

# Huntley & Palmers Allotment Association

## Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the meeting

Held: 19:30 Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at the David Fuller room,  
Radstock Community Centre, Radstock Lane RG6 5UZ

Attending:

|                       |                          |                |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Sandra Christopherson | Margaret Cocks           | Richard Cocks  |
| Irene Esser           | Liz Fahy                 | David Few      |
| Rosemarie Few         | Brian Hackett            | Jean Hackett   |
| Julia Tredgett        | Richard Tredgett (Chair) | Jessie Woodman |
| Luke Woodman          | Peter Wynn               |                |

### 1. Apologies

Liz Atkinson, Harry Dawe and Peter Tilbury were unable to attend.

### 2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023

There was one grammatical correction to section 9 – removal of the word “to” suggested by Jean Hackett.

That apart the minutes were examined and accepted as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by Richard Cocks and seconded by Julia Tredgett.

### 3. Matters arising

Richard had made further checks and confirmed that we still do not qualify as a charitable status body.

It was confirmed that we will remain a Not-for-Profit community organisation.

### 4. Chairman's report

A copy of the Chairman's report is attached as Appendix 1

### 5. Treasurer's Report

A copy of the Treasurer's report and accounts is attached as Appendix 2

### 6. Trading Shed Report

A copy of the Trading Shed report is attached as Appendix 3

## 7. Election of Officers

The following positions were unanimously proposed and approved:

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Chairman:             | Richard Tredgett  |
| Treasurer:            | Brian Hackett   |
| Purchasing Officer:   | Julia Tredgett  |
| Newsletter Secretary: | Rob Hine  |
| Plot Representative:  | Peter Burton  |
| Secretary:            | vacant – there were no offers to take this post             |
| Committee Members:    | Harry Dawe, Sandra Christopherson, Peter Wynn, Liz Atkinson |

## 8. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Peter Tilbury has indicated his willingness to continue and was unanimously proposed and approved for the following year.

## 9. Membership Fees for 2025

Richard explained that we need to be a membership organisation to maintain our tax free status and it makes sense to charge a modest membership fee.

Members asked what other associations in the local area charge and Richard explained the following that he was aware of:

- East Reading HS £3
- Twyford & Ruscombe £7/£8
- Purley Horticultural Society £4

Richard suggested that this makes us the best value Association in the local area.

It was agreed that Membership fees will continue at £1.50 per year for 2025.

## 10. AOB

Richard Cocks asked about the lawnmowers at Culver Lane.

Richard explained that we have had several mowers over the years, one purchased and several donated. Sadly there had been two incidents where mowers had been damaged and no one reported that they had been involved. Repairs and maintenance over the last few years has cost us several hundred pounds.

Nigel has kindly donated his Father's old mower for 2024 that Jim is working to get running. The committee have however decided that if this mower is badly damaged, in light of the fact that a relatively small part of the membership use the mowers, we will not put more money and time into repairing it.

In response to a supplementary question Richard explained that of the 161 members just over a third were plot holders at Culver Lane, the remainder having plots at other sites or joining as they are gardeners.

The meeting closed at 19:55

# Appendix 1

## Chair's report to the AGM 2024

Thank you all for attending the AGM of your allotment association.

At the end of the 2023 membership year we had 159 members of the association who joined for the benefits of the association including the Trading shed.

### **It has been another busy year with highlights including:**

- The shed going and staying off the electric grid which saves us £500 a year standing charge for a simple electricity supply – before we turn the lights on!
- The switch to a new wholesale supplier for the Trading Shed when the family running our previous supplier retired
- As a result of this a closer working relationship with a number of other sheds in the Reading area
- Growing support for the team at Reading Road who grow food for the Launchpad homelessness charity and also collect and donate surplus crops from a number of plot holders across Reading – this in addition to a thriving swaps table outside the Trading Shed.

### **Annual Picnic**

The annual BBQ has in the last few years evolved into a picnic which is less work to organise but seems just as popular with our members – another highlight of the year.

In early September last year, forty members gathered at the Culver Lane site for a big meet up, exchange of ideas and some friendly competition with prizes awarded for Best fruit or vegetable and Best box of six vegetables.

Please try to come along to this year's picnic – a relaxed event where you can meet plot holders old and new and enter friendly produce based competitions.

