

ALLY PALLY ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION
Draft Minutes of Annual General Meeting Sunday 25th July 2015

PRESENT: Alison Liney, Peter Falzon, Sally Chubb, Bob Hare, Peter Campbell, John Wilkinson, Jill Pullan, Jenny Bourne Taylor, Jill Ellis, Pamela Harling, Angela Silva-Jones, Annie Elliott-Evans, Pam Jackson, Sara Leviten, Arthur Leigh, Colin Roberts, Anne Whalley, Sue Hanson, Irma Izarine, Theresa Ball, Christine Heath, Ron Brooks, Jess York, Mark Pelling, Anne Elliot Evans.

APOLOGIES: Arthur Leigh (Apologies for lateness), John Wilkinson, Fred Clark

MINUTES OF AGM 2014: Minutes agreed. Proposed: Angela Silva-Jones, Seconded: Jill Ellis

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Chair – Bob Hare

The Committee has held 4 meetings since our 2014 AGM. These regular meetings and this AGM are the financial and legal basis of managing these allotments on behalf of plot holders and the Council. The Committee is keen to hear your comments and views, questions or issues. The biggest job for me is to thank the many people who've contributed to the life and running of our site. I should say that most of what happens day to day is not 'organised' but rather is self-organising.

Colin again needs everyone's thanks for doing or organising a multitude of repairs and other things – from plumbing to repairing our community sheds when they have been damaged to helping grow the vast number of veg and flower plants that were needed for our plant sale.

Peter is our Treasurer, but does a lot more. He also runs our Trading Shed, organising the rota, and has just taken on the additional role of ordering goods for our shed. On Peter's behalf, I'd like to thank his team of Ron, Liz, Jill, Sally, Mari, Jenny, Annie and Pamela. Peter also organised our apple pressing day last year, and with Sally, has organised and taught two Soil and Compost Workshops.

Our monthly 'café' has now been running for about 2 years. If you haven't come along, you've missed something very special. It's between 12 and 2 pm on the first Sunday of every month. Not just coffee or tea etc., but the most fantastic tasty and healthy lunch. Plot-holders from Shepherds Hill are now regular attenders. We are very grateful to Annie, Sally, Pam, Pamela, Evelyn, Jo and Jill who have made this both a great success and on alternate months, raise significant amounts of money for a different charity.

Our plant sale – what can I say – we couldn't have done it without Colin and Angela, who started sowing plants in our poly tunnel in early spring, potting them on continually, and moving them to harden off in 3 huge slug-proof fleece boxes constructed on my plot. Everything had to be timed to be ready on just one day, a much harder task than that faced by a garden centre, which can simply sell things when they're ready. I'd like to thank everyone else who donated plants. And a special thanks to everyone who helped set up the gazebos and tables early on Sunday morning, and all who helped sell for the sale. Whether we will have enough people to set up in time on Sunday is a worry for us all, so here for the record are the names of everyone who got up early on Sunday morning to help: Angela, Annie, Colin, Geoff, Jill E, John, Liz, Mari, Mike, Peter, Roland, Sally, Steve, Theresa. Many of these people stayed to help sell, and were joined by others: Anita (gate), Clive, Ian, Jan, Mark (gate), Martin, Julie, Ksenija, Mike C, Fadima, Pam, Ron, Sarah, Tom. Running the café were Annie, Evelyn, Pam, Pamela, Jill, Jo and Sally. I apologise for any missed names. We kept the prices a bit lower this year, but still achieved over £1200.

After the plant sale, Angela continued producing plants for sale on Sundays at good value to plot-holders. This is the second year she's done this, and it's appreciated and made a difference to many plot-holders' growing. Now, Colin is gearing up to produce plants for sale at the Chadahs Show in September.

Alison, as site secretary, carries by far the greatest part of the everyday tasks.

Alison and Sally both watch over our composting loo and John manages the technical side. A very big thank you to Alison who tends to be the one who cleans the toilet!

Tommy is always willing to help with jobs. His forte is the heavy work – if a pipe leaks, then hardly has Tommy been asked than there is a 4 foot deep hole down to the pipe at the bottom!

I've continued to repair old wheelbarrows. Should we have one or two wheelbarrow parking 'stations' near the bottom of the hill? The meeting felt we should if space could be agreed with the tenants concerned.

