



WOODLEY ALLOTMENTS TENANTS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

21st September 2021
The Oakwood Centre 7:30 p.m.

MINUTES OF MEETING

1. Welcome:

Scott Golding welcomed everyone to the deferred AGM.

2. Apologies:

The following tenants offered their apologies: JA, KD, AH, PL, KM, BO, MP, JW, and JW.

3. Confirmation of Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting:

The Chair made a brief reference to the minutes, which have been circulated to tenants. These were passed as agreed.

4. Matters arising:

These will be covered later in the Agenda.

5. Quorum discussion:

Led by Brian Hughes Vice Chair

83 tenants are in attendance so a quorum is achieved (76 tenants were needed for a quorum this year).

This means a new Committee can be properly elected and, with the tenants' approval, changes to the Constitution can take place.

6. Constitution:

a) Proposal 1 - CD

"Given that there may be more than one submission for proposed changes to the constitution, and as it is a very complex subject, to include it in the business of an AGM will not allow sufficient time for discussion. As the current 'acting' Committee is on an extension of their term it would be more appropriate for the 'new' Committee to lead the review at a separate meeting set up specifically for the purpose."

Comments:

- Brian Hughes agreed there was a lot to get through despite a productive meeting with LL and CD prior to the AGM to discuss L's proposal (circulated to tenants in a Special Bulletin).



Since then the Committee had received a number of emails from tenants to raise other issues regarding the Constitution which need to be considered, and both Brian Hughes and LL had further thoughts about points discussed 3/4 weeks ago. Consequently he would like to make a separate proposal

b) Proposal 2 – Brian Hughes

To consider 3 changes to the constitution tonight:

- i) To add a clause to read as follows: *“The Association members shall be defined as allotment tenants holding a current and valid tenancy at the Reading Road allotment site in Woodley”.*
- ii) To reduce the percentage of members needed to summon an EGM from 51% to 25%.
- iii) To reduce the percentage of members needed for a quorum at an AGM or EGM from 25% to 10%.

Rationale – As there is a quorum, tenants have an opportunity to consider 3 points which currently cause problems when organising an AGM/EGM and get these changed. Making these changes will make it easier to both organise effective future AGMs and also a separate EGM to discuss the many constitutional changes suggested by a number of tenants. This proposal will only take 20 minutes. Other changes can then be discussed at a separate meeting at a later date.

Comments:

- GD responded that current constitution has worked for 13 years so if it were to be changed it would need to be around for many years to come. Nobody else was party to the discussions between Brian Hughes, CD and LL so any proposed changes should be considered more openly. The Constitution should be for the benefit of the tenants not WTC and there should be a structure where tenants sign up to be members of the Association. We should postpone discussing the changes at this AGM as they are quite complex.
- SJ pointed out we should be voting on the proposals being put to the AGM not on new suggestions for further changes
- LL stated the two proposals on the table were either to delay or to discuss all of the changes proposed. She asked why we should consider only discussing 3 points and excluding all the others when that was not what was on the Agenda.
- BH explained LL’s proposal was not being ignored. He stated that changing the Constitution should not be rushed and accepted that we haven’t got the time tonight to go through all the suggested changes. There are however 3 changes that could be voted on at this AGM, now that there is a quorum, which would make the Constitution more workable. The rest could then be deferred to an EGM to give time for a fuller discussion.

The issues are as follows:

- a) Currently, an attendance of 25% of the membership is required for a quorum. So, 76 tenants (25% of 304) need to attend an AGM before any decisions can be made. 25% of tenants is an unrealistic percentage for an Association of this size and looking at other Associations the norm for a quorum is 10%.



- b) The current Constitution does not define who is a member and this creates issues relating to who can stand for Committee posts and who can vote. Defining a member as being a tenant can be used in the future when arranging AGMs and EGMs.
- c) Lastly, 51% of tenants (= 152 tenants) currently have to agree in writing before an EGM can be organised, dropping this to 25% would make this far more achievable.
- GD argued that these changes should have been brought up months ago and discussed in large groups by who are most interested. A single proposal could then come from the Committee to the AGM.
- Brian Hughes responded that his proposal, and also that of LL, was to make changes but the proposals did not state that they all needed to be made at once. Rather than postpone the whole thing we should consider these 3 changes as these will be very helpful to the new elected Committee. The remaining additional changes can be considered at a separate EGM meeting.
- BG suggested any changes to the Constitution should be approached in a holistic way and not ad hoc. He asked why, if these changes are so fundamental, they were not considered straight away after the last AGM.
- Brian Hughes replied that if we do not make these 3 changes it would make life more difficult for the new elected Committee.
- MG stated, given Covid and the difficulties we have been facing, if there were 3 changes that could be voted through today, it would be of huge benefit.
- SJ added we are voting on 3 very small changes that LL has been part of discussing and everybody should vote on these tonight.
- LL replied the proposal from CD wasn't to consider 3 points and Brian Hughes has put a different proposal on the table which is different to her proposal so the meeting is ignoring her proposed changes.
- Other tenants reminded LL the rest of her proposal would be considered at an EGM.
- Some tenants said with so many changes it was all quite confusing

