

Tudorville Allotments Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Conservative Club, Wednesday 27 September 2023, 7.30 pm

MINUTES

PREAMBLE

Apologies for absence. Jane Roberts, Chris Bartram, Jean & Bernard Staite, Christine & Peter Smith, Jeremy Walters, Pauline Hemmingway, Maurice Thompson, Dave Merritt, Guy Gregory, Genevieve Mallorie.

Present. Paul Bailey, John Bosley (Secretary), Fred Ellis, Avril Fuller, Lynn Howells, John Walters (Chairman), Peter Wade, Lee Davis (Treasurer), Helen Klingopulos, Howard Foxwell, Tony Hearn, Kim Howell, Bryan Bunting, James Weatherhead, David Prier, David Reed, Mary Chambers, Alan Merrett, Jeff Dickson, Tony Horton, Mary Bell, Graham & Jane Pye, Bryony Long.

Minutes of the last meeting. The minutes from 2022 were circulated and were posted on the notice boards.

1. **Approval of the Minutes.** Approved.

2. **Matters Arising.**

a. **Toilet on the allotment site.** The secretary reported that the committee have collected information and discussed this with relevant organisations and other allotment associations.

We have no mains drainage, so alternatives were investigated; Portaloos, septic tanks and composting toilets. Of these, composting toilets are the best option and are what most allotment associations choose.

From a question on Facebook, we had 59 replies from other allotments and 54% had no toilet facilities. Of those with loos, 43% were mains toilets and 37% were composting; there was one portaloos. There are composting toilets at Ledbury allotments which are about twice the size of Ross.

Ross Town council are supportive; planning permission and approval from environmental health is needed. The cost, including installation, would be about £12,500. We don't have that money so it would have to be found by grant application and fund raising.

Composting toilets separate urine, which goes to a soakaway, from solid matter which is then covered, usually with sawdust. Periodically the solids must be removed when it has rotted down. However, this cannot be used directly on plots although it can be used on trees. Often it is buried which is what is done at Ledbury.

Quite a large area is needed for the toilet building and the associated soakaway and it couldn't go near any of the boundaries. We would have to use a small plot in the middle of the site.

The committee's recommendation is not to proceed with this. The finances and the installation are challenging but what mainly led to our decision is hygiene and maintenance. The toilet must be regularly cleaned and maintained, consumables replenished, and periodically the solids must be disposed of. We were worried about who will do this.

There were a few comments from members but **the meeting agreed to take no further action.**

b. **Lightweight Strimmer.** The secretary reported that the committee had reviewed what was available. Battery power machines are the lightest but are inappropriate as we have no mains electricity onsite for charging. Most petrol brush cutters are a similar weight to our existing Hondas. There are some lighter models, but they are mainly for domestic (or personal) use for trimming grass only and are not suitable for our shared-user environment. In addition, the models considered were 2-stroke engines, possibly leading to confusion when fuelling. It was decided not to buy a lighter strimmer.

Kim Howell (plot 27A) said that she found the existing mowers heavy to use and wondered if a lighter one were available. The chairman said that we would investigate.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

My overall impression this year has been that the plots are as tidy as ever, with a lot of produce leaving the site. Site tidiness is generally good, but I would ask members to remain vigilant and tidy up any litter they may come across.

Last year I used two words for the weather we had during the season, "hot and dry", this year one will suffice. Working in Agriculture as I do, the most commonly used phrase I have heard about the weather is "challenging" often followed by "it's character-building stuff" both of which apply to work and allotmenting.

I have noticed a few things this season, some good, some not! Among the best veg I have grown this time have been planted later than I have in the past, indeed I will probably be picking French beans and new potatoes well into October. A note to myself I think not to rush to fill the whole plot up in April. For those of you that follow my efforts to grow Parsnips I am pleased to announce that I have actually got some this year, mostly thanks to home grown seed supplied by Avril. Thank you.

