

AGREED Minutes of AGM of Highgate Allotments Association, Highgate Primary School, Thursday 11th October 2018

1. **Welcome** The meeting opened at 7.30pm. Jim Greenhill welcomed everyone present – 22 plot holders, 6 committee members and artist-in-residence Chrissie Nicholls.
2. **Apologies for absence** were received from Eileen Alexander, Rose Alexander-George, Celia Barnett, Sue Cakebread, John Cakebread, Joy Collins, Dulcie Conway, Saul Estrin, Sara Jolly, Rahid Khan, Luke McRedmond, Patricia Santos, Jo Todd, Wendy Whale
3. **The minutes of the last AGM (12 October 2017) were approved.**

4. **The accounts for year ended 21.12.2017 were approved.**

Graham Laurie (co-opted Treasurer) presented the accounts for the first 6 months of 2018. Results so far are satisfactory.

He asked for a volunteer (with accounting or book keeping experience) to take over from him during 2019. The HAA accounts system is in good order and running smoothly and he will be happy to work in tandem with his replacement at the start of the handover period.

5. **Committee reports**

5.1 HAA Plot Lettings Report *Maggy Meade-King*

There have been 19 new lettings since the last AGM, all the result of voluntary terminations, usually because people are no longer able to look after a plot or have moved away. Of these, 13 have been approved for a full tenancy, and 1 set of prospective tenants decided allotments were not for them. We currently have 5 probationers. We try to offer new tenants all the support we can, as it is in everyone's interest that they succeed, so please offer a friendly hand to new neighbours. Tenants taking a sensible approach to giving up plots they can no longer manage (or maybe splitting large plots) has meant that – although we have a waiting list of over 100 – people are generally waiting less than 2 years for a plot.

5.2 Shed Shop Volunteers *Maggy Meade-King*

A team of volunteers has been assisting Jim in the shop on Saturdays. We could do with more, so that it is not too much of a commitment for any one person. Please talk to one of the Committee at the AGM if you are interested.

5.3 HAA Site Secretary Report *Geoff Kembell-Cook*

Reorganisation of Haringey Allotment Administration and Tenancy Rent Rises

The promised reorganisation of the Haringey Allotment service, suggested and supported by the Haringey Allotment Forum, has finally taken place. We are no longer served part-time by Parks and Trees officers but by a new full-time Allotment Coordinator: this post has been created with sole responsibility for administration and inspections of all

Haringey allotment sites, and has been fully funded thanks to our 75% rental increases. The new Coordinator has been appointed and will start work in November. As part of the package Site Associations will also receive a significant uplift of up to 100% to their annual Repairs and Maintenance allocation from Haringey, so returning some of the monies raised to tenants' own sites. For Highgate this has meant an uplift from £966pa in 2017 to £2006pa in 2018 which will enable us to continue with site improvements.

Plot Inspections 2018 and 2019

We expected two inspections in 2018 but, due to staff shortages in the Parks and Trees Dept. at Haringey Council, there have been no formal plot inspections since the last AGM. We expect our next plot inspections with the Allotment Coordinator in April 2019. It is reasonable to predict that after 18 months without inspection, the new Allotment Coordinator will expect to see very tidy plots ready to burst into life.

Waiting List

During the 12 months since the last AGM, 45 entries (the same number as last year) have been added to our waiting list, which now stands at around 100 entries. Currently the waiting time for those at the top is still just less than two years, but this is likely to rise during 2019. This short waiting time is a testament to Maggy's efficiency in running the lettings process.

Equipment Hire

HAA owns the following petrol-powered equipment, all available for hire by arrangement: a Stihl strimmer, two Mountfield mowers and a domestic shredder (suitable for smaller tree prunings).

Rubbish Removal – Skip Weekend

We had a very successful Skip Weekend, whereby HAA committee collected appropriate donations from tenants in return for offloading their rubbish, and we covered over two thirds of our costs. We are likely to do this again in the future.

5.4 Communications with HAA Membership (Hilary Laurie and Jack Humphrey) There are about 160 subscribers on the HAA Mailchimp email list: newsletters and other shorter news items have been sent out during the year. Members have supported fellow tenants in a number of ways and helped out in the Shed Shop, as well as enjoying our annual barbecue and plant swap. We continue to be a friendly and welcoming gardening community! HAA's website at <https://www.highgate-allotments.org/> is accessible to all tenants and gives a variety of useful information, particularly on the Documents page, including information sheets, forms and Committee meeting minutes. HAA also runs its own closed Facebook group. You can find us here: <https://goo.gl/fCw7Dy>

5.5 HAA Probationer Support Report *Dan Hackett*

Each vacant plot has a different profile. I make contact first by email and then view the plots with Maggy or the prospective tenants and hand out advice according to the

circumstances. In total 13 probationers have been approved for tenancy since the last AGM, with just 1 pair of probationers not taking up the challenge.

