

SOUTH HARPENDEN ALLOTMENT & GARDENS SOCIETY

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD ON 10 AUGUST 2022

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), Rachel Andrew (RA) Geoff Bateman (GB), Steve Case (SC) Rod Cooley (RC), Keith Davison (KD), Linda Gahagan (LG) Jane Keech (JK), Mike Lawford (ML), Rosemary Poyser (RP), Hazel Upton (HU), Roger White (RW);

Society Members: Paul Gardiner (PG), John Grundy (JG), Ron Jesson (RJ), Tom Lloyd (TL), Kim Mileham (KL), Ed Marshall (EM), Alena Marshall (AM), Hugh Poyser (HP), Noelle Roberts (NR) Mike Stratton (MS);

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

APOLOGIES: Alex Davis, Marcia Dorey, Brian Cooper, Svetlana Emelianova, Fraser Gordon, Helen Loveland, Peter Loveland, Rich Waight

CHAIR: Mike Cobley

The Chair welcomed all those attending the AGM. The Society is now in its 53rd year.

1. Minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting

The 2021 AGM Minutes were presented to the meeting and agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting. These were approved unanimously.

2. Matters arising from Minutes

None.

3. Year End Accounts & Treasurer's report

See report attached to minutes.

CP stated that though shop donated £500 to S.H.A.G.S but this wasn't banked until 2022 so this doesn't show on both sets of accounts. CP pointed out the contingency fund in the building society due to a windfall many years ago. This would be used if we lost our buildings that can't be covered by insurance.

The audit has been undertaken but not physically signed yet but will be done soon. The shop will donate £1000 to the Society this year.

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

MC led a round of applause for CP to thank her for all her hard work following a difficult year when she fractured her hip.

4. Proposed amendments to the Society Rules

Amendments to Annex 1, Annex 2 & Annex 3

Approvals for structures have previously been put to the committee. The rule amendments suggested are for this approval to be undertaken by the relevant site rep, plus one other site rep from another site, in order to streamline the process. These rule changes were agreed by a unanimous vote.

5. Trustees Reports

5.1 Chair's report – Mike Cobley

See report attached to minutes.

The council inspection is taking place on Wednesday 17th August after a gap of three years.

There has been a lot of work behind the scenes from the current committee members and it would be good to have more volunteers to help. We have a few new site reps, but more are always welcome, especially for Churchfield, Aldwickbury and Topstreet Way where we have site reps departing.

5.2 Secretary's report – Gill Hicks

See report attached to minutes.

6 Officers' & Other Reports:

6.1 Database Manager / Lettings Secretary's report – Alex Davis & Jim Machin

See report attached to minutes.

6.2 Shop Report - Mike Cobley

See report attached to minutes. There remains the issue of having no Shop Manager, so MC and FG are kept very busy, and this isn't sustainable but it's important for the shop to stay open. MC asked members speak to other plot holders to see if anyone would be happy to assist.

6.3 Machinery Manager's Report – Roger White

See report attached to minutes.

RW reported the Society has invested in some battery powered machines this year and are trialling them to see how robust they will be. MC stated we continue to have a problem with the wrong petrol being bought for the petrol mowers and E10 may be phased out altogether soon and the additive needed is expensive.

We have looked at solar panels, but there is security issue with these.

RC stated that the battery strimmer at Oakley Road is very good and popular. MC said he'd get the battery mower out after the meeting for everyone to see.

MC thanked RW for all his hard work – winter servicing starts in November.

6.4 Communications Officer / Webmaster' Report – Rod Cooley

See report attached to minutes.

RC asked that if anyone sees anything that needs updating on the website to let him know.

The photo competition will take place again this year and RC will send out an email to all members shortly. The scarecrow competition will also take place as last year. The results of the judging this year will also be saved to the website.

RA has taken over updating the S.H.A.G.S Facebook page and members will be able to post as well.

7 Election of Officers and Committee for 2022/23

- Refer to document, "Election of Committee Schedule SHAGS AGM 10 August 2022".

There have been three resignations from the committee: -

Gill Hicks – Hon Secretary
Tom Chichester-Miles – Aldwickbury site rep
John Myres – Topstreet Way site rep

Jane Keech said she would be happy to take over as Secretary if no one else was interested.

