



Minutes of the Hart Allotments AGM on Saturday 10th January 2015 held at the Harlington Centre at 3pm

1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

The Chairman (Sally Martin) welcomed the 53 people (42 named members) attending the meeting and thanked everyone for coming. There were 4 apologies. Most of the committee were seated facing the meeting so that they could answer questions. (When requested the committee introduced themselves and what role they took within the IPS). A mix of tenants and members only (no plot yet) attended the meeting. Paid up members were issued with voting slips on arrival.

2. Previous minutes and action points

The previous minutes were approved and all actions carried out.

3. Chairman's report

The Chairman (Sally) congratulated all the tenants for making such a success of the allotments in such a short space of time. She gave an overview of the activities that Hart Allotments had been undertaking since the last meeting. We (the committee and on occasion tenants) have:

Pilcot Site:

- ✗ Liaised with the farmers regarding site opening (in relation to lease, site location, ploughing and cultivating)
- ✗ Marked up plots and opened the site on 22 May 2014
- ✗ Held our grand opening event
- ✗ Held a harvest festival and bonfire
- ✗ Liaised with farmers regarding the provision of compost and manure
- ✗ Created compost bins for tenant use
- ✗ Provided a store of pallets
- ✗ Provided policies and procedures for the smooth running of the site and amended these when necessary
- ✗ Created committee sub-groups to monitor policy implementation.

Edenbrook site:

- ✗ Had meetings (2) with the Council to continue pushing for the Edenbrook allotments.
- ✗ Liaised with Hart Voluntary Action regarding what facilities would be needed for specialist groups and held discussions as to what facilities might be shared between us.
- ✗ Provided a 'wish list' of facilities that we would like to on the new Edenbrook allotments
- ✗ Liaised with the landscape architects responsible for creating the plans for the new site.

Industrial and Provident Society:

- ✗ Applied and received permission to alter our rules to allow 'unaudited' accounts (signed by Secretary and 2 other committee members). (Countersigned by a magistrate)
- ✗ Held 5 committee meetings
- ✗ Re-applied for a grant from the Comic Relief Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Foundation. This was subsequently rejected.

4. Treasurer's report and acceptance of unaudited accounts for year ending Nov 2014

The Treasurer (Dave) ran through the main parts of the accounts. Copies of the full accounts were made available for those wishing to have the detail. Dave explained that we had created a 2nd saver account to house the tenants' deposits. This is detailed separately in the accounts as this is not Hart Allotment's money – but just held by us and is returnable on vacation of the plot (if in reasonable condition).

In summary Dave explained that Hart Allotments had made a profit of £455.16 (Post AGM note when share capital of £8.90 excluded amended amount is **£446.26**). Our income amounted to £2735.33 (£2,726.43 without share capital) and our expenditure £2280.17. Once adjustments had been taken into account (uncashed cheques, debts etc.) this tallied with our bank statements. When profit £446.26 is added to reserves as at Oct 13 this amounts to **£1,522.60**. (Full account details will be shown on the Hart Allotment website)

The Treasurer, the Secretary and the new Treasurer (plus an unofficial accountant) had had sight of the accounts before the meeting and were happy with their accuracy. The meeting accepted these accounts. These accounts will now be submitted to the Financial Conduct Authority in line with their requirement for an annual return.

Action: Secretary



5. Election of Officers/Management Committee

Officers

The Chairman announced that she was resigning as chairman due to work commitments but would still like to remain a committee member. The meeting was asked whether any member would like to take on the role of chairman. The current Treasurer put forward the proposal that he would be able to take on the role if his Treasurer responsibilities were taken up by someone else. Alan (current committee member) agreed to take on the role of Treasurer. This proposal was put to the meeting and a majority vote was achieved.

The remaining existing post holders President and Secretary were prepared to stand for re-election and were voted in again by majority vote.

The current officers are therefore:

President – Cllr Sharyn Wheale, Chairman – Dave Bell, Treasurer – Alan Jones , Secretary – Sylvia Cresswell.

Management Committee

The existing committeemen were prepared to stand for re-election: Martyn Garvey, Tim Buswell, Diane White, Barbara Doel. They were voted in again by a majority.

Additional proposals to stand on the committee were received from Nikki Topp Walker and Hazel Maunders. They were both voted in by a majority.

