

# WOODLEY ALLOTMENTS TENANTS ASSOCIATION

## SPECIAL BULLETIN – 94

### WOODLEY ALLOTMENTS TENANTS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

27<sup>th</sup> March 2023

The Oakwood Centre 7:30 p.m.

1. **Welcome:**

Vice Chair, Sarah Lane had lost her voice so Kerri Evans, Treasurer, welcomed everyone to the AGM and introduced the current members of the Committee. Representatives of Woodley Town Council (WTC), Kevin Murray (Clerk) and Colin Holland (Amenities Manager) were also introduced and welcomed to the meeting.

2. **Apologies:** Tenants on plots F13, G12, F16, J30, F17, L33 sent their apologies

3. **In memoriam:** Remembering the life and contribution of tenants that we have lost during the last 12 months, Kerri reported that Pam Bennett a new tenant on one of our new mini plots had passed away unexpectedly. There followed a minute's silence as a sign of respect and for reflection.

4. **Confirmation of Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting:**

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

Matters arising –

- Annual Report – Tenants were informed of the arrangements for, our Chair, Scott Golding's funeral. Kerri thanked all who had attended.
- Plot Vacancies – The Committee discussed the % of plot allocations for Reading residents with Woodley Town Council. There are currently 34 plots occupied by Reading residents. Reading Borough Council (RBC) can allocate up to 50 plots to Reading residents. Reading residents apply to RBC who then applies to WTC for an allotment. As not all the 50 plots have yet been allocated, the Reading applicant would go to the top of the waiting list. H29 tenant asked if any Woodley tenant would lose their plot to a Reading applicant. Kerri confirmed that a Reading resident would simply join the waiting list and that no Woodley resident would lose their plot as current tenants have signed a legal tenancy agreement with WTC.
- AOB
  - a. Removal of tyres - WTC will not remove tyres from allotments. In accordance with the TA, tenants must remove any tyres themselves by booking a trip to the tip and taking 4 tyres at a time. The presence of tyres is recorded during plot inspections. Anyone struggling to remove tyres please contact the Committee.

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- b. Grass cutting - This was discussed with WTC who have cut the grass throughout last year. The Committee thanked Colin Holland for arranging this.
- c. Buckets next to water butts for washing vegetables -This has been done and BH will provide 6 additional buckets to be placed next to other water butts that are being identified.
- d. Provisions of skips over the May Bank Holiday - Skips were provided by WTC, although they were a little later than planned.
- e. Discussing water leaks with WTC – This will be covered by Colin Holland later in the meeting.
- f. Committee to arrange for the delivery of woodchips and pallets - This has been done with the deliveries placed around the site in different locations to make it easily accessible to more tenants. The Committee has also sent out lists of recommended companies for materials as manure and mulch.
- g. Advertising Launchpad dates - The Committee has advertised these planned days in advance on the Notice board and on Facebook to allow tenants to see this information and to volunteer to help if they wish. This is ongoing.

### Questions:

- Tenant on M11 asked for woodchip to be delivered near to this area. Barry Jackson informed tenants at the meeting that a delivery had been made but a large proportion had been removed very quickly by one tenant. The Committee will arrange for a further deliver to this area.
- A tenant referred to the difficulty reading the new sign near the Noticeboard. This will be dealt with later in the meeting.

**Constitution amendment:** There is an error due to proof reading of the document. 1c is to be amended to 1b. This was voted in unanimously.

### 5. Election of Committee Members

- a) As there were only 6 nominations (with no two members nominated for the same post) voting was by a show of hands

All were unanimously elected.

The Committee Members are:

- Chair : **Sarah Jackson**
- Vice Chair : *Vacant*
- Secretary: *Vacant*
- Treasurer: **Kerri Evans**
- Ordinary Members:
  - **John Anderson**
  - **Teresa Buley**
  - **Fiona McAllister**
  - **Peter Wheat**
  - *Vacant*

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Plot numbers for Committee members can be found at the end of the Newsletter.

