

Golf Course Allotments Association
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 14th July 2023

Chaired by Andrew Lewis
Minutes by Polly Hanchett

1. Welcome and Initial Business

Andrew welcomed all who were present; 24 members attended.

1.1 Minutes of the 2022 AGM

2022 minutes were approved with no amendments. *Adoption proposed by Sarah, seconded by Lynn.*

2. Officers' Reports

2.1 Chairman's Report – Andrew Lewis:

Tenancies: We have lost several plot holders this year, many of long-standing. The Committee were particularly affected by loss of Steve Davies who served with us for some years but who was a plot-holder for many more and was well-known to many of us here. Rest in peace.

Road: The condition of the road surface remains unacceptable from the toilet up to Winton Avenue gate. Lots of dust is thrown up, damaging people's crops and lungs. We previously had high hopes that the council might provide funds from the allotments' budget for repairs, but this hasn't been possible. We have been saving money to put towards it, but the cost is enormous: we were quoted £20,000 for the work some 5 years ago and it's likely to cost double now. Andrew will pass the baton on to his successor, in the hope it can be resolved soon.

Tree work: Ongoing – several thousand pounds have been spent managing trees on the site, working round from the chippings bin on the road most of the way around to the Bidwell gate. Next year, they will work from the Bidwell Gate round to what used to be the Young Gardeners' plot.

Toilet: No dramas this year, thankfully. Karen Sellars is stepping down from all toilet responsibilities after many years, so we are looking for someone to take over. We would be grateful to hear from anyone who is interested.

Café: We hoped to get the kitchen refurbished this past year as it's rickety and tired and it would help the café to have a proper working kitchen. Unfortunately plans stalled as Liz has been unwell, but hopefully there will be progress on this soon.

Leaks: no major leaks this year, but Mick and his team have done their usual fantastic job fire-fighting all the small ones and we are extremely grateful for all he does.

Community Hall replacement: we anticipate that the hall will come to the end of its life within the next 10 to 15 years, so we are saving money for its replacement.

Andrew is stepping down after 5 years as Chair. He has worked very hard for our community, including through the disruption of Covid, and we are extremely grateful for all he has done. Laura formally proposed thanks to him, which was seconded by Tricia. All present clapped their appreciation.

2.2 Site Secretary – Tullio Moglia

Tullio sent apologies for non-attendance; he is on holiday. Report read by Andrew.

Tullio apologised that he hasn't been at the site as much as he would like this year. Nonetheless, it has been a busy year.

We have full occupancy, and there are 93 applicants on the waiting list. In addition, 56 applicants have been removed for not following procedures.

We have a new Allotment Officer for Haringey, and have had the first site inspection. Warnings and Dirty Plot Notices were issued.

Tullio would like to thank the Committee members for all their hard work during the year.

2.3 Treasurer – Tricia Kelly

It has been another financially successful year for the Allotments. Full report can be read at the bottom of these Minutes. In brief:

Our opening balance for the financial year 2022-23 was £10,198.65, and at the end it was £15,970.65. This represents a net income of £5,780.00. It should be noted that £6,502.81 has been ring-fenced for site maintenance as we have been trying to save a proportion of our income for the major works that need doing (mainly the road and the shed).

Income is generated mainly from the Café and the Show, with a little bit of income from the shop, subscriptions, calendars, fundraising and occasional donations. This year, the Show made £1342.13, slightly more than 2021. Monthly cafes generated £1,601, with an overall profit of £1,479.79 thanks to their very low level of expenses. This is a really significant contribution to our budget and we are all extremely grateful to Liz and all her volunteers for their hard work. All present clapped their appreciation.

Allotment shop: This has a huge turnover of over well over £7,000, although it only makes a small profit as it is run as a service to plot-holders and the mark-up is very small.

Calendars: Calendars have generated a profit of £94 this year. We had a bigger profit last year but ran out of calendars, so we did a bigger run this year at a greater cost and have some left over! It's likely we will need to charge more per calendar next year, but they are a wonderful product to have, are very high quality and are much appreciated as a gift.

Card reader: We are continuing to offer the card reader in the shop, the café and at the Summer Show, and all card payments are very welcome. However, we will continue to welcome cash as we understand that some people are more comfortable with this.

