

Interim Annual General Meeting of Exmouth & District Allotments Association

Saturday 9th April 2022 10.00am.

St John the Evangelist Church Withycombe Village Road EX8 3AE

Minutes

Apologies: -Mr. and Mrs. Cowper, G Elliott, G and J Ellis, A Goodman, S. Hooper, A. Jenkinson, D. Poor, J. Simpson, J. Singleton, A. Taylor- Broadhurst, M Whale

Attending: - 33 members

Minutes were proposed as accurate by Matt Taylor and seconded by G Wyatt

- 1) **Presidents Welcome** - Janet Cuff welcomed the Members and thanked them for attending this AGM
- 2) Minutes of previous AGM 18th September were approved without correction
- 3) **Chairperson / Secretary Report** – Cheryl Chessum
 - a) It was explained that the meeting would be conducted in two parts. The first part would be to deal with agenda items 1 to 8 which is the business part. The second part will be for discussion, questions and answers as well as responding to AOB items sent in before the meeting.
 - b) The Committee Members present were introduced to the Membership in attendance and advised we are also well supported by two members of the Town Council Olly Davey and David Poor who attend our committee meetings and act as our link into the wider Town Council on the Associations behalf. We continue to enjoy a positive and constructive relationship with the Town Council too.
 - c) The Membership were informed that the major improvement works on both sites - paths, parking areas, chippings bins, key infrastructures renovated and improved has now been completed for this year. The hedge, tree and boundary work has been completed in time for legal compliance with non-disturbance to nesting birds. This has included the removal of several dead and dangerous trees on the Pound Lane Site. The hedge work is part of an ongoing plan for the next 3 years to gradually strengthen and improve them but advised some areas may look worse before they look better. We now move into a maintenance phase rather than major improvements and expenditure.
 - d) Vast amounts of rubbish and debris of all sorts continued to be identified, moved, sorted, and then removed to improve the sites. There will be no more funded rubbish removal in the coming year. She thanked the phenomenal effort made by Carolyn Priest and Fiona Priest and several volunteers to clear a huge mound of rubbish on Pound Lane and from neglected plots there where rubbish had been abandoned and left for others to clear. This is in addition to the site coordination work and remains a voluntary role.
 - e) Thanks were given to the Site Coordinator for Hamilton Lane and the volunteer work done across the site throughout the year. We are grateful to David Smith HL and Annie Goodman PL for their roles in rodent management.
 - f) The Membership was advised that for the first time in two years we will be reviewing the rules for members governing the Association. Amongst issues we will be revisiting bonfires, Astroturf and raising sheds off the ground. These will be presented to a meeting of the full Town Council for ratification and then implemented across both sites.

- g) Following the judging of the In Your Neighbourhood awards by the RHS and hosted by Exmouth in Bloom the Wildlife plot and Veg Course, our entry for this year was awarded Level 5 'Outstanding'. Thanks to Joy Simpson, John Singleton, Noel Allen and Dawn Witkiss in particular for making this happen.
- h) The Vegetable Growing Course, offered to all people on the waiting list to help them get the skills to manage and grow food on an Allotment once they have come to the top of the waiting list goes from strength to strength.

4) **Treasurers Report – John Barwick**

a) The Accounts will be presented to the Membership in respect of the Management Account and Club Account for the year 30th June 2022 at the AGM in February 2023.

Some clarification in the Management Account

- a) It is expected there will be an outlay of 30k expenditure across the accounting period to be reported.
- b) In the Accounting year 2018 to 2019 the balance of the Management Account was £54,000
- c) In the Accounting year 2019 to 2020 the balance of the Management Account was £63,000
- d) At the end of this year 2020 to 2022 (a 20-month accounting period due to change of year end Accounts) the balance is predicted to be £50,000. The income is being well used to support improvements across the sites.
- e) The deficit forecast for the year on the income to the Management Account is £4,500
- f) All plot deposits continue to be protected in the balance sheet in a separate interest accruing bank account within TSB.
- g) The water bills were inaccurate and the underusage charged for by SWW now being corrected will contribute to the deficit.
- h) We have used reserve funds for a number of one-off expenditures in improvements. These are paths being fully restored on both sites for safe ease of access, chippings bins in various locations for accessibility and improved parking areas on both sites. Other work may be identified as the year proceeds.