Kerri asked if there were any other tenants who wished to put themselves forward to be on the Committee/help to support the Committee, but nobody came forward.

### 6. Presentation of Annual Report:

Kerri Evans presented the Annual Report written by Sarah Lane, Vice Chair.

a) **Positive feedback from WTC** - Kieran Mullane (WTC admin representative for the allotment site) thanked the Committee for their hard work over the last year. He remarked that “the site has seen significant growth and success despite the sad passing of Scott Golding. The current Committee welcomed 61 new tenants to site since Jan 2022 and we hope for another successful year working with the new Committee”.

The tenant on G12 also thanked the Committee for all they do.

Sarah thanked the outgoing Committee for their dedication and hard work. She commended them as having a “great community ethos and a strong connection of all working together with the site at their heart”.

She praised the volunteers who have shown dedication in watering the Launchpad plots and to keeping everything alive until it was ready to be harvested and taken to Readifood Bank.

Sarah also thanked the volunteers who have cleared brambles and those who have started on the Memorial Plot

b) **New Tenancy Agreement (TA) for 2022/23** - Together with WTC the Committee are constantly reviewing and updating the TA to improve it in ways which benefit the tenants.

c) **Communications** – The Committee continue to have regular ongoing meetings with WTC. The Committee are communicating well with tenants through social media pipelines, emails, Newsletters and Special Bulletins. Mailing lists are compliant with data protection with opt in and opt out facilities.

d) **Waiting List** – there are only 24 remaining on the current Waiting List for allotments and as previously reported, there have been 61 new tenants in the last year.

e) **Road repairs** – Until the bucket has been fixed on the WTC tractor, we are unable to get scalping transported around the site.

f) **Speeding** - Please remember the speed limit is 5mph.

g) **Charity plots** –

- i. Launchpad has erected a fruit cage for gooseberry and raspberry bushes. Corporate volunteers have been on the plots already this year and there are more planned in the coming weeks. Please do volunteer to come and help to support and give extra advice to the volunteers on these arranged days. The Launchpad volunteer days brings in revenue

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to the Association which then enables us to pay for improvements to the site e.g., security and the Memorial plot.

The Launchpad team were invited to a carol concert and were able to meet celebrity supporters Chris Tarrant, Matt Alright and Danyl Johnson. They let the team know that they are held in the highest esteem by Launchpad.

- ii. Sport in Mind have advised that the Committee that their tenancy at the allotment has run its natural course and had reached a natural end to the weekly adult meeting sessions.
  - iii. Addington School are doing extremely well.
  - iv. Hope and Vision are also doing extremely well and are growing produce for all the individuals that are in recovery and being helped by the charity.
- h) **Security** – The Association has 5 cameras which operate at a cost £14-£21 monthly in batteries. It is everyone's responsibility to help maintain the safety of the site so be vigilant and if you see anything wrong then please report it to the Committee. Please help us to keep the site safe.
- i) **Notice board area** – the Notice board now has a Perspex cover to keep everything dry and tidy. Thank you to Mike McNamara for arranging this.
- j) **Encroachment** –
- i. Tenants reported an encroachment onto site from a house of Pitts Lane. During building works, the Pitts Lane resident established a new boundary and demolished a 50-year-old oak tree which was on council land. The Committee informed WTC who raised the issue with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). WBC then reported this to RBC (the allotment site owners) and the issue is now in the hands of the legal department of RBC who have issued a 28-day notice.
  - ii. A tenant hacked down perfectly healthy fruit trees on an adjacent plot to use as bean poles. This was reported for action by WTC.
- k) **Illegal brewing on site** – This was reported to WTC. The issue is ongoing.
- l) **BBQs** – These were happening on site during the drought despite there being a ban due to the fire risk. Tenants flouting the ban were contacted.
- m) **Bonfires** – These are still happening outside the times allowed in the TA. Tenants have also been leaving fires smouldering. Please keep to the rules
- n) **Dumping of rubbish** - Rubbish, with some brought in, is still being dumped around the site and on other tenants' plots. This is unacceptable. Please be vigilant and report anybody dumping rubbish to the Committee.

