

Royal Paddocks Allotments Annual General Meeting minutes

14 November 2019, 8 pm

Hampton Wick Royal Cricket Club, Bushy Park, Hampton Wick KT1 4AZ

Present: 64 plotholders recorded (names available on the register), including committee members listed below, and Councillors Jim Millard and Robin Brown. The following 2018/19 Committee members were present:

David Harnden – Chair	Jenny Bourne	Nick Baylis
Dylan Baxendale	Theo Christophers	Gill Hiley
David Lainchbury	Karen Saywell	Martin Scotton
Andrew Stanley		David Laughrin - Secretary

Apologies were received from Committee Members Christine Thorpe and Anne Wingrove, plus David and Pam Boyd, Vivienne Kemsley, Christopher Bubb, Jane Harnden and Fred and Sybil Peters.

1.	Welcome from the chair and apologies – David H thanked all for attending and the Hampton Wick Royal Cricket Club for the generous donation of the use of their premises.
2.	Minutes of the 2018 AGM – the minutes were agreed.
3.	Matters arising from the minutes – there was one matter arising: the lack of the promised quiz in 2019. It was hoped that this would be remedied in 2020.
4.	Chairman's annual report – David Harnden David Harnden reported on the year's activities and achievements. He drew attention to the new proposed chemicals policy that he would ask to be endorsed at the end of the meeting, and also explained that progress on installing a new incinerator had temporarily been put on hold while the impact of possible changes to Richmond Council policy on bonfires and incinerators was clarified. This would be explored at the forthcoming Management Committee meeting. The project was teed up and ready to go thanks to initial work by Nick Baylis continued by Theo Christophers over the summer, but it would be foolish to proceed with significant extra expenditure if an outright ban by the Council on air quality grounds was imminent. He would keep plotholders informed. David went on to pay tribute to all those who had continued to contribute to the thriving life of the allotments. He could not mention everyone but wanted to mention in particular: • The cafe team led by Anne Wingrove, providing a much-valued meeting point for all plotholders on Sunday creating a real sense of community. • The Social Committee led by Jenny Bourne, Janet Baylis and Ruth Walker who had put on very successful events throughout the year including another highly successful recent Autumn Social. • The gate team led by Ashley Catto who lock and unlock the vehicle gates each night and morning helping to keep the site secure. • The plot inspections team led by Karen Saywell who inspected plots 3 times a year to keep standards of cultivation up to those required by the lease and who choose the best plot awards.

- Ray Hulm and his team for maintenance of the pumps and Chris Pocock for his continued work on the compost toilet.
- Andrew and Susan Saunders, with help from Jem Negus, who maintain the hedge on the southern border of the site, which now provides an effective screen from the neighbouring footpath.
- Jon Anderson for looking after the bee area.
- Martin Scotton for his uncomplaining and essential hard work on collection of rent payments.
- Gill Hiley for her indefatigable work on lettings and keeping up to date the very informative information pack as well as controlling the waiting list for plots.
- Mark Buckley and Carol Dukes for creation and maintenance of the website.
- The local community police team who look after the community plot.

He drew attention to the fact that the year had seen a lot of activity on the allotments not only on work days where volunteers had carried out a range of maintenance tasks, but also on significant additional projects:

- The range of new pump signs had been masterminded by Gill Hiley and plotholder Dan Johnson, who had generously made up the signs at no cost to the site. They had been greatly helped in the siting of the signs by Ben Wilkins.
- Ben Wilkins had also been a major player in the group that had discussed the future supply and harvesting of water on the site. The excellent report completed by the team was on the RPA website and copies were made available to the meeting. The work had already led to the installation by Ben of an array of water butts outside the Seed Store café.
- Volunteers from St John's Church had carried out a new project co-ordinated by Karen Saywell and John Hourigan to assist frail or ill plotholders maintain their sites as part of "Love Hampton Wick" week. Encouragingly they wanted to repeat this very successful activity next year.
- A range of talks and activities had offered information and advice to old and new plotholders alike, and a survey of fruit trees on site in and around the nature area, at the instigation of Ruth Walker, was likely to lead to a new group to look after their care.
- Free manure had been arranged and delivered not just from the Royal Mews but also from local stables at the instigation of the Community Police. Free pallets offered by plotholder Stuart Wisdom of Tiles of Wisdom in Stanley Road were available for plotholders to construct compost heaps, with a maximum of 3 pallets per plotholder for the moment. They could be collected from the manure area.
- The dead hedge area near the bee area had been developed to provide a suitable resting place for large and woody off cuts that could no longer be burnt and help provide a barrier to make the bee area more secure.
- Finally, the most significant project had been the major work on the tracks on the site masterminded by Nick Baylis and Gill Hiley and helped immensely by Gray Rigge and John Hourigan who had attended on site to make sure the work went smoothly. The improvement to the entrance and drainage was marked and the minor work on other tracks would be kept under review to see if more work was needed in the future.