The Chairman (Sally) expressed thanks to Martin Stephens who advised that he was unable to continue on the committee due to an overseas posting. She also expressed her thanks to all the officers and committee members over the last year for their hard work.

4. Proposal for Tenants' key deposits to be put towards membership fees for next year.

The Treasurer (Dave) explained that when we first started out we were unsure as to whether the code type of lock (currently in use) would be satisfactory. (Hook allotments have gone back to having keys as their lock has broken a number of times, however ours is quite substantial). Consequently at the beginning tenants were charged a key deposit upon taking up a plot. Since we do not currently have keys the proposal was to use the key deposit as the membership fee for next year's fees. The meeting discussed this but Alec Grant proposed that this should still be held as a key deposit because we may need it for this purpose if our existing lock fails. **Consequently by majority vote the proposal was rejected.** New tenants on to the plot will therefore still be required to pay the key deposit (when joining the site) to make it equitable. Membership fees will therefore need to be paid by tenants from their own funds.

Sylvia reminded the meeting of the 3 component parts that ploholders will be required to pay for a Pilcot plot for next year (same fees as last year but without the deposits).

1) Hart Allotments Ltd membership fee (£10)

2) Water charge (£2, £3 or £4),

3) Rent to farmers (£7.50, £15, £30)

Our year starts in February for the coming year and members/tenants will shortly be asked for next year's fees.

5. Proposal for unaudited accounts for next year (as per this year) (annual vote required)

By majority vote the proposal to continue next year with **unaudited accounts was accepted.** (Secretary and 2 Committee members vets these).

6. Pilcot Farm allotment site issues

Lease - The Secretary reminded the group that we have a 2 year lease (we are in our second year) and after that it reverts to annual renewal. The participants discussed the arrangement but until the time scale for the Edenbrook allotments are known it was considered best to leave the arrangement as it is.

Issues - Water. The main concern expressed by the participants was the water logging problem. The farmers had advised prior to the meeting that the land drains had been checked and there was little more that they could do to try to ease the problem. John Bobbitt explained how the land drains worked by using underground terracotta pipes which the



water seeps in to and then drains out of the pipes into the ditches. The chairman mentioned that the growing season could be extended by constructing higher beds. She mentioned that as this was a temporary site some tenants had unrealistic expectations of the farmers. A number of ideas were discussed;

- **Raised beds** – The question as to where the soil for these could be supplied from was discussed; Calthorpe school playing field excavation soil, farmers digging soil up further down the field for us to use, farmers providing more compost, and tenants purchasing own compost were put forward as suggestions.
- **Digging out the ditch running parallel to Hitches Lane.** The Council are apparently not able to dig out the ditch that runs parallel to Hitches Lane (they were asked to do this last year to reduce the flooding before we started) as tree roots have grown in the ditch making it impossible for the digger to operate. It was not known, however, if this would in fact alleviate the problem. A good number of the meeting volunteered to form a task force to help clear the ditch if this was considered to help the problem.

The secretary agreed to raise the issue with the farmers again.

Action: Secretary

7. **Edenbrook site update**

Stephen Bowering as a tenant on the Edenbrook estate explained to the group what he had gleaned from the developers. He mentioned that the new site might not be ready until 2017. Cllr Alan Oliver confirmed that it was still planned (as it is part of the S106 agreement) and that as a keen gardener he is keeping a watchful eye on developments. The Secretary mentioned that as part of the agreement, as we had waited so long for these allotments, the provision of the allotments was meant to be one of the first things to be done on the next phase of development. There were concerns that Edenbrook too might be waterlogged much of the year (as much of the country park is). However, before the council accept the site it needs to be 'fit for purpose'.

Alan Jones explained that we had created a 'wish list' for the Edenbrook site and that we have been liaising with the landscape architects who have been commissioned by the developer to come up with suitable plans. (No draft plans have yet been seen). The group also expressed concerns over the size of the Edenbrook plot as we need to share some of it with Hart Voluntary Action and 2 schools. The Secretary explained that it could be to our advantage because HVA are able to receive bigger grants than us and we have had some discussions about sharing resources such as a potting shed, gazebo, toilets etc.

8. **AOB**

There were no AOB items.

9. **Date of next meeting**

The next AGM would be held in January 2016.

The chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions and invited folk to swap seeds.