The election of **Jane Keech** as **Honorary Secretary** was proposed by MC and seconded by RG and duly elected by a unanimous vote.

During the past year the following have been co-opted as site reps on the committee: -

Stephan Barnard – Cross Lane
Rosemary Poyser – Cross Lane
Rod Cooley – Oakley Road
Richard Waight – Piggottshill
Rachel Andrew – Piggottshill
Steve Case – Piggottshill
Helen Loveland – Sibley Avenue
Peter Loveland – Sibley Avenue

All the above were proposed by RG and seconded by JK and elected by a unanimous vote.

There were no other officers up for election this year.

Posts remaining vacant at this AGM:-

Honorary President
Distribution/Shop Manager
Aldwickbury Site Rep
Topstreet Way Site Rep

7. Questions from Members

7.1 MS asked when the tree in the corner of PH would be taken down as it's killing his plot – 2/3rd of it is not able to grow. MC will raise this with the council at the inspection on 17th August. They do currently have a policy to not doing anything about healthy trees.

7.2 HU said it had been reported there was a problem with 3 trees having Dutch Elm disease. GB thought that was highly unlikely there would be any Elm trees and he would come and look. MC would also mention to the council.

7.3 PG asked when the door to the TAR would be refurbished. MC said this would hopefully be done by September.

8 Any Other Business

8.1 The current issue with Muntjac Deer at various sites was discussed. A nature camera will be set up to see what is occurring and then discussed at the next committee meetings. 50m of stock fencing costs £3133 and the deer can apparently jump up to 6 feet high – would be difficult to justify spending this amount of money at all the sites affected.

8.2 JK comments on how lovely Oakley Road is now looking.

There were no other items for AOB.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.17pm.

The next AGM will provisionally be held in May 2023 (exact date tbc) at 7.30pm in the Ted Allen Room

TRUSTEE, OFFICER & COMMITTEE REPORTS AGM 2022

CHAIR'S REPORT – MIKE COBLEY

The Society has had another good year, with nearly 100% occupancy of our 400 plots available. The sites are looking better than ever due to the diligence of our plot holders and the continued hard work by our site reps.

Oakley Road has improved the most, overall, with Rod taking over as site rep, still assisted by Mike. Peter & Helen have stepped in temporarily at Sibley Avenue acting as site reps. New site reps have joined at Cross Lane, Rosie and Stephan taking over from Jenny and Dominic. Harpenden Rise has had the benefit of most of our 2022 maintenance and renewal budget this season. The site faced upheaval for several weeks when contractors needed access through the site for the renewal of the playground equipment next door and the plot holders have worked together setting up for the new larger shed. Even this caused problems with a neighbour complaining to HTC asking that the shed be moved as they could see it.

We are experiencing parking problems in the neighbourhood both at Harpenden Rise and also at Cross Lane. We will continue to press to get the barrier removed from the railway bridge and resited beyond our gateway to the site. This involves HTC initially, but then St Albans Council, Herts County Council and Network Rail. We need a new site rep for CF as Keith has wanted to step down for the last 2 years. At PH, our biggest site we have new additional site reps to be elected at the AGM - Rich, Rachel and Steve.

Another big expenditure in 2022 has been an upgrade in our machinery. After an initial purchase of a Stiga mulching mower last year, 3 new machines have been bought for CF, SA and TW. We have also bought new battery equipment, with 2 battery mowers and a battery strimmer. Recharging batteries now is added to the site reps' tasks.

The Society runs with the help of the Committee, and we are sorry that we will lose our Secretary following this AGM, so we wish Gill best wishes with her new role with Harpenden Trust. Carole has made a steady recovery after her accident last December but has found it hard work at times getting up and down stairs to her 'office'. With some planned alterations to her house due soon, things can only get better. Thanks are due to everyone on the Committee for their continued help running SHAGS for all our members

Our allotment shop remains a problem without a manager.

SECRETARY'S REPORT – GILL HICKS

We were pleased to be able to have in person committee meetings again from May 2021 and have held monthly or bi-monthly meetings since then. Minutes of the meetings are available on the S.H.A.G.S. website for members to view.

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. The rule change we propose this year relate to the approval of structures with the idea of streamlining the process and make it quicker for members to be given a decision, so hoping this won't be a contentious change.