So the story for the year was overall a very good one, but as on any individual allotment there were always more tasks to be tackled each year. Ideas for projects and volunteers to carry them out were always welcome. New faces were always needed on work parties, helping with social activities and the café. He hoped to see more plotholders on future workdays and wished all Plotholders well for the future.

5.	Accounts and financial report Andrew Stanley introduced his first report as Treasurer with thanks to his predecessors, who had handed over the accounts and funds in good order. He summarised the accounts for the meeting, drawing attention to the healthy balance of funding from rents, from the very successful café and from social events. He thanked all those who contributed to the events and the café, which he described as great assets in themselves. Turning to expenditure, Andrew drew attention to the major spend of nearly £25k on the tracks project, but said that because of its meticulous planning and sound execution it had offered clear value for money. Despite the expenditure, there was still nearly £24k in the Potholders' Committee reserves, which was a healthy cushion. Karen Saywell had helpfully prepared a long term plan which showed that there was always likely to be at least a £10k reserve cushion to meet unforeseen contingencies, even if future projects such as the replacement of the incinerator were tackled. Andrew ended his report by thanking Martin Scotton for his indispensable work on collecting the rents, and Len Cowking for carrying out his independent review of the accounts. The meeting endorsed the accounts unanimously with thanks to Andrew for his clear explanations and meticulous hard work.
6.	Social Activities Jenny gave a full review of the wide range of social events that she, Janet Baylis and Ruth Walker and all her hard-working committee had arranged over the year, from the lively and entertaining Plotholders' Question time to the Plant Sale and the Socials. Involvement from all is welcome for next year's events as well as ideas for new events that plotholders may be able to lead. She thanked all the wide range of helpers who had assisted over the year and in particular the judges and volunteers who had helped set up the events, those who had done so well in getting prizes for the raffle and those who had looked after stalls, beer tents and barbecues. Anne Wingrove and the wonderful café team deserved special credit. She was delighted that the social raised over £800 on the day. Jenny added that the Committee had suggested that the Autumn Social and Produce Show might helpfully be renamed the "Autumn Show" to catch its essential character in less of a mouthful and this was unanimously agreed. The final event for 2019 will be the Christmas Café on 15 December with mulled wine and mince pies! Dates for the 2020 diary would be as follows: • Plotholders' Question Time: 9 February • Seedy Sunday: 15 March • Plant Sale: 17 May • Autumn Show: 19 September Jenny's full report is available on the RPA Website.

	Karen Saywell added a report on café activities on behalf of Anne Wingrove, who was unavoidably absent. Another highly successful year at the café had managed to deliver a much-valued service whatever the weather – hot, wet, cold or dry. This was the true social hub of the allotments. Thanks were due to the efforts of all the volunteer servers and homemade cake bakers, and Anne always welcomed new volunteers for either task or both. She could be contacted via the RPA website.
7.	Presentation of Awards The awards were presented entertainingly by Councillors Robin Brown and Jim Millard, who had kindly taken a break from canvassing for the general election to attend. The awards were as follows: <i>Best Newcomer:</i> 1st. Plot 190 - Kathryn Teo (Derek Mason Cup) 2nd Plot 35 – Yasmin Allen and Nik Ruggles 3rd Plot 198b – Clare Swift <i>Best half plot:</i> 1st. Plot 69f - Mary Downham (<u>Barbara Wood Cup</u>) 2nd Plot 153f - David and Pamela Boyd 3rd Plot 143b - Len Cowking <i>Best full plot:</i> 1st Plot No 101 - Ben Wilkins (RPA Cup) 2nd Plot D - Jon Tarlton 3rd Plot 3 - Vivienne Kemsley
8.	Election of Plotholder Committee Members for 2019/2020 Plotolders standing for election were: Dylan Baxendale, 180; Jenny Bourne, 27f, 28b; Theo Christophers, 148; David Harnden, 152; Gill Hiley, 50; Christine Knight, 82; David Lainchbury, 131f, 132b; David Laughrin, 19; Robert McIntyre, 200; Karen Saywell, 81b; Martin Scotton, 59; Andrew Stanley 120; Christine Thorpe, 49; Anne Wingrove, 127b. All the above were unanimously elected.
11.	Other Business i) In response to a question by a plotholder, the Chairman confirmed that the Plotolders Committee finances were adequate at present to meet foreseeable future needs without recourse to a rent increase. But this would of course be kept under review. The potential gamechanger for the site would be the water situation, and all plotholders were encouraged to follow the very helpful advice in the Water Group's excellent report. Thanks were due to this Group and again to Ray Hulm and his pump team.

	ii) The proposed new policy on chemicals was unanimously endorsed by the meeting, and would be put on the site noticeboards and RPA website; iii) To mark Nick Baylis' retirement from the Plotholders' Committee, at least for the time being, a presentation of a specially minted Seed Store mug was made to Nick Baylis and Barry Houlston for their work on the Seed Store in 2013. iv) Nick Baylis asked for the minutes of future AGMs and Committee meetings to be placed on the RPA's excellent website to help keep plotholders up to date on issues. This was agreed. After a warm vote of thanks to the Chairman, the meeting was closed.
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The AGM ended at 8.55 pm