On the 'Bee Plot' (Haringey Teaching Apiary), Fred Clark and Sara Leviten continue to run the introduction to bee-keeping course, and to manage their hives.

So, you can see that a lot of people are involved in things both large and small for our site – and I know I will have missed names, for which I apologise.

Last but not least, I want to thank on your behalf all members of the past year's Committee - Alison Liney (Site Secretary), Angela Silva-Jones (co-opted), Arthur Leigh, (Neighbourhood Watch link), Jenny Bourne-Taylor (our rep. on the APPCC), Jill Pullan, John Wilkinson, Peter Campbell (Treasurer), Sally Chubb (Cttee Secretary).

Compost - We have managed to get only 2 deliveries of compost to our car park since our previous AGM. As many of you know, this requires the help of the Alexandra Park contractor and his heavy equipment – digger, tractor, trailer, and at least two park staff. It is a lot of work for them. We have willingly made 2 substantial donations to the Gardeners' Benevolent Fund on behalf of the contractor, John O'Connor Ltd, and again, I'd like to record our thanks to them in this report. Thank you all for filling in our little forms, which help us keep track. We limited the number of barrows to 8 per plot for the last load, which spread it out over a full week and gave everyone who would like some the opportunity of getting it. We hope to be able to get another load in late autumn and will continue to restrict the loads to 8 barrows per plot.

Events weekly: Peter's Art Group (Fridays), CHADAHS Trading Shed (Sundays), Poly tunnel plants sales (Sundays in June and July).

Events Monthly (1st Sunday): – Teas, coffees & home-made cakes.

Saturday 12 September – CHADAHS Annual Show at Moravian Church Hall.

CHADAHS Trip - 20th September

Other local shows – will try to put into our google calendar on our website.

Open gardens locally – there's quite a lot, but if someone is interested in helping, they could be put into our google calendar.

Site Secretary – Alison Liney

The waiting list - now 186, including 7 people on the long list. The long list is those people who come to the top of the waiting list and want to defer getting an allotment. They need to contact me when they are ready for a plot and let me know each year that they want to remain on the list. The list has moved 25 places since my last report. I am now taking people off the list from Feb 2007. We welcome 12 new tenants: Ron Brooks, Mark Guerriero, Billy Nicholas and Theresa Pateman, Nick Summers, Ian and Sally Crofton, Tim and Lin Brown, Ian and Priscilla Chandler, Ken Benjamin, Alex Lynch and Mark Pelling in Alexandra Park. David Gear and Tallie Maughan in GLM. There are 3 probationers.

Security – Our boundary is still not secure. There have been various incidents during the year. Petrol trimmers, cultivators, bags of potatoes have been taken from sheds and onions, peaches stripped from plots. It is possible to park a van by the flats at the bottom of the site and climb in though we have done our best this year to improve the fencing on that side and plant spiny bushes.

The trading shed and Top shed have been broken into twice. At the moment, someone appears to be climbing in from a neighbouring garden. We need to improve our use of security cameras. Discussion about buying another camera, installing outside lighting and insurance. We are insured for public events like the plant sale and if we employ someone to do a job, but each tenant is responsible for health and safety on their own plot.

Maintenance – We are lucky to have Pete Oliver, whom we pay to trim back the growth on the communal paths, and to have Colin Roberts to deal with plumbing and Tommy Amooty to do any digging required. The pipe taking water down to the bee plot tank in the Nursery was accidentally punctured so that was quite a spectacular incident. I will mark it so it doesn't happen again. Peter Campbell has been a great help as unofficial leak liaison officer and he and Colin have also been giving their time to improving fencing. The Council has done some work on the oaks.

Rubbish collections – Twice a year. The amount that can be taken is restricted so please take rubbish away when you can and certainly don't bring it specially!

Treasurer – Peter Campbell

Peter presented the accounts for the year ending March 2015. There is a healthy cash balance of £4,093. The Café sent over £700 to various charities during the year but this money does not appear on the accounts. Peter thanked Harry Pullan for helping him produce the end of year accounts for the meeting. The Accounts were accepted - proposed by Colin Roberts and seconded by Jenny Bourne Taylor.