I have regrettably had to resign as Secretary due to other voluntary roles I undertake with the Harpenden Trust, though I've agreed to stay on until the end of 2022 if no one comes forward prior to the AGM. Thanks to Mike for all his support whilst I've been Secretary and good luck going forward to everyone on the committee, I've enjoyed working with you all.

TREASURER'S REPORT – CAROLE PAMPHLETT

See following pages

SOUTH HARPENDEN ALLOTMENTS & GARDENS SOCIETY

Year End Receipts and Payments Accounts

For the Year Ending 31st December 2021

PAYMENTS	Year 2021		Year 2020	
Site/Shop Maintenance	£ 924.34		£ 653.33	
Site Improve/Projects	£ 1,550.00		£ 71.45	
Shop roof - part payment	n/a		£ 2,000.00	
Machinery Purchase	£ 890.80		Zero	
Machinery Maintenance/Service	£ 1,326.26		£ 1,688.92	
Machinery Fuel	£ 245.50		£ 271.21	
Sec/Admin	£ 448.91		£ 203.44	
Water Rates	£ 2,592.95		£ 2,893.04	
Rates	£ 824.44		£ 716.91	
Electricity	£ 317.20		£ 405.15	
Newsletter	n/a		n/a	
Insurance	£ 481.52		£ 481.52	
Health & Safety	£ 66.00		£ 120.00	
Society Awards	£ 264.66		£ 67.46	
Publicity/PR	£ 100.00		£ 105.00	
Donations			n/a	
Rent refunds	£ 75.00		£ 79.50	
Shop refunds	£ 221.70		£ 87.50	
Shop refunds outstanding	£ 96.00			
RHS	£ 35.00		£ 35.00	
Manure purchase	n/a		£ 300.00	
	£ 10,460.28	-£ 10,460.28	£ 10,179.43	-£ 10,179.43
RECEIPTS				
Harpden Town Council Grant	£ 3,180.00		£ 3,100.00	
Allotment Rents	£ 12,144.50		£ 11,782.60	
Associate Members	£ 171.50		£ 185.00	
Other Income			£ 60.00	
Manure income	£ 8.00		£ 418.00	
Donation from Members Shop	£ 500.00		£ 500.00	
Rent refunds			£ 30.00	
Shop refunds	£ 221.70		£ 92.50	
Contribution for shop roof	n/a		£ 900.00	
	£ 16,225.70	£ 16,225.70	£ 17,068.10	£ 17,068.10
Surplus for the year		£ 5,765.42		£ 6,888.67
Plus Balance b/fd from previous year				
S.H.A.G.S Monies	£ 18,887.85		£ 12,003.20	
Petty Cash	£ 37.91		£ 33.89	
	£ 18,925.76	£ 18,925.76	£ 12,037.09	£ 12,037.09
YEAR END TOTALS		£ 24,691.18		£ 18,925.76
MONIES HELD				
Balance in HSBC Bank at Year End				£ 18,887.85
	£ 24,657.77			
Petty Cash Held	£ 33.41			£ 37.91
YEAR END TOTALS	£ 24,691.18	£ 24,691.18		£ 18,925.76

The above figures were agreed by the committee at the July 2022 meeting
 Carole Pamphlett - S.H.A.G.S.

SOUTH HARPENDEN ALLOTMENTS & GARDENS SOCIETY	
Statement of Assets held in Harpenden Building Society	
Building and Contingency Fund	
The Society maintains a ring-fenced figure to cover uninsurable assets such as the Committee Room, Shop and stock, plus machinery and sheds with all equipment stored in them.	
	£ 45,000.00
Contingency Fund	£ 4,000.00
Accrued net interest to 31/12/20	£ 2,702.31
	£ 51,702.31
Net interest for 2021	£ 51.70
	£ 51,754.01
Treasurers report for the financial year 2021	
Looking back to 2021, all our members tried hard to get back to normal. The year figures show an increase in allotment rents on the previous year, but on the whole our expenditure was higher from the year before as we had to cancel so many events due to the first Covid lockdown. The Society still remains in a strong financial, and we aim to purchase some new battery mowers in 2022 as we didn't buy any new machines in 2020 and only two mowers in 2021 as our machinery sheds had to close again due to the Covid restrictions. The new machines will benefit all of our plot holders from our eight sites.	
We continue to receive support from Harpenden Town Council, both in the form of an annual grant and a planned boundary management programme which HTC fund.	
Carole Pamphlett - S.H.A.G.S - Treasurer	
Independently examined - Jean Clare - see page 4	
Signed on behalf of the Trustees - Mike Cobley	

