gross interest for 2020	£ 51.65				
	£ 51,702.31				
Freasurers Report for the fina	ncial year 2020				
020 was a difficult year for managing					
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	as a loc of interest no	m local people	to take on	a pior, so our	income
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Members' Club (Shop) Ac	counts to 31st	December 2020		
Year End Receipts and Pa	yments Accou	nts for 2020		
	¥		¥	
Income	Year 2020		Year 2019	
Sales to members		£ 11,378.88		£ 8,018.58
		2 11,070.00		2 0,010.00
Expenditure				
Stock purchase	-£ 8,798.27			-£ 6,463.29
Shop Maintenance	-£ 21.99			
	-£ 8,820.26	-£ 8,820.26		
Trading Surplus		£ 2,558.62		£ 1,555.29
Constian neid to Contatu	6 500.00			C 500.00
Donation paid to Society Roof repairs	-£ 500.00 -£ 1,160.00			-£ 500.00
Noor repairs	-£ 1,160.00	-£ 1,660.00		
	-2 1,000.00	£ 898.62		£ 1,055.29
Balance brought from 31/12/19		2 030.02		2 1,000.29
Barclays Bank	£ 16,374.24		£15,377.74	
Cash In Hand	£ 426.41		£ 367.62	
	£ 16,800.65	£ 16,800.65	£15,745.36	£15,745.36
		£17,699.27		£16,800.65
Monies Held at 31/12/20				
Bal in Barclays Bank	£17,523.30		£ 16,374.24	
Cash in Hand	£ 175.97		£ 426.41	
	£ 17,699.27	£17,699.27	£ 16,800.65	£16,800.65
Profit and Loss Account		Year 2020		Year 2019
Opening stoke at sale value	£ 7,602.85		-£ 6,727.48	
Closing stock at sale value	-£ 6,393.90		£ 7,602.85	
Stock	£ 1,208.95	£ 1,208.95	£ 875.37	£ 875.37
Plus Trading surplus		£ 2,558.62		£ 1,555.29
Surplus		£ 3,767.57	Surplus	£ 2,430.66
Less donation to S.H.A.G.S	-£ 500.00		Less	-£ 500.00
Less Roof repairs	-£ 1,160.00		Surplus 201	£ 1,930.66
	-£ 1,660.00	-£ 1,660.00		
Surplus 2020		£ 2,107.57		
Despite the major problems are a	latment chen had	2020 un manage d'a		ading cumbin
Despite the major problems our a As you will know Roger Gillett ou				
July and was unable to continue				
the hard work of Mike Cobley and				
the relief of our plot holders. So, a			anages to stay 0	pun, maon to

# LETTING COORDINATOR AND DATABASE MANAGER'S REPORT - Jim Machin

## Letting

Currently we are fully let but awaiting completion of one agreed letting; the tenant is away. It has been a very busy letting period since March 2020.

Number of lettings to new tenants 59 Number of lettings to existing tenants 3

Over the period we gave new people on the waiting list priority over existing tenants unless the tenant only had a half plot or where there was no one on the waiting list wanting to take on the plot.

#### **Letting Procedure**

The Council have agreed that we can continue to let by email rather than signed documents so we are in the process of changing the procedure.

## **Letting Secretary**

We are in the process of changing Letting Secretary and Alex Davis is currently working on lettings and database with the aim of taking them over shortly.

## Waiting List

We have 30 people on the list currently wanting a plot and 6 people who have expressed interest but not able to take one until a later date. Of the 30, 21 are looking for Harpenden Rise or Cross Lane so the number for the remaining sites is low.

## **Bee Keeping**

The beekeeper who kept bees at Cross Lane has found it to be unsatisfactory and has given up.

## Database

A small change was made to add a separate column for the sub-plots - A, B etc. - to improve data handling.

#### Wayleaves

Four new wayleaves granted to new tenants.

# DISTRIBUTION (SHOP) MANAGER'S REPORT - James Gallagher

Over the short period of time since I became the shop manager, everyone has been very welcoming. Mike has always been cheerful and helpful. Only doing one Sunday a fortnight it is nice for me to see a few regular faces coming back each time. The shop is well stocked with items. Over the last couple of weeks it has been a bit slower on Sunday mornings, either because of sport going on or a few damp mornings. Also it's now going into the time of year where people are going on holiday and potentially being allowed to leave the country again.

We have an order of winter/spring garlic bulbs due shortly, a seed potato order has been placed with much reduced quantities from last year as quite a few were left over. Also Mike has placed a spring bulb order. We're looking to get another small order in for the shop soon, especially slug pellets. One of good sellers within the shop have been slug pellets as most plot holders seem to have lots around!

Looking forward to the opportunity within the shop over the rest of the season and to helping increase sales and trying new ideas to attract more members.

# **MACHINERY MANAGER'S REPORT - Roger White**

See minutes.

# COMMUNICATION / WEB MASTER'S REPORT - Rod Cooley

In accordance with changing rules, Covid 19 policies have been created and put on the website after discussions with the society trustees and information received from NAS and Harpenden Town Council. The Society Covid 19 policy has been constantly evolving. This included reopening of all of the communal tool sheds subject to guidelines. An updated Covid 19 policy, from the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021 relaxation of rules will be issued soon.

An auto reply message has been set up on the society's Gmail account to answer common questions. A frequently asked questions and a contact form section has been added to the website to allow members and other people to ask questions or raise issues. The queries are sent directly to R.Cooley's email address. This section has been very useful and, for example, picked up a strimming noise complaint.

Members have been advised how to avoid society email going into the junk / SPAM folders.

Useful links have been added to the society's website "useful links" webpage.

Many messages have been sent to different sites over the past year.

"The plot so far" communication has been added to the website as well as regular updates on the society shop called "Shop News".

The details for the "Committee of officers and site reps" have been continually updated.

The 2020 photo competition was very successful and the same approach will be used for the 2021 photo competition. A new dropbox folder has been created for the members' photos to be uploaded to it and updated instructions, with a link to the folder, will be sent to all members nearer the time when photographs are to be requested.

Dropbox were contacted when they made changes to their file labelling for uploaded files. This would have prevented the photo competition from going ahead. Other people also complained & Dropbox decided to revert back to their original file labelling for uploaded files.

Weebly were contacted when their Scribd document command stopped working. Weebly repaired the command.

The Society website <u>www.shallotments.weebly.com</u> is still completely free to the society as well as the society email address <u>shallotments@gmail.com</u>