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- o) **Trespass onto other tenant's plots** – Individuals have been trespassing to pick fruit (e.g., blackberries) and produce on other tenant's plots. This is not allowed and anyone doing this is breaking the TA.
- p) **Pond and drainage** – This is ongoing. There is a question over the merits of a pond in this location. The pond was designed to act as an attenuation pond for excess water, but this is not working. Instead, flooding issues have been moved onto K row. It appears that the water table remains very high at the front of the site. Kevin Murray added that the drainage of the site will need reviewing. Gill Germain asked if there was a link between the flooding and the leak that was being investigated on site by WTC. Colin Holland added that there was no leak found but water naturally drains to the front of the site where water is retained by clay, keeping the water table high. A tenant on K row reported that the amount of flooding is new. Colin Holland suggested that clearing the ditch may help reduce the problem and will complete this task over the summer. The tenant on D27 suggested that a culvert to the left of the gate where there is currently a bramble patch could alleviate the problem. There was further discussion over the benefits of a pond on site with some support for a pond on the Memorial Plot. A decision about the pond is to be delayed while the drainage issue is investigated further. The Committee will discuss drainage on site at their next meeting with WTC.
- q) **Community events** – Teresa Buley has done an amazing job organising seed and fruit bush sales.
- r) **Bramble clearance** - This project is underway with Jim Reeves leading.
- s) **The Memorial Plot** - Mike McNamara is spearheading this and the initial clearance of this plot is underway this weekend.
- t) **Pop up Shop** – This, together with accompanying local honey sale, has proven to be very successful. The next H&P pop up shop is on site on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April.
- u) **Scrap metal collection** – Please leave any at the end of your plots by Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April.
- v) **Apple press** – We have one on site. Please contact the Committee if you wish to use it.
- w) **Future plans** –
- i. An additional toilet is planned near M row. This is in discussion with WTC.
  - ii. We are creating a group called Friends of Woodley Tenants Association; these are tenants not on the Committee who have agreed to handle special projects e.g., Barry Johnson - the Launchpad plots, Tony Carter - delivery of pallets, Ian Butterworth – cameras. If there is any tenant who would like to help or has an idea, please contact the Committee.
  - iii. Security update – The Committee are looking into upgrading the cameras with better night vision capability.

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x) **Thank you and welcome from our new Chair, Sarah Lane** – “Our sincere thanks go to (outgoing Committee members) Mike McNamara, Gill Germain, Barry Johnson and Tony Carter for all their support during the last year and a very warm welcome to the new Committee; I look forward to getting to know you working with you in the interests of our tenants”. Thank you all for attending this evening.

### 7. Treasurer’s Report:

Kerri Evans, Treasurer, gave the report. Kerri has been treasurer since 2016. We now have internet banking with a robust system in place to ensure security.

**Balance brought forward from 2021:** £3154.06

#### Income 2022:

- Total Launchpad: £550.00
- Total seed/plant sales: £327.50
- Lloyds complaint £30.00
- Interest: £0.43

#### Expenditure:

- Condolence flowers & Sue Rider donation following Scott Golding’s death: £125.00
- Security & renewals (Website, GDPR etc.): £160.35
- Printing costs (including ink, cartridges & paper): £488.16
- Batteries (for CCTV cameras): £64.73
- Sundries:
  - Shed & padlocks: £82.99
  - Christmas Committee drinks: £28.56
- In addition, transactions for Launchpad costs - all invoiced:
  - Fuel for mower, Ground cover: £104.57
  - Seeds, Fruit bushes, Onion sets: £160.22
  - Gloves, Water (for corporate): £45.48
  - Seed order £19.28 added to invoice 22 (2023 year’s accounts)

**Balance brought forward to 2023:** £3150.53

In 2023 there will be additional expenditure for the Memorial Plot and the Committee have already put money aside for this. Money has been moved into a savings account to get more interest.