Also, more generally I have seen a lot of insect mesh being used to protect brassicas, but unfortunately, I have also seen a lot of butterflies under the netting, showing that it needs to be firmly secured to prevent access by the dreaded cabbage white. I netted some cabbage early in the year, didn't check them, and later discovered that I had started a slug and snail rescue centre, providing them with a sheltered environment, free from predators and with all the cabbage they could eat!

I went on holiday at the end of June, and whilst away picked up an email from John B to say that someone had been injured on the plots falling onto a metal post. I duly resolved to look into this on my return, only to find the offending posts were mine and that the injured party was a committee member, who looks after the Health and Safety on the plots. No lasting harm was done and I have stopped using the posts, but the serious point is that we should all be looking at our plots with regard to our own safety as well as to that of our neighbours and anyone else who may pass by!

The paths and other communal areas have been well mowed this year, thanks to those concerned. I would estimate that the average plot must take ten to fifteen minutes to mow, so another five spent on other areas goes a long way to keeping the site well presented.

My thanks as always to all the committee for their help and support throughout the year, especially to Lee and John, our treasurer and secretary respectively. Lee has steered us through to our new bank account, moving us into the online age, dramatically cutting down on paperwork. John B has had a busy year as you will gather from his report, with a lot of plot changes as well as Health and Safety issues to investigate! A mention to for Helen for another good seed order last year. The seed scheme offers big savings, so don't forget to order in the next week or so.

It is important that members appreciate the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes to keep the Association ticking over, we are not large but things like plot allocation, rent collecting, insurance and water all need attending to.

New committee members are always welcome, especially someone from the Walford Road site please.

I note from the agenda that I am up for re-election this year. Whilst I am happy enough to stand again, I would not stand in the way of anyone else who cares to.

I think this is probably enough from me, so I'll hand you over to John, Lee and Helen to present their reports. If anyone has any questions or suggestions, then please feel to raise them in AOB later.

Thank you.

John Walters

SECRETARY'S REPORT

We have 69 different plots (9 at Walford Road) with 61 plot holders and 1 vacant plot. Since the last AGM 14 people have applied for allotments and we have allocated 11 plots and the average waiting time was about 35 weeks. We still have 8 on the waiting list.

In the 4 years I have been secretary 46 people have applied for plots. Most applicants for plots are women, although quite a few apply on behalf of a male partner. Applicants are getting younger. We have had a few people underestimate what is involved with an allotment and have given up relatively quickly.

Whilst we have a waiting list, they will take priority over an existing member having an additional plot. If you want a larger, or smaller plot, let me know and we will try to accommodate requests before releasing to new members.

Some members have placed compost bins, and other items against the boundary fences. Plot holders have now removed these and the site rules have been revised to stress that everything must be within the plot boundary. There is a historical problem with items along the cemetery hedge but this will cease when these plots next change hands. We asked one member to cut back trees which were overhanging paths. Trees can cause problems with shade and obstruction and again we have covered the issue in the revised site rules. The rules will be sent out in October and now include maximum permitted sizes on greenhouses and polytunnels.

We have had complaints from residents of the Park Homes about weeds in the boundary hedge. For the past two years we have addressed this on an ad-hoc basis, but we need a permanent solution. We will probably be cutting back the nettles so that the strip along the fence can in the future be mowed and strimmed.

We have replaced some of the covers on water tanks including those at Walford Road which never had any and suffered from falling leaves. Quite a few of the plots no longer have a numbered sign; some have been damaged or lost and we have created quite a few new plots by splitting larger ones. We will start to replace these over the winter.

In June we opened the allotments as part of Ross Open Gardens and 61 people visited the site over the weekend which is low compared with some gardens that had over 800 visitors. However, we are some distance from most of the activity and a special journey was necessary. Despite the low numbers, the committee feel it is right to support this community event. I would like to thank those who acted as a steward and those who tidied their plots and the site.

We do periodically check the site and chase members who are not maintaining their plot, but if you have a neighbouring plot which is troublesome, please let me know.

I would like to thank John Walters for providing manure which is good stuff and Rob Bell (plot 29A) for providing wood chips which have been very popular.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The new Lloyds Bank Account opened in October 2022 has been a success and has saved us on account charges compared to HSBC. The new account also allows us to pay in cheques via a mobile device, which is a great convenience. BACS payments have increased, and are much appreciated, as they are quicker and easier to manage.