Subscriptions: Income from subscriptions has really plummeted. Last year, only 60 plots out of 347 paid their subscription, significantly less than the year before and the year before that. Those present were reminded how important subs money is in paying for the services provided on site – the toilet, the shop and the café. Some discussion about how we might raise awareness and persuade more plot-holders to pay. Ideas included hand-delivering reminders, doing shout-outs via email, or reminders via the unofficial WhatsApp group, and having a subscription-focused social event at the start of each year. Jim also pointed out that, as a new plotholder, he was given little information about the subscription - how much it is, how it's paid, what it's for and why it's so

important – and all present agreed that this was another important angle to cover. Committee to review these ideas, see what can be put in place.

Keys: Key deposits have contributed an additional £295 to general income, but it is important to remember that this money is only 'borrowed' from plot-holders and could need to be repaid instantly if all plot-holders returned their keys.

Toilet: maintenance this year was £342. Thank you to Karen for maintaining the cleaning rota over the past years, and to Sarah for her recent help in organising a new rota.

Site maintenance: In April 2022, we had a ring-fenced accumulation of £6,502.81 for maintenance. We have since spent just under £4,000 on various site maintenance issues, including tree cutting and rubbish collection.

Haringey usually give us a grant for maintenance which, in 2022, was £2,200. Unfortunately, this year the long-standing Allotment Officer at Haringey left, and the post was vacant for several months. Tricia was new to post as Treasurer and did not know to look out for the form, which went straight to the junk email folder, and there was no-one at Haringey to query its non-return. By the time it was noticed, the money had already been spent and our grant for the year was lost. In any event, we have spent more this year on maintenance than we would have had from the grant, and are fortunate that we can cover this through the surplus we have built up in previous years.

Going forward, it seems likely that Haringey is trying to cut back on expenses. For the next financial year, they are asking that we fill in our usual form but also supply bank statements and accounts showing what money we have and what it's being spent on. This implies they might be restricting grants to sites that don't have other sources of income.

Extended discussion about what this will mean for the site, in particular that we have only built up a surplus fund because the original work on the allotment road done by Haringey council was substandard and hazardous to health and needs re-doing. We also need money to upkeep our community buildings. Barbara had lots of very helpful suggestions about making bank accounts work better for us, as our existing system of ring-fencing amounts, needing to use a cheque book, needing multiple signatures for payments, is unwieldy and complicated; a Treasurer's account could be opened to save for long-term projects that is separate from the working, day-to-day account, and a more practical everyday account could be found. Tricia to discuss further with Barbara and bring this back to the Committee to look at.

Adoption of report proposed by Laura P and seconded by Ann W.

2.4 Shop – Laura Proffitt

Another really successful year. The turnover is higher than it's ever been, the shop is very well-used, and it's at the centre of our community.

Main challenge this year is that one of our main suppliers is closing business. While we get regularly supplies of compost and manure from Sunshine Garden Centre, our big one-yearly deliveries of things like lime, ground cover, chicken pellets and enviromesh come from Horticultural Supplies – and they are closing the business. Laura is exploring other options.

The shop continues to be manned by a rota of volunteers, who open the shop every day of the weekend through Spring, Summer and Autumn. Laura is also happy to open up in the winter if she is around, so this year it has effectively been open and available the whole time. Thank you to all the

volunteers for their hard work. It is a lovely role to have. The team are very welcoming and supportive and it's a great way to get to know other plot holders and to feel involved in the community. This year, only 6 people are on the rota and we would very much like more people to join. It doesn't need to be a big commitment; if you can only manage a Saturday or a Sunday, or only want to sign up for a couple of slots a year, we would still love to hear from you. Please contact Laura or pop into the shop if you can help.

2.6 Show – Karen Sellars

Karen was unable to attend today, so Laura reported back in her absence:

After many years commitment to the show, Karen has now bowed out. There is currently no permanent Show secretary, so the committee are running it with different members taking responsibility for different parts of show e.g. tent setup, café, Portaloo hire and judging. The hope is that someone will come forward to take charge of it again next year.

Tricia added her thanks to Karen, who worked so hard on the Show for all of us. The Show was very successful last year, and it will certainly go ahead again this year.

