

Annual General Meeting of the East Ward Allotment Association

September 28th 2006 at the Allotment Shop

Chair: Stewart Young

Minutes: Valerie Wardlaw

Present: Derek Bloomfield, Jean Conner, Andy Henson, Helen Costello, Alan Hart, Pat Mansfield, Chris Rumble, Jane Nimmo-Smith, Cari Morningstar, Jane Millar, David Tucker, Adrian Muscutt, C. Ferguson, Duncan Hall, Stephen Simmons, Trudy Simmons, Natalie Watkins, Alex Tolers, Stephen Twine.

1. Apologies: Cindi Warwick

2. Minutes of AGM, 27th April 2006 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

Trustees- there are still issues to be clarified as to the roles and responsibilities of Trustees, with particular reference to public liability insurance. Stewart Young is pursuing information from the Oxford City Council Allotment Officer, Mike Gass.

4. Vice Chair's Reports

Stewart Young and Derek Bloomfield have been acting as Vice Chairs since the last AGM, when no Chair was elected. Stewart has followed the advice of Peter Chilton in the Assets Management department of Oxford City Council and signed the lease with another trustee. Since signing the 'Heads of Terms' document there has been no further word on the lease. The transfer of EWAA land to OUWG has been agreed by Parliament, so leases for OUWG and the Whitehouse project should also be finalised shortly.

Plots where there has been no evidence of cultivation for some time were identified and the holders written to. Those who wish to keep their plots must show evidence of cultivation by December 21st or they will forfeit their plot and it will be reassigned to someone else.

Stewart has also attended the Allotments Forum meetings where money assigned by Oxford CC has been allocated to improve allotment security. EWAA will be consulted on the type of fencing and gates we want for the allotment in late 2007, with self-locking gates being a possibility.

The new committee elected in April is starting to work well together, but who they are and how to contact them has not been communicated effectively. The names, contact details and plot numbers of all officers and committee members will be listed in the next Newsletter. *[Committee- Please forward your preferred contact details to David Tucker, Newsletter Editor.]*

Derek has taken a complimentary role by helping out individual plot holders, and with the maintenance of the EWAA land. Derek is happy to help plot holders with strimming and heavy tasks they may be struggling with. He is also glad to repair items and wants to get more involved in practical support for plot holders.

5. Treasurer's Report

Andy reiterated the main reason for changing the date of the AGM was to move the accounting Year End to August 31st for better shop reporting and to align with the

Rent year. This should mean we have a better picture of the EWAA income and expenditure from this September onwards. Andy presented the accounts for the 5 months since the last AGM. Current balance is £26 profit. Shop turnover has risen by 60% due to Helen's ordering- thank you for all her hard work. The shop is still registering a loss, but that may be due to inaccuracies in stocktaking in April at the busiest time of the year.

Andy recommended that plot rents should remain the same, as we are continuing to cover the costs of rent to the council, water and electricity charges. Plot rentals are:

Whole plot	10 pole	£15, or £10 for concessions
Half plot	5 pole	£7.50 or £5 for concessions

(Concessions only apply to the first plot rented, not to subsequent plots)

Andy felt that there should be a fee levied for late payment of rent. Rent days are clearly advertised, and late payment causes a lot of work chasing up plot holders to find out if they want to keep their plots. After much discussion the fee to be levied on late payers was agreed. If rent has not been paid by 12pm on the last rent day, a late fee of £5 for waged and £2 for concessions for each plot will be charged.

The Committee agreed to ensure information on plot rents, who to pay cheques to, and an address to send payment, would be clearly displayed at the shop, as this had caused some of the problems with payment. The Treasurer will send receipts for payments not made in person at the shop. *[VW- notices, AH receipts]*

Key Deposit- key copying has increased in price so it was agreed to increase the deposit from £2.50 to £3, with a £2 refund if keys are returned

Non-payers of rent- Plot holders who do not pay rent by 12pm on the last rent day are contacted and must pay within a certain period or their plot will be reallocated. The last payment date, and the date when plots can be reallocated, will be agreed at the next committee meeting. *[VW- committee agenda]*

6. Election of Officers

President: Stewart Young (nominated AH, seconded DB)

Vice President: Derek Bloomfield (nominated JN-S, seconded CM)

Secretary: Valerie Wardlaw (nominated CM, seconded JM)

Membership Secretary: Cari Morningstar (nominated AH, seconded DB) Agreed that this should be an Officer post.

Treasurer: Andy Henson (nominated DB, seconded CM)

Shop Officer: Helen Costello (nominated VW, seconded JN-S).

7. Election of Committee Members

Alan Hart

Jane Millar

Chris Rumble

David Tucker

Pat Mansfield

Steve Simmons

Jane Nimmo-Smith

Cindi Warwick (may not be available after March 2007)

Mandy Howes will continue to clean the toilet, but not do shop duty.

This makes a total of 6 Officers and 8 Committee members. It was decided that two officers should be assigned shop duty in March and April due to busyness of shop.