A dry summer and autumn in 2022 has likely led to the increase in water costs for the year, up approximately 32% on the previous year. Mower servicing and repairs was up approximately 31% on the previous year, even though we had no major repairs. Petrol costs for the year are down approximately 28%. With changes to the cost per litre this does suggest significantly less petrol consumption compared to the previous year.

The 2022 seeds order cost was approximately 32% up on the previous year. It is encouraging to see so many members making use of the facility.

All other outgoings are comparable to the previous year.

The small increase in rent charges for the coming year appear to have been well received and we thank you for this. As you will see from the accounts report (attached), rising prices across the board have seen greater expenditure, the increased rents are aimed to maintain our healthy bank balance and give us funds should a major or unexpected expenditure be required.

Net income for the year is at £244.51, with a balance on 31/08/2023 at £3,034.64.

Lee Davis

SEED REPORT

Helen Klingopulos reminded members of the benefit of ordering seeds using the scheme we have with Kings Seeds and reminded members that orders should be returned by 31 October; boxes for orders are in the communal sheds.

Helen also asked members to think about planting flowers (even if only 1m²) and using green manure. She gave [an interesting statistic](#):

“On a single day in summer, one acre of wildflower meadow can contain 3 million flowers, producing 1 kg of nectar sugar. That’s enough to support nearly 96,000 honeybees per day.”

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The summary of the accounts as 31 August 2023 is attached. These were unanimously accepted.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

The Chairman (John Walters) and Secretary (John Bosley), having been in post for two years, must stand down but are both willing to stand again. There were no other nominations for these posts and both were re-elected.

As is usual the Chairman asked if any other members wished to join the committee but there were no nominations. Before the meeting Guy Gregory (plot 45) had said that he would join to represent the Walford Road site.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. Alan Merrett (plot 51) raised the issue of trees at Walford Road. Kerry Barnett (plot 47) had also emailed about this. The trees on the Walford Road site are getting large, starting to encroach on plots, causing shade and damaging sheds. This will be looked at.
2. James Weatherhead (plot 13A) mentioned that we had previously had the police visit the site to security mark equipment and wondered if it was worth doing again. This will be considered.
3. Tony Horton said as a new member he has been made to feel welcome and thanked everyone. He asked if we had considered additional communications between members, eg WhatsApp. The Chairman thought this a good idea and worth investigating.
4. Geoff Dickson said that he was a member of Ross Men's Shed and that they could probably help with producing plot number signs. He was thanked for the offer and it was suggested he discusses this with Bryan Bunting who is handling this for the committee.

The meeting closed at 20:25.

Tudorville Allotment Association
Accounts Report for 01/09/2022 to 31/08/2023

2021 - 2022	Income	2022 - 2023
£ 1,741.92	Rents	£ 1,841.86
£ 636.02	Seeds Order	£ 889.50
£ 205.00	John Taylor Memorial	£ -
£ 2,582.94	TOTAL	£ 2,731.36

2021 - 2022	Expenditure	2022 - 2023
£ 635.20	Seeds Order	£ 843.46
£ 9.45	Printing and Stationery	£ 5.95
£ 52.12	Site Maintenance	£ 100.92
£ 131.42	John Taylor Memorial	£ 46.32
£ 47.20	Old Bank Account Charges	£ 30.80
£ 240.23	Welsh Water	£ 319.63
£ 201.76	Insurance	£ 203.76
£ 419.38	Mower Servicing and Repairs	£ 551.97
£ 137.40	Petrol	£ 107.04
£ 168.00	NSALG Membership	£ 177.00
£ 100.00	Compost	£ 100.00
£ 37.50	Room Hire (AGM)	£ -
£ 2,179.66	TOTAL	£ 2,486.85

2021 - 2022	Balances	2022 - 2023
£ 2,386.85	Brought Down	£ 2,790.13
£ 403.28	Net Income	£ 244.51
£ 2,790.13	Carried Forward	£ 3,034.64