3. Motions and Proposals

None.

4. Elections

4.1 Site Secretary: Tullio Moglio Proposed: Linda D. Seconded: Lynn H.

4.2 Chairman: Tricia Kelly Proposed: Veronica Seconded: John N.

4.3 Treasurer: Jim Clark Proposed: Sarah M. Seconded: Tim B.

4.4 Shop Manager: Laura Proffitt Proposed: Diane Seconded: Tricia K.

4.5 Minutes Secretary: Polly Hanchett Proposed: Andrew Seconded: Tricia K.

4.6 Remaining ordinary committee members: Sarah McGuire, John Newman, Mick Gerrie, Alison Boon, Andrew Lewis, Imelda O'Brien, Andrea Blackshaw, Diana Ferguson

Proposed by Lynn H. seconded by Ann W.

Appointments to the remaining positions (Assistant Site Secretary; Show Secretary; Vice Chair; Assistant Shop Manager; and Probationer Support Officer) are deferred to the first Committee meeting as the new Committee members were not present at the AGM.

4.7 Café Manager: Liz Love Proposed: Andrew L Seconded: Linda D
(Note: Liz was roundly applauded for all she has done in managing our monthly cafés.)

5. Appointment of Auditor

Robin Andrew proposed Robin Hodgkinson be appointed as the GCAA's auditor. No objections

6. Any Other Business

None. Meeting adjourned 12.13pm.

Treasurer's Report for the financial year ending 31st March 2023

Our opening balance in April 2022 was **£10198.65** and by the end of March this year, our closing balance was **£15970.65**

Some of this money is ringfenced and /or earmarked for large site maintenance projects in the future which I will come back to at the end.

Our main income over the year was from the monthly cafés and our Annual Show . We also make money from the Trading Shed shop, members subs, sale of calendars and occasional extra fundraising and donations.

Taking the show first:

Takings on and around the 2023 show day were **£1775.11** and after expenses of **£432.98** the profit amounted to **£1342.13**.

In 2021 the overall takings were **£ 1519.85** and after expenses, the profit was **£1181.51**so you can see that we were just a bit up from 2021 which was the first proper show after the pandemic.

Hopefully, you'll all come in September and tell your friends so we can have a bumper show this year.

Turning now to the Monthly Lunch Cafes

Income this last year was **£1775.11** and with low expenses of **£121.37** thanks to the regular generous donations of food dishes and cakes, the overall profit was **£1479.69**

Numbers have fluctuated but all thanks to Liz L and her helpers, the café is a real boon to the social life of the allotments and we are lucky we have it. If you haven't been yet – do try it. Lovely food and an opportunity to meet your fellow allotmenters.

Now to the Trading Shed otherwise known as our Allotment Shop :

Sales amounted to **£7694.12**. with costs of **£7148.27** giving a small profit of **£445.85**

There has been an almost 100% increase in annual turnover in the past 2 years thanks to the efforts of Laura, myself and all the shop volunteers.

The shop is run as a service for the benefit of allotment members and we source our stock at a very good discount, almost all of which is passed on to members with a very small mark-up. So the main purpose is not to make a big profit but it is pleasing when we do.

Calendar sales amounted to **£860** and with production expenses at **£765.94** they made a profit of **£94.06** .

Many thanks to Bruce Shayler for all of his hard work producing them -choosing the photographs and organising the design and printing – I think we can all agree that the calendars are a wonderful asset to our allotment community and they make good presents too. As you will see from the figures, it is fine margins on costs vs sales . Costs went up by more than £200 between 2021 and 2022 and we do have to warn that costs are going up again aso we might have to review what we charge this next year.

Card Payments

I have to say that having people pay this way makes my job a lot easier – and people should not feel that any amount is too small to pay by card - that is the purpose of them -they are designed for small businesses and social enterprises.

However I know that some people will always prefer to deal in cash and might feel nervous or mistrustful of card readers.

I can assure them that they are a safe and secure way of paying, but if they still prefer to deal in cash, that is fine - we have no plans to phase that out.

Moving on to Subs .

We took in **£345** in Subs last year- This means that only 69 plots paid for their membership last year which was considerably down from the **£615 in 21/22** and **£715 in 20/21**. Some but not all of this might be explained by the fact that we have shifted from an April-March system to a January-December one but in reality people generally pay or don't pay.