Voting

Proposal 1:

For – 17 Against -65 Abstention – 1

The majority of tenants voted to consider a limited discussion of the Constitution and not leaving the whole thing to an EGM.

Proposal 2:

To consider 3 changes to the constitution today and defer discussion of all other changes to an EGM.

i) To add a clause to read as follows: *"The Association members shall be defined as allotment tenants holding a current and valid tenancy at the Reading Road allotment site in Woodley"*.

For – 82 Against -1 Abstention - 0

ii) To reduce the percentage of members needed to summon an EGM in writing from 51% to 25%.

For – 82 Against – 1 Abstention – 0



iii) To reduce the percentage of members needed for a quorum at an AGM or EGM from 25% to 10%.

For – 81 Against – 2 Abstention – 0

These 3 clauses would therefore be incorporated into the Constitution following this AGM.

7. Election of Committee.

- Brian Hughes explained the voting procedure, use of ballot papers and counting.
- Nominees were then offered the opportunity to introduce themselves and to briefly outline why tenants should vote for them.
- Counting was performed by Councillor David Bragg WTC and volunteers who were not candidates for election. Brian Hughes thanked the volunteer counters and observers prior to reading the list of newly elected Committee members later in the meeting.

Elected Committee members:

- Chair – Scott Golding
- Vice Chair – Sarah Lane
- Secretary – Gill Germain
- Treasurer position – Kerri Evans
- Ordinary Committee Members – Teresa Buley, Tony Carter, Brian Hughes, Barry Jackson, Mike McNamara.

After the results were announced,

- LG asked why the Ordinary Committee members were restricted to 5.
- Brian Hughes replied we are limited to this number by the current Constitution. This is something that can be further discussed at the EGM. He added that he is very keen to carry on working with other tenants on the Constitution. He also confirmed that once agreed changes have been made to the Constitution, they take effect the day after the meeting and apply to decisions made at the AGM and EGM. There will be 4 week notice of the EGM and hopefully this will be arranged soon.
- There was then a discussion about the opportunities for tenants to be co-opted Committee members for special projects.
- CD reminded everyone co-opted members don't need to be elected but they do not have voting rights and the group would act like a sub-Committee.

8. Presentation of Annual Report: Scott Golding presented the Chairman's annual report.

a) In memoriam.

He took a few moments to remember the life and contribution of previous Committee members David Stares, Peter McKay who had recently passed away. Scott also reported the recent passing of tenants Dougie Williams and Colin Lott.

b) Road repairs.

We have come through difficult times but activities on site have still carried on over the pandemic. Recently, over 40 people turned out for the road repairs, the best response for many years. A lot



was completed on the day and more would have done had the councils tractor not broken down. There is a plan to carry out further work in the future.

c) The Beehive Enclosure and pond.

The beehive compound is up and running, but we cannot move forward with the pond work until the council have addressed the drainage issue on the site.

d) New keys

These will be available in Jan 2022 and cannot be openly copied. There is a currently problem with people using the allotments as a cut through, having got hold of a copy of the key. One new key will be given to each tenant and additional keys can be made available to tenants at a cost of £15. The purpose of new locks and keys is to improve site security by keeping the gate closed to all but the tenants. The front and back gate will opened with the same key.

e) The Launchpad project

Work has carried on although we haven't had many corporate volunteers until recently. Corporate volunteers generate income for the Association.

Thank you to all the tenants who have helped both working on the plots and donating produce every Monday for Readifood (food bank).

f) CCTV cameras.

Than you to IB who looks after these and helps to make the site more secure.

g) Skips.

We managed to get them in again this year in spite of the budget cuts within the Council. There was an unfortunate episode of fly tipping on site with waste that was brought in so please report anyone you see dumping rubbish.

h) Interim Secretary role.