SOUTH HARPENDEN ALLOTMENTS & GARDENS SOCIETY**Members Club (Shop) 31st December 2021****Year End Receipts and Payments Accounts for 2021**

	Year 2021		Year 2020	
Income				
Sales to members		£ 11,812.87		£ 11,378.88
Expenditure				
Stock purchase	-£ 9,594.52		-£ 8,798.27	
Other expenditure	-£ 50.00		-£ 21.99	
	-£ 9,644.52	-£ 9,644.52	-£ 8,820.26	-£ 8,820.26
Trading Surplus		£ 2,168.35		£ 2,558.62
Donation paid to Society	n/a		-£ 500.00	
Roof repairs	n/a		-£ 1,160.00	
			-£ 1,660.00	-£ 1,660.00
		£ 2,168.35		£ 898.62
Balances brought forward				
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
		£ 19,867.62		£ 17,699.27
Monies held as at 31/12/21				
Bal in Barclays Bank	£ 19,800.77		£ 17,523.30	
Cash in Hand	£ 66.85		£ 175.97	
	£ 19,867.62	£ 19,867.62	£ 17,699.27	£ 17,699.27
Profit and Loss Account				
	Year 2021		Year 2020	
Opening stock at sale value	-£ 6,393.90		£ 7,602.85	
Closing stock at sale value	£ 6,856.34		-£ 6,393.90	
Stock	£ 462.44	£ 462.44	£ 1,208.95	£ 1,208.95
Plus Trading surplus		£ 2,168.35		£ 2,558.62
Surplus		£ 2,630.79		£ 3,767.57
Less donation to S.H.A.G.S	n/a		-£ 500.00	
Less Roof repairs	n/a		-£ 1,160.00	
			-£ 1,660.00	-£ 1,660.00
Surplus for the year		£ 2,630.79		£ 2,107.57

During 2021 our shop continued to do well with your support, but sadly we had some bad news in the autumn of 2021 Roger Gillett our very long standing shop manager sadly passed away. A number of members from the society attended his funeral and we gave a donation to the Stroke Association which was at his family's request.

This unfortunately left us without a permanent shop manager, however we did have a volunteer come forward but unfortunately, he found it too much with his other work commitments. So currently, Mike, Fraser together with the Sunday morning ladies have been running our shop, but we desperately need a permanent shop manager.

SOUTH HARPENDEN ALLOTMENTS & GARDENS SOCIETY
Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees of
South Harpenden Allotments and Gardens Society

I have examined the Receipts and Payments Accounts and Statement of Assets for the year ended 31st December 2021, prepared from the records maintained by the Society.

Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Independent Examiner.

The trustees of the Society are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. It is my responsibility to form an independent opinion, based on my examination of those financial statements and to report my opinion to you.

Basis of Opinion

My examination includes evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.

The examination was planned so as to obtain all the information and explanations which were considered necessary in order to provide sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance the financial statements are free from material misstatements, whether by fraud or other irregularities or error.

Opinion

In my opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the Society's affairs for the year to 31st December 2021.

Jean Clare

July 2021

LETTING COORDINATOR AND DATABASE MANAGER'S REPORT – ALEX DAVIS & JIM MACHIN

Letting

Across the 8 sites we have over 400 plots. We have 300 + plot holders and 40+ associate members. As of the end of July we have 98.6% occupancy. There were 6 vacant plots. 2 of these have new plot holders identified and we are just completing the paperwork.

Between October 2021 and July 2022, 34 plots have been re-let.

Waiting list are well down on last year's levels. Apart from Harpenden Rise, most sites now have no, or small waiting lists. The high level of waiting list due to Covid lockdown have reduced to more normal levels. The Harpenden Rise waiting list continues to grow. At the end of July there were 17 people on the list This reflects the lack of allotment sites in north Harpenden and few plots becoming available at Harpenden Rise.