### **Thanks to ....**

Running the Allotment Association is a team effort and I would like to thank the following who have helped keep things going during the last year:

- Brian Hackett who acts as our treasurer looking after the money and also, along with Julia Tredgett, manages our website.

- Similarly Peter Tilbury who has again acted as our independent examiner making sure the accounts are a fair and accurate record of where your money comes from and goes to.
- Julia Tredgett who manages the purchasing for the Trading shed to keep it stocked with the good value products you enjoy buying.
- Julie Smith and Alan Winter who edited the newsletter until the last year giving you a regular read of gardening and allotment related news. My thanks also to Rob Hine who has now taken on this important role.
- Peter Burton who liaises with Earley Town Council who are our collective landlord about issues raised by members at Culver Lane and also undertakes monthly plot inspections to head off issues where plots are under managed to the potential disadvantage of neighbouring plot holders.
- The other members of the committee who help steer and support your organisation.
- Jim Saunders who maintains the Culver Lane site lawnmower for the benefit of members on that site.

I would also like to particularly thank all the volunteers who help open the shed on a Saturday and Sunday to serve our members and provide them with friendly service of our great value range of goods. Without them there would be no trading shed and we have been pleased to welcome a number of new volunteers to the shed in the last year.

### **We need a secretary**

There is a vacancy for a secretary to join the committee and take minutes of about four committee meetings a year plus the annual AGM. If anyone feels they could help with the running of your association in this way, please speak to me after the meeting or in the shed about what is involved.

I will be happy to take questions from our members.

## Appendix 2

### Treasurer's report to the AGM 2024

Treasurer's report to the AGM 2024

The main points on the accounts for the year are set out below.

#### **Sales**

Increased by about £1500, profit up by nearly £500. This is about the limit that we should be aiming to make, subject to planned major expenditure.

#### **Stock**

Up on 2022, but so is turnover, which requires more stock.

#### **Expenditure**

Increased expenses due to installation cost of solar lighting, covered by grant from Earley Charity. We had the final charge for mains electricity supply. There was minimal expenditure on mowers,

#### **Subscriptions**

We had 161 members, compared to 152 in 2022.

#### **Auditor and cheque signatories**

Our auditor Peter Tilbury has agreed to remain in office, and the HAPAA cheque signatories have also agreed to continue.

Brian Hackett  
Treasurer  
April 2024

## Appendix 3

### Purchasing Officer's Report to the AGM 2024

The Shed opened in January with the potato season and we operated a Click & Collect for the first couple of weeks. Thank you to the Volunteers who again helped weigh out and label the potatoes, onions, shallots, beans and peas to make this happen.

On Good Friday, we ran a Pop-Up-Shed at Reading Road Allotments with Teresa and Barry. We served 14 Customers and took £221.44, which is equivalent to a good day's trading in our shed. This event looks to become a regular event.

In February we started buying manure from East Reading at their selling price of £4.00. The manure proved very popular and we arranged several deliveries for ourselves, as well as topping up from East Reading. In total we sold 466 80L bags, 195 of which we bought from Trevor at East Reading and 271 we ordered ourselves.

In line with our committee's decision to go peat-free, we have only bought peat-free compost and have slowly run our stocks of peat-based John Innes down and replaced them with peat-free alternatives. Our main supplier Horticultural Supplies wasn't offering many peat-free alternatives and so we started buying the Homebase Multi-purpose that was recommended in Which and a very good price.

We had sad news in July that Mike Heath at Horticultural Supplies had died and that Andy his Widow was closing the business at the end of October 2023. The autumn perishables and some bargains were sadly the last delivery from this supplier.

The loss of our supplier to the shed of 20 years brought many of the trading sheds in the Reading area closer together. We were able to secure discounts on autumn perishables and the seed potatoes and onions by clubbing together on orders.

Many of the trading sheds including ourselves have gone over to K G loach based in Congleton, Cheshire who are able to supply many of the products we stock. Their prices are also a little cheaper than our previous supplier and we have been able to pass these savings on to our customers. Interestingly whereas previously, we dealt with three suppliers regularly we now deal with nine, which is quite an increase in admin for all involved.

Are there any questions from the Membership?

Julia Tredgett

Purchasing Officer