Thank you to Gill Germain who stepped in has done a great job, particularly with the minutes.

i) Personal comments revolving around plot inspections.

The Committee work with WTC and our job is to try and keep up with what is happening on the plots. Some people give up and don't tell us and it's not fun for tenants to have an overgrown plot next door. There are 93 on the waiting list and not fair if people are not working their plots properly.

If we get elected again, we will continue to do plot inspections and will not be bullied or intimidated by people on FB. We will manage the site properly. We are working on your behalf and he stressed that anything personal did not emanate from the Committee.

The Council not the Committee is responsible for sending letters out and the tone and content of these letters comes from the Council. By working with WTC we get roads built, the fences put up, fences repaired and new locks put in place. In the future, if anyone has anything to say or doesn't like what we are doing, come and look us in the eye and don't hide behind a keyboard.

Comments:

- BG made tenants aware that nails had been found on D row in the scalplings. Scott promised to investigate and a notice will be placed on Facebook to make tenants aware.

WOODLEY ALLOTMENTS TENANTS ASSOCIATION

SPECIAL BULLETIN – 75

- PF drew our attention to rats on the site and asked if there was something the Committee could do. Scott replied that we now need to be licensed to put down bait boxes and we can only buy rat poison cheaply in bulk with this licence. So we are handcuffed by these regulations.
- JS replied that, as an environmentalist, he would not use any type of poison on his plot to protect the wildlife, preventing rats and others in the food chain from being poisoned. Humane rat traps can be used but he would be very unhappy with any use of rat poison.
- SF mentioned her produce was being taken by both rats and foxes.

9. **Treasurer's Report:** *Also see Appendix for full breakdown.*

There are two years of accounts to report on as there was no AGM last year. All bank accounts are available for anyone who wishes to see them.

2019

Carry forward - £1370.64

Income

- Great year from Launchpad where we raised £2530 and fruit trees/bushes and seed sales by Teresa Buley raised £92.17.
- There was also £100 grant.

Expenditure

- £270.95 was spent on the Launchpad
- £171.65 for cameras and batteries,
- £82.96 for printing costs
- £49.10 for road repairs.

2020

Carry forward - £3462.81

Income

- The Launchpad was only able to raise £175 due to lockdown
- Teresa Buley did an excellent job with fruit trees/bushes and seed sales and raised £595.

Expenditure

- £288.52 was spent on cameras, batteries and memory cards
- £199.50 for the website and survey.

This year we decided to split the funds into 2 accounts to separate money allocated for specific projects from the working account. £800 was transferred into a savings account earning 1p per month.

There was also a change of signatory this year. Mike McNamara now has access to online banking so two people can keep an eye on the accounts



2021 so far

Carry forward - £3478.84

Income

- Corporate volunteers are beginning to return and the Launchpad has raised £270

Expenditure

- £293.36 on printing
- £129.98 on batteries
- £111.14 on website renewal.

10. Adoption of Annual Report and Treasurers Report:

This was accepted unanimously

11. Bee Hive Enclosure report by SC

The enclosure now houses 18 hives and there are now 9 beekeepers.

A bigger enclosure may be needed if there are more beekeepers that wish to join.

12. Any Other Business.

a) Reading Town Meal.

Thank you to everybody who donated to the Reading Town meal.

b) Plot inspections.

The Committee were asked for a list of the criteria for plot inspections.

Scott Golding responded that the main criterion is whether the plot is being worked. The Committee and WTC are trying to identify plots that are not being worked properly and not abandoned.

A tenant pointed out that, although getting a letter from WTC was scary, contacting the Committee or WTC allowed issues to be resolved quickly.

Scott Golding reiterated that all tenants had to do was email the Committee or WTC and not resort to social media.

Mike McNamara stated that during plot inspections the Committee was looking for progress over time. There may not be a lot happening in the winter but by June more progress would be expected. He reminded tenants that recent newsletters emphasised that tenants should contact the Committee if they have any problems with their plots. The Committee have been very understanding and removed tenants from plot inspections if they presented a valid reason. Further information on plot inspections can be found in the Welcome Pack for new tenants. Copies of this are available.