Haringey Teaching Apiary – Sarah Leviten and Fred Clarke

This year we ran a class with two students focusing on keeping a hive and responsible bee keeping. We have given a couple of talks and had some members of the Muswell Hill synagogue on site for a talk. After a sad Autumn where we had to burn two hives and their contents due to European foul brood, we went through the winter with two hives, having been unable to harvest almost any honey (25 jars in total). Now, due to collecting swarms, we are at six hives and so far all are surviving and some thriving. If all goes well this will be our most productive season for five years. We could put some jars of honey in the trading shed for anyone who would like to give a donation. Please write to Sarah if you would like to join a class on bee keeping. Arthur mentioned the threat to bees from lifting the neonicotinoids ban and the petition on 38 Degrees online.

Wildlife – Sally Chubb

Since the AGM in July last year, we have had a good variety of wildlife sightings. Happily there were plenty of live hedgehogs and several very young hogs spotted last Autumn, one of which trundled up and down my plot one warm evening in October and even tried to climb up my leg! Terry caught a large hedgehog in January in her live rat trap. It had eaten the peanut butter bait and gone to sleep. It wandered off unharmed when released! I haven't seen any hedgehogs this summer so far and no spottings recorded but Bob says he has seen several and that Tommy has a family of hedgehogs on his plot. Sadly, there were three dead hedgehogs reported over the year, as opposed to two the year before. One of the dead hedgehogs, we thought, may have had his back leg caught by a strimmer, though foxes in towns are reportedly occasionally and unusually targeting hedgehogs.

The friendly Mallard ducks returned in April in time to start gobbling up the frog spawn. There have been lots of birds spotted. The ring-necked parakeets are around and squawking, the lovely long tailed tits, a nuthatch, robins, blackcaps, goldfinches, woodpecker and the sparrow hawk, but not recorded with any young this year. There have been butterflies of various kinds and caterpillars. Bob Hare has added to the list of wildlife on the website sorted by date, a list of wildlife sorted by species.

Do let me know if you have put in a new pond and I will add it to the list. There seemed to be plenty of frogs around this spring.

We have a new top bar beehive this year on the site so don't forget to grow some bee friendly flowers on your plot. If you can also keep a wildlife friendly patch of habitat on your plot without getting a dirty plot notice, please do!

It was noted at the meeting that a heron has also been seen flying very low on the site and a fox and cubs spotted on the top path. Bats are also spotted.

Jenny Bourne Taylor offered to help with encouraging wildlife on the site and if anyone else would be interested, just let me know.

Trading Shed – Peter Campbell

There are more people on the rota now. It is good to have more people involved in the running of the shed with ideas for stock etc. We have had more customers this year. Lynne Malloy, who has been ordering the stock for the Ally Pally and Shepherds Hill sites, for several years, and doing an excellent job, has decided to confine herself to ordering for Shepherds Hill only. I have agreed to take over the ordering of stock for Ally Pally. If we order £350.00 worth of stock we get free delivery and I will try and ensure we are able to benefit from this saving. There is a catalogue in the Trading Shed of goods, tools etc. which can be specially ordered for tenants. They can put in an order and pre-pay for the goods in the Trading Shed so do have a look at that.

Alexandra Park and Palace Consultative Committee – Jenny Bourne Taylor

The most important news is that Alexandra Palace has been given £18.8m from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards restoring the old theatre and BBC Studios at the eastern end of the Palace. Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive of the Alexandra Palace and Park Charitable Trust is resigning but Louise Stewart, an excellent candidate from Visit England, has been appointed in his place.

Dehydrating Toilet – John Wilkinson

John apologised for not being able to attend the meeting but submitted the following report:
The Allotment Toilet has had problems this year with the “liquids” not evaporating. We have had several years of perfectly satisfactory performance from the toilet so we called in the supplier who has been very helpful in assisting us. The latest news is that just over a week ago, James (the toilet supplier), Colin, Peter, Ann and myself, attended (some at a greater distance than others it must be said!) and pumped out the liquids into 10 holding containers. Having removed some 350 litres from the tank (that's at least 1000 “visits”) and having reassembled the toilet tank so as to achieve the best possible airflow (which is what evaporates the liquids and keeps the toilet smelling sweet) James will revisit, remove the holding containers and adjust the rear hatch so as to make sure it fits easily. He will also monitor how well the toilet is doing and whether it can be considered to be fixed. We all anticipate that it will work well from now on, but James will always be on hand in case it doesn't. Many thanks to Colin, Peter and Ann for their work and support on the day. The toilet is such a reassuring feature of life on the Allotments we should thank all those who keep it going so thank you Alison and Sally! To those who use vast amounts of toilet paper (and there are some!) please be aware that bees in search of building material for their hives (or it may be a form of wasp – I didn't look too closely) have found the lavish paper layers in the loo and spend many happy hours down there harvesting the stuff. I'm as keen a naturalist as anyone, but users of the toilet need to be aware of this so we do not need to keep a first aid kit next to the pan!

