

## ST JOHN'S ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION 1983

### Annual General Meeting Sports & Social Club, Kenilworth 4 April 2022, 7.30 pm

#### Minutes

**Welcome** from Chairman Bob Shanks. He welcomed everyone and thanked them for taking the time to attend. This was first actual meeting since 2019.

**Members present;** Bob Shanks, Ruth Harris (Treasurer,) Arthur Belgrove (Plot Secretary), Stella Allinson, Janet Bates, Ken Chennells, Terry Cripps, Rebecca Davis, Catherine Dallaway, Angela Guest, Philip Galloway, Alan Gardner, Toni Hickman, Frank Holmes, Chris Jordan, Karen Knight, Roy Lockwood, Linda Martin, Chris Nelson, Catherine Nelson, Chris Othen, Janet Othen, Mike Skinner, Peter Spencer, Rosemary Spencer (note taker), Mark Stanistreet, Krishnan Thirumalai, Norman White, Jenny White, Partner of Iwona Janik. Jurgita Liutkeviciute,

**Apologies;** Rhoda Bedington, Richard Hansen, Adrian Jones, Bill Sucking, Diana Sandercock, Julian Stanley, Mark Williams, Stuart Williams, Joan Wood and Mandy Yates.

**The Minutes from the AGM, held on Zoom on 12 April 2021,** having been previously distributed to all members, were agreed by those present and signed as being correct; proposed by Tony Hickman and seconded by Chris Othen. Frank Holmes, was concerned about an item of business recorded in the minutes, and it was agreed that this would be discussed at 'Any Other Business'.

**Matters arising;** None

**Chairman's Report;** This had been circulated prior to the meeting. We need to get more members involved in the running of the Association. The burden falls heavily on a very few individuals. Various jobs were detailed in the report and Bob talked about what was needed.

Rebecca Davis suggested a Facebook page. Mark Stanistreet offered to liaise with Rebecca and this was agreed to be a good idea to be reviewed in three months after setup.

Catherine Dallaway suggested that maybe someone could go with Arthur when he meets prospective tenants and help with the induction. Arthur commented that more than one session is usually needed, as one hour is not long enough to read and understand the documents before signing them.

Mark Stanistreet mentioned that some newcomers to keeping allotments might find a mentor helpful. Frank Holmes offered to do this.

#### **Plot Secretary's Report** (Arthur Belgrove)

This had been circulated prior to the meeting. Arthur updated his report stating that during the year, 67 plots had changed hands. In response to a query about working parties, Arthur explained their function. We periodically have a working party to do jobs around the site, but this is not required at the moment. Tony Hickman suggested that

advertisements for help when required could be put up in the shed. There were 20 people on the waiting list, down from 40 before Christmas.

### **Site Report** (Ruth Harris)

This had been circulated prior to the meeting. Ruth reiterated the urgent need for a Site Manager, to ease the workload of Arthur and herself. In response to a query from Chris Othen, Ruth outlined the various tasks currently undertaken. Chris suggested that committee look into dividing them up to ease the burden on individuals. The committee will look into this

### **Treasurer's Report** (Ruth Harris)

This had been circulated prior to the meeting. Ruth gave an update on a new supplier to the shop. The previous one has closed their business. The report was accepted unanimously after a proposal by Tony Hickman, seconded by Chris Othen.

**Auditor** All our accounts have now been audited, and were found to be correct. Ruth reported that Diana Sandercock has agreed to be our auditor for the next twelve months. This was carried after a proposal by Tony Hickman, seconded by Linda Martin.

### **Health & Safety** (Nick Sumners, H & S Officer)

This had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Association's policy was explained along with what was essential to keep everyone safe. The means of summoning the Emergency Services were explained, using the Football Club's post code, the 'What Three Words Code or dialing 112. This is all on the Notice Board at the back of the shed.

### **Election of Officers**

Officers are elected for a three year term, and Arthur Belgrove, Plot Secretary, was due for reelection. He was re-elected and was thanked for the amount of time and effort that he puts into the various aspects of the Plot Secretary's job.

### **Propositions**

There were four propositions, all circulated prior to the meeting.