Some Clarification in the Club Account

- i) Renovation and improvement work has been carried out on the Shed at Hamilton Lane. This shed was funded by a £10,000 National Lottery Grant but the brief on which the money was granted has never been met in full. It now meets that brief. Although unlikely, at any point the National Lottery

could have inspected how the money was spent and challenged the build and requested monies returned due to failing to meet the basis on which the money was granted.

- j) We have approx. £7,000 of financial value in stock across both shops. While our horticultural suppliers have put their prices up, we do often remain better value and more competitive than Garden Centre's. The stock value reflects the decision to buy a large amount of stock in advance to protect the membership from rising prices where we can into the future.

5) Vote on Honoraria proposed by Cheryl Chessum

JB reminded the membership that the honoraria were not a payment but a thank you for all the voluntary work undertaken by the identified persons on behalf of the Association across the year. Honoraria were proposed for:

- a) Treasurer - £500
- b) Secretary - £500
- c) Site Coordinators PL - £75 HL - £100.
- d) Shop Managers HL - £75 PL - £75

The Honoraria were voted on and agreed by majority.

- 6) Resignation of all Officers and Committee followed by Election of Officers & Committee for 2022 – 2023. The nomination forms were presented one by one and each one was voted on to stand on the Membership Committee on behalf of EDAA.

The results were as follows: -

President and Shop Manager HL - Janet Cuff
Vice- President – John Patrick
Chair/ Secretary – Cheryl Chessum
Treasurer – John Barwick
Pound Lane Site Coordinator - Carolyn Priest
Hamilton Lane Site Coordinator – Julia Jacobs
Website Manager and Veg Course Lead – John Singleton
Rodent management and Site support for Pound Lane – Annie Goodman
IT support and site management support - Stewart Shram

- 7) Presentation of awards for a range of gardening accomplishments by Site Coordinators:

Pound Lane

PL71 B Waterson
PL34 S Bentley
PL72 P Bater
PL59 and 60A J and G Ellis
PL68A D Myatt
PL21 A Taylor-Broadhurst
PL6A A and T Tipping
PL17 C Lees and S Rich
PL48 P Burns

Hamilton Lane

HL171 Z Hawkins
HL181 Gerald Bishop

HL25/11 J Simpson
HL125 M Whale
HL48 and 49 C Dowling
HL62 and 63 B Milford
HL188A and 189B B Lomas
HL219 and 220 Jean Petit and Matt Taylor
HL134 A Jenkinson

8) AOB – Veterans Plot. Removed as request withdrawn.

9) **Part Two**

Presidents Introduction - Janet Cuff

- JC presented the proposal for the unified naming of the facilities across Hamilton Lane site be known as the Hive Community with each facility being linked together under this identity. JC explained it was the linking of areas of different activity with each contributing to the member facilities of the Association. It was agreed to adopt this by the membership in a show of hands. This will include the formal opening of the Jesse Collings Room later this month.

Chair

- CC gave a brief talk on the background of the man Jesse Collings, a local Littleham man who was an important figure in the allotment movement and his contribution to campaigning for land to be let led eventually to legislation which enabled the statutory provision of Allotments to the community. The room will be officially opened as a Community Room by Mike Hawkins on 30th April 2022. All welcome.
- Padlocks we use across both sites are gradually failing and cannot be replaced. They are out of manufacture. Work will begin to investigate managing this issue and how we proceed in the coming months.
- Grant aided Adapted beds Project will proceed later in the year. We are catching up with some urgent work which needs to be done including removal of dead elms, particularly on PL. S Bentley, J Collett, commented that the hedge work near her plot left garden waste uncleared and so this will be noted for feedback to contractor.