5.6 Environment Report *Dan Hackett*

In the Newsletters I have advised on use of fertilisers, manures and composts, when and how to prune fruit trees and related issues. Newsletters are available to download on our website's Documents page here: <https://www.highgate-allotments.org/documents/>

5.7 HAA Compost and Chippings Report *Geoff Kemball-Cook*

Compost Deliveries: We have benefitted from several deliveries of free Eco-Compost, plus a very generous, continuing supply of Thompson's rotted horse manure.

Chippings: These continue to be supplied without notice and free of charge by local tree surgeons, as and when they are working in our immediate area.

5.8 HAA Site Security and Maintenance Report *Angelo Guarino & Geoff Kemball-Cook*

Security: The main item of note was the break-in and mass theft of power tools from some 20 locked sheds (including the Shed Shop) in January 2018. Following a site visit from the Metropolitan Police we are keeping security measures under review, but we are restricted from certain fairly obvious further measures by the lack of mains power on site. Tenants are advised that it is impossible to make the site perfectly secure and it is unwise to leave valuable tools in sheds on site: such tools are unlikely to be covered by your insurance policy away from your home, and Haringey Council's insurance does not cover them either. Regrettably, battery-operated power tools and mowers/trimmers are readily re-sellable and so are likely targets.

Maintenance: No single item of major expenditure has been made since the last AGM, rather a number of small improvements and purchases have been funded in order to benefit tenants. Details of these can be found in the 2017 Accounts under Expenses and ancillary documents covering the first half of 2018.

5.9 Haringey Allotment Forum Representative Report *Geoff Kemball-Cook*

I have attended 2 of the 4 open HAF meetings but, possibly more importantly, I am a member of the HAF Steering Group which met 5 times during the last 12 months. The main issues hammered out in cooperation with Haringey Council were the setting up of the new Allotment Coordinator post and, more recently, the development of the new increased Repairs and Maintenance grants, which Haringey have adopted without modification.

6. Questions arising from the committee members' reports

There were no questions.

7. Artist in Residence, Chrissie Nicholls

Chrissie showed a selection of the very fine work she has done. She is writing a monthly blog about her time on the site which can be read at www.inkpotandpen.com/plots-and-plants. She will be with us on site for a year.

8. Election of 2018-2019 HAA Committee

Since 9 nominations have been received for 10 committee places, no formal election required.

The new committee members:

Don Adams

Joy Collins

Jim Greenhill

Dan Hackett

Sara Jolly

Geoff Kemball-Cook

Hilary Laurie

Maggy Meade-King

Iain Sheils

Jim thanked all the past committee members, the helpers in the shed shop and Site Secretary Geoff for his energy and commitment. A presentation was made to Angelo in recognition of his invaluable help over many years when he carried out necessary repairs, oversaw the security of the site, and helped in the shed shop.

9. AOB

Site security: How to improve site security discussed. Noted that Metropolitan Police officers, visiting after the January 2018 break in, were in favour of the installation of security cameras.

Trees on site and in neighbouring gardens: Risk of damage from large trees bordering the site discussed. Noted that Haringey Council will only act if trees deemed to be a hazard.

Possibility of exchanging one plot for another: Confirmed that tenants have the option of swapping plots when one felt more suitable becomes vacant. See the website

<https://www.highgate-allotments.org/>

Donations of produce for sale: Rob Wilson thanked everyone who had donated produce to the stall at Alexandra Palace Farmers' Market, with proceeds of sales going to the Harington Scheme.

Sheds and greenhouses: Noted that there should be only one shed and one greenhouse per plot.

Plant and seed sharing: This best achieved using our Facebook page

<https://goo.gl/fCw7Dy>; donating plants to the plant sale at the summer BBQ; leaving plants by the shed along with a Help Yourself notice; adding seeds to the seed swap box in the shed.

Thanks to Highgate Primary School: Jim thanked William Dean, Head Teacher of Highgate Primary School, for the use of school premises for the AGM and for committee meetings throughout the year.

10. The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Next committee meeting: Sunday 11 November 2018

Next AGM: Thursday 10 October 2019