(Clare Stentiford is available to help in shop)

8. Membership

Cari Morningstar explained that there were currently 7 full plots and 8 half plots vacant, of which 7 have been assigned to new members, with 8 others on the waiting list. She thinks we need about 10 new members to have all plots allocated. These figures exclude plots where rent is owed, so there may be further plots available once non-payers have been chased. She feels the overgrown state of some plots is putting new members off.

Alan and Derek volunteered to help clear plots using a bark cutter and the strimmer. Stewart added that there may be a council tractor available over the winter to help clear brambles. Valerie felt the EWAA should help new plot holders clear very overgrown plots using the work party programme. Jane Millar added that putting black plastic down on badly overgrown plots for a period helps to kill weeds- could funds be raised to subsidise the cost of plastic for overgrown plots? There is also the possibility of getting free supplies of 'Primosol' woven plastic from Oxford CC. All agreed to discuss possibilities to help clear overgrown plots at the next committee meeting.

[VW-committee agenda]

Recruitment

The website needs to be updated. David Tucker agreed to take the website over, but Andy has to give him the password.

[DT & AH]

Derek has written some notices to put in the local shops.

[DB]

Jean thought leafleting all the houses round the allotments might bring in new people, especially if the leaflet was translated into languages spoken in the area.

Helen said she could have text translated, Valerie can produce leaflets and notices, Derek and Jean will distribute fliers.

[VW will send draft text to committee members for agreement and follow up with HC, DB & JC]

9. Shop Duty Rota

Valerie will compile a rota and circulate- copies will be available from the shop from Sunday the 8th October. Please remember if you aren't available on the date assigned to you it is up to the individual to phone round other committee members to arrange a swap.

10. Work Parties

The Committee needs to decide a programme of work parties for the year, as there hasn't been sufficient warning given in the past to enable plot holders to participate. It is a rule of the EWAA that plot holders must join at least one work party per annum. A programme will be agreed at the next committee meeting and publicised through notices and in the Newsletter. The next work parties are on Saturday and Sunday the 21st and 22nd October between 10am and 12pm. They will start defining plot boundaries, numbering plots, levelling and clearing the Cricket Road path between the shop and Road One. (The path can't be levelled until waste from some of the Cricket Road houses, which is encroaching onto the path, is cleared). Andy Henson agreed to organise sorting out boundaries and plot numbers. *[VW- Committee agenda, AH boundary posts and plot numbers].*

Future work parties will help clear overgrown plots- please ask in the shop if you want help with your plot.

11. Proposed rule change: permitted strimming times

The current rule, agreed at the last AGM, was in response to complaints about noise pollution by neighbours of the allotment, and plot holders. The rule restricts

strimming to between 9am and 12.30pm seven days a week. There was much discussion about extending the hours when strimming is permitted, to allow people to clear overgrown plots. A vote was proposed to see if the current rule should be changed. The rule restricting strimmer use to between 9am and 12.30pm was reconfirmed by 7 votes to 6.

Other less noisy options for machinery will be investigated. There is a scythe that can be borrowed from the shop. In addition the committee will investigate buying a 4 stroke strimmer, which could be used at any time if found to produce tolerable noise levels.

12. AOB

Bonfires- are currently forbidden due to drought, but agreed that plot holders can have bonfires if the Bonfire code of practice adhered to- no bonfires before dusk or 6pm, no bonfires on Sundays or public holidays, burn dry material only.

Crates- Cath has a friend who wants to donate large crates used for delivering paving slabs. All agreed that they would be very useful for compost bins, but that they should be sold to plot holders to raise funds for black plastic for new plot holders.
[HC agree price for crates]

EWAA rules- Pat was concerned about plot holders ignoring security, bonfire etc rules. All agreed that officers and committee members should familiarise themselves with the rules and actively intervene to remind plot holders if rules are being broken.

Insurance- Derek felt there is an unresolved issue about insurance when using EWAA equipment. He thinks all users of equipment should be better trained before they use the equipment. We are not hiring out equipment, the fee charged is for petrol, and all the equipment belongs to EWAA plot holders. Stewart said he would investigate public liability coverage through the Allotments federation, which would cost £100. All agreed that Risk Assessments are needed- will be discussed at the next committee meeting.
[SY, DB, VW-Committee agenda]

Social Evening- Derek wondered if plot holders would be interested in a social evening- discuss at next committee meeting.
[VW- agenda, DB]

Pine tree- Stephen Twine said someone had cut down a pine tree on his allotment. Nobody was aware of who or why this had happened, as it wasn't causing any problems. All plot holders are reminded that maliciously damaging another member's property is punishable by expulsion.

Pernicious weeds- plot holders want to have somewhere off their plots to get rid of bindweed and mares tail. VW suggested the composting point by the shop could be reopened for the long term composting of perennial weeds- will discuss at next committee meeting.
[VW agenda]

15. Date of next AGM

Thursday the 27th September 2007, 7.30pm at the allotment shop