As always, new plot holders are a varied bunch from all walks of life, ages and experience. There is a common interest in growing their own produce and enjoying being outdoors. They often express surprise at the size of the sites and how they appear to be 'tucked away' in different parts of Harpenden. There is a general enjoyment of the calm feel of the sites amid a busy town.

Please continue to welcome and support our new plot holders. It is always encouraging to see re-let plots producing a good harvest.

Lettings Process

Most of the current lettings are now done by emails. This has made administration and record keeping simpler.

SHOP REPORT - MIKE COBLEY

It has now been two years since Roger had his catastrophic stroke, but the shop has continued to be profitable despite the lack of a dedicated manager. We have funded the new roof, more recently a new water heater for washing up and new main doors are on order for the end of the summer along with similar work for the Ted Allen room. Next Spring the outside woodwork will require repainting.

In recent years the shop has made an annual donation to SHAGS funds of £500, but from this year this will be increased to £1000.

The shop operates entirely by the volunteers so many thanks to Fraser (who would be a great manager if anyone can persuade him!) and the Sunday helpers Helen and Peter, Diana, Gillian, Susan and Louise.

The shop is the heartbeat of SHAGS and during the pandemic was a focus point for unofficial committee meetings and social discourse. Unless we can find a Shop Manager soon, we may have to reconsider the viability of continuing operating our much loved shop so please help and fill the vacancy.

MACHINERY MANAGER'S REPORT – ROGER WHITE

This year has seen the reopening of the machinery sheds to allow the use of shared equipment.

The Society has faced two major problems with the use and maintenance of machinery: firstly the introduction of E10 fuel at garages in September 2021 and secondly the aging of our machinery stock. In addition, recent increases in fuel price combined with the need to use 'super unleaded' E5 fuel and fuel stabiliser has made the cost of running the old petrol machines significantly higher.

The average lifespan of the machines provided by the Society to maintain the communal areas of the sites is about 5-8 years so in the spring of 2022 the Society decided to invest in two types of new machinery, namely some new petrol mulching mowers and some battery powered equipment manufactured by Stiga. The petrol mowers should hopefully last until at least 2030, by which time petrol equipment is expected to

be phased out and the battery powered machines will be assessed to determine their suitability for grass cutting, particularly on the larger sites.

Current trials with the battery machines (brushcutter and mowers) are promising although until wetter conditions return it is impossible to be sure how robust and powerful these machines are. If used carefully battery machines are likely to have significantly lower maintenance costs, are lighter, quieter, and easier to use and it seems inevitable that battery powered equipment will become the main choice of machinery in the near future.

COMMUNICATION / WEB MASTER'S REPORT – ROD COOLEY

- “The plot so far”, newsletters, minutes of meetings, and general communications, including the 2022 AGM notification, have been added to the website as well as regular updates on the society shop called “Shop News”.
- Rule changes on allowable plot structures have been updated on the website using information supplied by Gill Hicks and the committee.
- Updated machinery fuel information has been added to the website.
- Contact details for the committee members and site reps have been regularly updated on the website thanks to information supplied by Gill Hicks.
- Newsletters and general communications have been emailed to all members.
- It has been a problem to send society messages to members with BT email accounts as they are sometimes rejected as SPAM (no fault of the members). Members with BT email accounts have been sent advice on how to avoid society messages going into their junk / SPAM folder.
- Many email communications from site reps to their plot holders have been sent over the past year.
- The Covid 19 policy has been continually updated and put on the website in accordance with changes in Government policy.
- The 2021 photo competition photos were collated and sent to the competition judges for choosing the winners in time for the awards ceremony. This was done co-working with Carole Pamphlett.
- Photos of the 2021 awards ceremony winners at the awards ceremony were taken and put on the website.
- The photo competition winning photos were put on the society website as well as the winners of the photo competition and the winner of the scarecrow competition, co-working with Carole Pamphlett.
- Plot holders have been requested to submit photographs for the 2022 photo competition. In addition, members have also been asked to take part in the 2022 scarecrow competition. This has been done co-working with Jane Keech.
- The Society website www.shallotments.weebly.com is still completely free to the society as well as the society email address shallotments@gmail.com.

SIGNED: *G.J Hicks*
 Gill Hicks
 Honorary Secretary, S.H.A.G.S