13. Closing the meeting.

Scott Golding thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 9.27pm



Appendix:

WATA Accounts 1/1/19 - 31/12/19

Description	Deposit	Withdrawal	Balance
Balance carried forward from 2018			1370.64
Post Concrete (Mike McNamara)		£37.80	£1332.84
LAUNCHPAD Invoice #1	£50.00		£1382.84
Fruit & Seed Sales (Teresa Buley)	£81.70		£1464.54
Fruit Bushes (Scott Golding)	£11.00		£1475.54
Printing Costs (Mike McNamara)		£6.50	£1469.04
LAUNCHPAD Invoice #2	£50.00		£1519.04
AGM Printing Costs (Mike McNamara)		£82.96	
LAUNCHPAD Invoice #3	£140.00		
Nationwide Closing Interest	£0.43		
Transition Town Grant	£100.00		
Wheelbarrows (CD)		£100.96	
Thermos Metropolis Pump Pot (CD)		£29.99	
2 x Camera & Memory Card (Scott Golding)		£119.88	
Postcrete (Scott Golding)		£23.75	
Batteries for Camera (IB)		£28.09	
LAUNCHPAD Invoice #4	£85.00		
LAUNCHPAD Invoice #5	£70.00		
Strimmer Sold (Scott Golding)	£50.00		
Millie Carmichael – 'Bee-roadz Presentation' travel expenses		£38.25	
LAUNCHPAD Invoice #6	£280.00		
LAUNCHPAD Invoice #7	£280.00		
LAUNCHPAD Invoice #8	£395.00		£2495.59
LAUNCHPAD Invoice #9	£560.00		£3055.59
Batteries for Camera (IB)		£23.68	£3031.91
LAUNCHPAD Invoice #10	£220.00		£3251.91
BBQ Food (Barry Johnson)		£49.10	£3202.81
Manure for Launchpad (Scott Golding)		£140.00	£3062.81
LAUNCHPAD INVOICE #11	£290.00		£3352.81
LAUNCHPAD INVOICE #12	£110.00		£3462.81
Final balance for 2019			£3462.81



WATA Accounts 1/1/2020 -31/12/2020

Description	Deposit	Withdrawal	Balance
Balance carried forward from 2019			£3462.81
LAUNCHPAD INVOICE #13	£175.00		£3637.81
Bee Hive Fencing (Scott Golding)		£175.00	£3462.81
Batteries for CCTV (IB)		£10.00	£3452.81
Padlock for Bee Enclosure (CD)		£18.99	£3433.82
Fruit & Seed Sales (Teresa Buley)	£150.00		£3583.82
Fruit & Seed Sales (Teresa Buley)	£45.00		£3628.82
Batteries for Camera (IB)		£25.22	£3603.60
2 x New Cameras (IB)		£94.98	£3508.62
Batteries for Camera (IB)		£37.98	£3470.64
3 x Memory cards (IB)		£17.37	£3453.27
Survey Monkey (Mike McNamara)		£99.00	£3354.27
Batteries for Cameras (IB)		£37.98	£3316.29
Batteries for Cameras (IB)		£64.99	£3251.30
Website costs (Mike McNamara)		£100.50	£3150.80
PayPal test deposit	£0.01		£3150.81
Plant sales (Teresa Buley)	£400.00		£3550.81
Road BBQ food (Barry Jackson)		71.99	£3478.82
Interest 08/10/2020 to 31/12/2020	£0.02		£3478.84
Final balance for 2020			£3478.84



WATA Accounts 1/1/2021 -21/9/2021

Description	Deposit	Withdrawal	Balance
Balance carried forward from 2020			£3478.84
Launchpad (Scott Golding)		£20.00	£3458.84
Strawberry Plants (Scott Golding)	£10.00		£3468.84
Launchpad Invoice 14	£80.00		£3548.84
Launchpad Invoice 15	£60.00		£3608.84
Batteries for camera (IB)		£64.99	£3543.85
Flowers for Peter (Teresa Buley)		£23.98	
Padlock keys (Scott Golding)		£10.50	
Launchpad Invoice 16	£130.00		£3639.37
Printer ink (Mike McNamara)		£60.48	£3578.89
Website renewal (Mike McNamara)		£70.95	£3507.94
WATA Domain registration (Mike McNamara)		£40.19	
BBQ Fuel (Barry Jackson)		£6.50	£3461.25
BBQ Lighters (Barry Jackson)		£3.99	£3457.26
Gas canisters (Barry Jackson)		£20.00	£3437.26
AGM Printing costs (Mike McNamara)		£232.88	
Batteries (IB)		£64.99	£3139.39
Interest 01/01/2021 to 21/09/2021	£0.09		£3139.48
BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD: 21/09/2021			£3139.48

Many thanks

Sarah Lane – Vice-Chair

Woodley Allotments Tenants Association at Reading Road

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