

Lynwood Allotment Association

Minutes of 34th Annual General Meeting held on Monday 15 January 2024 at Ye Olde Swan Public House, High Street, Thames Ditton

The meeting started at 8.00pm. 29 members and associate members were present.

1. Apologies for absence:

Debra Ames, Joyce Aspinall, Geraldine Batchelor, Cathy Bradley, Alun Davies, Liam Humphries, Jos Margerison, Malcolm McDonald, Vikki Newton, Chris Odom, Louise Perry, Gary Stephenson, Mel Tanner.

2. Committee member retirement and elections:

- i. Vic Choules, Graham Howard, and Gill Vickers retired by rotation and were re-elected. Geraldine Batchelor and Sarah Stuart were nominated, seconded and join the Committee.

- ii. Allocation of committee roles.

Martin Baker	Treasurer	Plot 33	Trustee
Geraldine Batchelor		Plot 60	
Eunice Bayne	Resources	Plot 3	Trustee
Vic Choules	Maintenance	Plot 35	
Graham Howard	Secretary	Plot 23	Trustee
Sarah Stuart		Plot 78	
Gill Vickers	Membership Secretary	Plot 69	

3. Approval of minutes of last meeting.

The 2023 (33rd AGM) Minutes were approved by the members present.

4. Matters arising from the minutes.

5. Chair's Report:

The Secretary gave a report in place of a Chair's report as unfortunately Vikki Newton, for personal reasons, resigned from the position of Chair in November.

The contributions made by members was acknowledged. As a self-managed allotment we are dependent for our good running on a wide range of people who contribute to the common good. We are grateful to others who help make the allotment such a wonderful place by:

Trimming hedges;

Repairing taps;

Pruning trees;

Organising the BBQ and quiz;

Playing wonderful music at the BBQ;

Tending the herb plot;

Managing the orchard area;

Providing signage for the orchard and the herb garden;

Giving guided experiences to children from the Stepping Stones Nursery;

Donating plants, equipment and produce to the produce stand which helps reduce waste and helps members and local charities (and chocolates);

Clearing some of the fly tipped waste to their domestic bins or the dump;

Entering the EMGS show;

Keeping bees; Bill Thurston our resident bee keeper gave an interesting presentation to the AGM on bee keeping and the threat posed by Asian hornets which are now being found in southern England.

Generally helping others and offering plenty of other acts of kindness.

The free contributions made by Hill Park Nurseries, Park Lane Stables and woodchip from Aubrey the tree surgeon. We also have to recognise

Looking at the duties of the committee set out in the constitution:

1. To maintain a register of plot-holders, maintain a waiting list of applicants for plots and assign vacant plots in accordance with the waiting list. Gill Vickers, Membership Secretary, will report on this shortly.
2. To administer the Agreement between the LAA and EBC so as to ensure the compliance by both parties of the terms of the lease. Other than the general requirement to maintain the allotment in a good state our long term lease gives us a sense of security. We do have to ensure that any structures erected do comply with the terms of the lease. The system of approvals works well generally. Gill Vickers and Martin Baker attend consultation meetings with the local authority and other allotment associations.
3. The large area of woodland is not our responsibility but we are pleased that EBC has undertaken some tree management in this area over the past year. This has reduced the risk of trees falling on to the highway and may have helped improve its value as a nature reserve. Not only is it a home to bats I was very interested to hear from Chris Thurnham how many varieties of birds she has recorded on the allotment in the last few days. Chris said that by using the app Merlin she had recorded blackbirds, blackcaps, blue tits, bullfinches, chaffinches, crows, dunnocks, goldfinches, great spotted woodpeckers, great tits, green woodpeckers, greenfinches, jays, kestrels magpies, nuthatches, parakeets, redwings, robins, song thrushes, sparrows, starling, wood pigeons and wrens. Perhaps most notable was a kingfisher recorded running alongside the stream in Lynwood Road.

4. To set and collect all rents due and make payment of all sums due from the Association. Martin Baker reported on the financial situation in his report. With our healthy financial situation rents and membership fees which were last increased to £10 membership and £28 per plot in 2019 are not to be increased. It was interesting to see an advertisement for an allotment in Croydon recently where the charges are £40 membership and £35 per month.

5 To terminate the lease of any plot-holder who is in default or who has breached the terms of their Tenancy agreement. (Gill's report)

6 To authorise site visits by individuals or parties in conformance with the Agreement with EBC. As mentioned before we have visits from the nursery school.

7 Changes to the Constitution. None were proposed.

Other important activities undertaken by the committee and which are important to members are tree management, skip, manure and compost provision. Eunice Bayne gave information on work which had been undertaken and would be taking place.

6. Treasurer's Report and consideration and approval of 2023 accounts.

- i. Accounts and notes on the accounts for the year ending 31 December 2023 were circulated with the agenda for the meeting and were approved.
- ii. The financial position continues to be healthy.

7. Membership secretary's report.

There are no vacant plots at Lynwood and a waiting list of 34 people so letting any plots that do become vacant will not be a problem.

Not all allotment societies are in the same position as us.

21 people applied in 2023 and 1 person has already applied this year. Some allotment societies have closed their waiting lists but we have not.

Last year we let 12 plots and 2 members moved plots as they wanted to downsize.

Plots become available at any time of the year, sometimes following inspections, but this usually occurs after invoices have been sent out and members decide that they are no longer able or wish to continue.

We are continuing to update our inspection checklist and we expect to be able to circulate this to members during the next few months.

Following advice from Elmbridge Consultative Committee we are looking closely at our inspection criteria. We have spent many hours looking at advice from the National Allotment Association, recommendations from the RHS, Brighton and Hove City Council Allotment Rules and other local allotment societies inspection documents.

We need to make sure that the inspection checklist is fair to both the Tenant and Lynwood Allotment Society. It will be reasonable, easy to understand and achievable.

It will make clear what is allowed and not allowed at Lynwood and every member will understand what is expected and therefore what is inspected.

The other key reason for updating our rules is to help avoid plots being left in a very poor state when they are vacated. This in turn will save a lot of time and effort spent clearing, tidying and removing items that have been dumped on the plot, which generally falls to committee members. On some occasions a skip has had to be ordered to dispose of the rubbish. In addition, we sometimes have to pay for a contractor to deal with neglected and unpruned trees. When a plot is left in a very poor state it sometimes results in us having to waive the first year's rental. All these things cost Lynwood Association money.

8. Suggestions for site improvements

There was a suggestion that training could be offered to members on the use of machinery.

Concern was expressed about litter, including gas containers being left by the equipment shed.

9. AOB

None

Following the formal business of the Association Jean Billett, Chair of Esher and Molesey Garden Society gave a talk on the history of the Society and its current activities.

Meeting ended 9:30 p.m.