### 8. Adoption of the Annual Report and Treasurers report

**WOODLEY ALLOTMENTS TENANTS ASSOCIATION****SPECIAL BULLETIN – 94****9. Plot vacancies**

- a) Lettable plots – 380 – this represents an increase of 21 lettable plots from 2021.
- b) Occupied plots – 375
- c) Vacant plots  
10 pole – 0, 5 pole – 0, Mini plots – 5, Starter plots – 0
- d) Primary tenants – 339, Joint tenants -25
- e) Waiting list –  
There are 24 new prospective tenants and 14 current tenants who have expressed an interest in an additional plot.

**10. Plot inspections**

- a) Plot inspections were performed last year on behalf of WTC.
- b) Alongside this, photographs were taken of the plots, enabling WTC to see progress.
- c) The point of plot inspections is to ensure that allotments are being well utilised to grow crops.
- d) If anyone has problems about/ reasons for not cultivating their plots, please contact the Committee or WTC immediately so that you can be supported.

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### 11. Any Other Business.

#### a) Colin Holland (WTC)

- i. Rats – getting quotes for a contractor to deal with the problem. Never going to get rid of all of them but hopefully the numbers will be reduced.
- ii. Water butts – low pressure is due to increased demand during hot weather, so problem is not easily solvable. Looking at adding water harvesters. Losing a lot of water through small leaks. The maintenance team will be checking all water butts over the season to reduce these leaks, level tanks and ensure stopcocks are working.
- iii. Polytunnel – With the Associations support, WTC are hoping to erect a polytunnel on site to support growing on plants and small trees for the parks.
- iv. Addition of bays – for depositing woodchips, leaf mould etc which WTC can offer to tenants.
- v. New Signs – WTC has put these up to replace the old ones on all parks. They have been put out of reach, so they are less likely to be vandalised.

**Feedback:** Some tenants have found it difficult to read the small print on the new signs

b) **Fruit bushes and seed orders** – Teresa reported that the timing for these goes in the Newsletter so please look out for news about ordering fruit bushes and trees in July. These can be ordered via an order form but if you would like to order a particular variety not on the order form, please contact Teresa directly via the Committee email. Orders for seeds can be taken in October.

c) **Pop up Shop** – 7<sup>th</sup> April between 10am-12.30pm on the Launchpad plots L25 and L26. Information will go out by email but if you wish to order something beforehand and have it delivered to the site, please contact Teresa directly via the Committee email. Fertilisers, compost, manure, canes and other items can be pre-ordered.

d) **Kevin** – Thank you to the Committee for their support around the allotment especially around Plot Inspections which WTC couldn't do any other way, and which really do make a difference to the site. Gill Germain asked about a query raised by one of our tenants regarding the underuse of the allotment budget for 2022-23. Kevin will investigate this and get back to the Committee. She asked if the money was earmarked for something or if this under spend was common at this time of year.

e) **Facebook group** - The Committee reminded tenants at the meeting that our new Facebook group is called **Woodley Allotments Tenants Association at Reading Road and** can be found at: <http://tiny.cc/2vlruz> or by scanning this QR code.

The meeting was closed at 8.40pm





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### Actions

Item	Description of action by the Committee	
4 Matters arising	Arrange for additional delivery of woodchip close to M row	
6 Annual report	Continue discussion about site drainage with WTC	
	Continue discussions about second toilet with WTC	
	Upgrade cameras on site	
11 AOB	Follow up on water tank maintenance	
	Follow up on procedures introduced by WTC to control rats	
	Report on use of WTC allotment budget by Kevin	

Apologies for the delay in sending the AGM Minutes out to all tenants, as we are aware that the constitution states, 6.g within 30 days. We would also like to personally thank Gill Germain for completing the minutes after stepping down from the Secretary role for 2022/23. We really appreciated you taking the job on.

Should you have any questions or amendments to the above minutes, please do not hesitate to contact the committee on [Readingroadplots@woodley-allotments.org.uk](mailto:Readingroadplots@woodley-allotments.org.uk)

Many thanks

**Sarah Lane –Chair**

[chair@woodley-allotments.org.uk](mailto:chair@woodley-allotments.org.uk)