#### **Proposition 1**

**To change the use of Plots 111 and 120 to winter bird feed and similar use by the formation of a support group that pay the normal rent for the plots to the Association and manage the plots in an appropriate way. Reports on the wildlife and the use of the plots to be made in the Association's newsletter.**

Proposed by Bob Shanks, Seconded by Barry Hickman

Plots 111 & 1120, currently set up as a wild flower meadow due to the poor quality of the soil and drainage problems. Frank Holmes questioned whether this amounted to sub-letting the plots, contrary to the tenancy agreement our constitution. Bob said that this was not the case. Frank also wondered if 'no dig' cultivation might solve the problem. However this involves a great deal of compost being brought on to the site. Bob put a 20 ton load of manure on to the plot recently to no benefit. The plots can revert to allotment cultivation at any time should the Association wish.

Votes cast in favour: 30  
Votes cast against: 1  
Abstained: 0

The motion was carried.

### **Proposition 2**

**That there should not be any work or expenditure undertaken by the Association on the ditch and hedge along the north western side of the allotment.**

Proposed by Frank Holmes, Seconded by Philip Galloway.

Mark Stanistreet asked about the owner of the hedge and ditch. Bob explained that they are owned by the adjoining land owner. He has never maintained them and doing so is of no advantage to him. The ditch is a drainage system for the allotments and failure to maintain it will result in plots becoming waterlogged. It is also it is a matter of health and safety.

In answer to a query, Ruth reported that last time we cleaned the ditch the cost was £684. It will need doing again in about 12 months' time and the estimated cost will be in the region of £1000.

Votes cast in favour 2

Votes Against 29

Abstentions 0.

The motion was defeated.

### **Proposition 3**

**That there will not be any more expenditure on skips for general use.**

Proposed by Frank Holmes, Seconded by Norman White

The problem of tenants who do not take their rubbish away despite the requirement to do so in the tenancy agreement was discussed. The possibility of taking deposits from new tenants to cover this was thought to be too large an administrative burden.

Votes cast in favour 2

Votes Against 29

Abstentions 0.

The motion was defeated.

### **Proposition 3**

**That an arrangement be made to allow those tenants that do not use a motorised vehicle in accessing the allotment to opt out of the expense of track repair/improvement etc.**

Proposed by Frank Holmes, Seconded by Neil Augustus (absent)

Ruth said that the site is maintained for the benefit of all members. It is a matter of health and safety. Members could not opt out things that they considered to be of no direct benefit to them.

Votes in favour 2

Votes against 29

Abstentions 0

The motion was defeated.

### **Any Other Business**

**The Gate** Do we continue to keep the gate closed at all times?

After discussion, Chris Jordan made the following proposal, seconded by Tony Hickman

**That the gate be kept closed at all times.**

It was passed unanimously. Ruth agreed to email all members with this result as soon as possible.

Chris Othen mentioned the possibility of a lock on the gate to be used on match days.

### **2021 AGM**

Frank Holmes noted that there was a proposal in the minutes of last year's AGM to give the committee authority to increase the rents for 2021. He pointed out that as details were not distributed prior to the meeting and only a small number of members attend the meeting on Zoom, most would not have known about this. Ruth responded by saying that if we wait for an AGM to increase rents, it was a year before the increase came into effect. The delay was a problem. It was now our practice to include this resolution to enable rent increases to be collected immediately. She also pointed out that the 2021 AGM was quorate.

Catherine Dalloway thanked the committee for all their hard work during the year. It was stated that allotments in Redditch cost £65 per year and in Coventry, £46 per year. Ours are now £30 plus a £2 membership fee. Our plots are also a full 10 perch plot, which many are not.

Ruth proposed the following resolution;

**That the committee be given discretion to increase the rents up to a maximum of £10 for 2023 should they think it necessary** seconded by Catherine Dalloway and a vote was taken.

Those in favour 29

Those against 0

Abstentions 1

The motion was carried

The meeting closed at 9.05pm, the chairman again thanking people for their presence and their patience in discussions.

*Rosemary Spencer  
9 April 2022*