Treasurer

- A software programme is currently being considered to streamline the accounting process for the Association.
- **Rents** – Every plothead has signed a tenancy agreement signed to say they agreed to rules of the Association and from the outset it is clear that annual rent renewals are due by the 31st January each year. This has never changed.
- Of the 45 reminders sent out from the 1st February only 2 to 3 could be considered genuine reasons for non-payment. We terminated 2 plotheaders for non-payment and expect this to increase. The principle is ‘no rent – no tenancy agreement – no plot.’
- Rent renewals for January 2023 will be 3 sessions at HL and 1 at PL over weekends to reflect the proportionality of the plots.
- **Water supply** - is very old and reserve accounts need to be held to cover any catastrophic breakdown which we would need to fund ourselves. Historically the Association has and will continue to have the need to protect a substantial reserve. It may be possible to look into possible costings but this will be difficult to predict due to extent of work, rising labour costs and rising material costs.
- **Adapted Beds** The updated plans have been reviewed and we have already raised £5,000 towards the cost and aim to continue to raise funds to cover 75% of the costs. However, we need to start the project as the RHS grant of £3,000 needs to be spent within a certain timeframe.

- **Waterless Toilet in Kingston Road** area has been set aside as too expensive to fund at the moment.
- **Card reader in HL Shop** – this has proved to be a very popular innovation and accounts show members are spending more.
- **Association membership figures** have increased. In 2017-18 324 memberships, 2018-19 324, in 2019-20 424. In the current year the number of registered memberships is 487 and can be predicted to rise to potentially 500 in the next year.

Vice President

- JP was very positive and complimentary about the progress on both sites of the EDAA over the past year which has dealt with several things which badly needed doing for some time. He thanked the Committee for finally getting them done.

Pound Lane Site Coordinator

- CP thanked all the volunteers and members on Pound Lane over the past year who have tirelessly given their time and effort to the continuing development and work tidying up various areas. CP commented on several new planned areas for the Community Hub which included compost area, swap shed and wildflower garden as well as other initiatives to improve biodiversity and be environmentally friendly for pollinators.

Chair

- CC thanked volunteers on HL for their support – Special mention to Joy Simpson and Noel Allen for maintaining the Wildlife Garden, John Hills for putting up the requested noticeboard by Gate 8 and keeping it up to date. Also the volunteers along the new path from Gate 8 planting slips to provide more wildlife hedging.

Questions and Answers

- Carol Newton expressed thanks for all the work the committee do. Also to let members know any excess produce can be taken to Open Door who will either use it to cook meals or sell it to those who are struggling for very small donation.
- Also asked if fires could be held on Saturday afternoons at PL for those who cannot have them on Sundays due to other commitments. CC stated we could consider it but unlikely as there was a problem with the local dry-cleaning business being affected by smoke. CC Confirmed that the restrictions currently in place are likely to be continued and confirmed in the rules review planned for June 2022
- Clive Sturgess again requested to have a personalized letter sent out to him regarding his rennet renewal. CC was clear this will not be the case for any member and the new system remains and he will need to look at the noticeboard.
- Chris Lees asked if his rent could be paid by direct debit and JB stated this could not be done but he could set up a standing order to the Management Account.
- Matt Taylor asked if the area cleared by the removal of the old, raised beds would have new beds. CC confirmed the area would remain clear as a turning circle was needed for cars and to allow chippings to be delivered by contractors.
- CC responded to the query that the new chippings bin seemed too small and could it be expanded. CC answered for the time being it will remain as it is and monitored.
- Elaine Lamble requested a noticeboard for the shop on PL. This was agreed.
- Gordon Elliott asked if an allotment could be set aside for Ukraine refugees. CC said if requested this was possible, but the Constitution required that they were all resident in the EX8 area but would be welcome.
- Clarity was sought on the gate locking policy and it was confirmed that, as always, if there is no one around when leaving please lock the gates. Jenny Ingram commented that more awareness of doing this was needed if food prices continue to rise.

- Dawn Witkiss said she felt she spoke on behalf of the majority of ploholders for the work they do on behalf of all the ploholders and members of EDAA, it is a lot of work and often not appreciated how much time goes into this by volunteers. Her thanks were appreciated and noted.

Meeting closed at 11.40am

EDAA