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

We would very much welcome new committee members to help run the Allotment site. New members do not have to have a specific role but there are a number of jobs available:

Compost deliveries: Liaising with the Parks Dept. to organise the deliveries, supervising the delivery and ensuring the money is collected on site. Bob would like to hand over this job.

Security and repairs on the perimeter fencing: The Council currently pays for large expensive repair work but we organise and pay for smaller repairs from our funds. We need someone on the Committee to take over this job from Alison and co-ordinate the repairs.

Rubbish collections: Liaising with the Council and supervising the twice yearly rubbish collections. Alison would appreciate someone taking over this role.

Social Secretary: This is a new role, to organise current social events, such as the BBQ after the AGM and any new events to be decided, possibly a trip out to an open garden – Organic Lee for instance.

All the Committee were happy stand again – Alison Liney, Bob Hare, Peter Campbell, Sally Chubb, John Wilkinson and Jenny Bourne Taylor. Angela Silva-Jones continues as a co-opted member and Arthur Leigh was co-opted back onto the Committee. Jill Ellis, David Craig and Pamela Jackson were proposed as new members on the Committee and agreed by the meeting.

THE TRADING AND SOCIAL SHEDS

For historic reasons, CHADAHS claims responsibility for the Top Shed, used for meetings and the allotment café, and APAA has taken responsibility for the Trading Shed. Having contacted the Council, Alison can confirm that the Council take no responsibility at all for either shed and do not insure them. The meeting voted on two proposals:

1) CHADAHS Committee to be approached and asked to consider CHADAHS taking responsibility for the Trading Shed rather than the meeting shed: carried by a majority vote with 5 abstentions

2) APAA take over responsibility for both sheds. Alison explained that the extra expense would not be very much and APAA could then insure both sheds : 7 for, 10 against and 3 abstentions – with the proviso that the insurance of the sheds needs to be researched and costed.

Bob will approach CHADAHS Committee on behalf of the AGM with the first proposal.

DEVOLVED MANAGEMENT

The Council are proposing some form of devolved management over the next couple of years. There are various models of self-management, including finding a charity to take over the running of the allotments, a Federation of Allotments to pool resources and hire staff to run the allotments, or each allotment separately running their own site. There is a lot of work involved in considering and carrying out the various proposals. Also many concerns about collecting rents (on our site there are 150 plots), health and safety on the site, and the carrying out of unpleasant tasks such as giving out dirty plot notices and evictions. There are lessons to be learned from other boroughs which have already switched to devolved management. The Allotments Forum are asking for more information and arranging meetings with the managers involved. A member of the Forum has compiled an information sheet about the likely options and Alison will send this around on the news email. There will be further copies in the Trading Shed. As it is such an important and complex item on the agenda which needs somehow to be communicated to all tenants, it was proposed that we have an extraordinary AGM to discuss this one issue.

ALLOTMENTS PRODUCE SALES FOR CHARITY

Alison and Bruno Dore from Shepherds Hill met with Budgens Supermarket staff in Crouch End as Budgens would like to arrange a weekly collection of any surplus allotment produce to sell in their shop for Charity. Although a good idea in principle, the meeting had some concerns about the

unpredictability of crops and surplus produce during the year. Alison to discuss this further with Budgens bearing in mind the problems raised.

A.O.B.

Security: Should we buy another security camera. The pros and cons of this proposal were discussed. Irma has concerns about perimeter security at the back of her plot. Outside solar lighting was suggested as a possible deterrent.

Insurance: Are we insured on our plots? Alison explained that we are responsible for all health and safety on our own plots. The site insurance covers workers employed on the site and public safety if we hold an event and invite the general public.

Compost delivery: Ron asked whether it would be easier to deliver the compost to just outside the site at the top gate?

Solar lighting for shed: We did have a plan to do this, so will look at it again.

Chair: A big vote of thanks to Bob, our Chair, for chairing the meeting and for all he does throughout the year!!