There are more than 200 ploholders on site so I would urge everyone to pay their subs – and tell your neighbours to also – they help pay for things like the toilet and all the services of the site that members enjoy. We did a leaflet round all plots a few years ago and it might be worth doing that again.

Keys

The money we get from key deposits is theoretically a returnable charge and by the end of this year we had **£295** the bank from keys over the past 3 years, money which can be put to general use as we don't expect everyone to ask for their deposits back all at once!

A word about the toilet.

Obviously we don't charge you to spend a penny , it's a service to members , but there are costs involved . Last year maintenance and cleaning products cost **£342**. (The hire of another Portaloo for the show is separate and comes under show expenses.) I'd add that cleaning is done by volunteers and the cost to them is considerable if it is left in a nasty state. Please leave it as you would wish to find it and clean up after yourself.

Finally Site Maintenance.

We had a ringfenced accumulated £6502.81 at the beginning of last year and spent £3958.20 of this on various site maintenance issues such as tree cutting, site clearing, and costs on keeping the water tanks and taps in order.

Haringey Council normally give us a grant which in 2022 was £2700. Unfortunately Haringey lost their Allotment Officer in July and a new one was not appointed until November. Due to a miscommunication , we fell down a hole in the middle of their

bureaucracy and the grant wasn't paid. By the time this was noticed our side, it was too late as they had no more money to give out. Despite putting up a fight, we have had to accept that this money has gone.

As you can see, we spent more than the grant we would have been given on maintenance last year. We are lucky in that we are carrying a surplus and can cover the loss this time. Going forward, it is looking like Haringey is trying to cut back on as much as they can. For next financial year, they are asking to see the bank statements and expenditure for all allotment sites which implies that they may be going to argue that they will only give grants where the site does not have their own funds.

We will argue strongly back that we have been trying to build up a surplus fund to eventually be able to cover the large cost of resurfacing our road – to mend the substandard work that Haringey contractors carried out originally.

We also will need repairs and upkeep to our community hut and the shop.

Hence we have been building up our funds and we are very lucky that we have the various means to fundraise. .

We are not sure what will happen in the future – it will remain to be seen.

And that is the end of my Treasurer's Report for 2022-23

THE GOLF COURSE ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION ACCOUNTS 2022-2023

<u>Category</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Shop	7594.12	7148.27	445.85
Subscriptions	345.00	---	345.00
Fundraising	111.00	---	111.00
Calendar	860.00	765.94	94.06
Toilet	---	342.00	-342.00
Show	1775.11	432.98	1342.13
Cafe	1601.06	121.37	1479.69
Insurance	---	330.00	-330.00
Card Reader fees	---	136.84	-136.84
Miscellaneous **	25.10	101.60	-76.50
Site Maintenance ***	6502.81	3958.20	2544.61
Keys	340.00	45.00	295.00
TOTAL	19,162.20	13,382.20	5,780.00

** miscellaneous income is interest transferred from defunct charge account. Expenditure is purchase of further card readers.

<i>Balance brought forward April 1st 2022</i>	<i>10198.65</i>
(including ringfenced 6502.81 carried forward from 2022)	
Total income 2022-2023	19162.20
Total Expenditure 2022-2023	13382.20
Net income	5780.00
Balance at the end of the year	15970.65

Income and Expenditure 2021-2022 & 2020-2021 for comparison

<u>Category</u>	<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>		<u>Balance</u>	
	<u>21-22</u>	<u>20-21</u>	<u>21-22</u>	<u>20-21</u>	<u>21-22</u>	<u>20-21</u>
Shop	3742.49	3945.60	3489.62	3830.46	252.87	115.00
Subscriptions	615.00	715.00	---	---	---	---
Fundraising	572.76	36.50	---	---	---	37.00
Calendar	1134.02	646.00	545.16	564.96	588.86	81.04
Toilet	---	---	792.75	00.00	---	---
Autumn Show	1519.85	442.00	338.34	442.00	1181.51	103.66
Café	1380.38	00.00	131.96	00.00	1248.42	00.00
Insurance	---	---	---	255.00	---	---

Card reader fees	---	---	---	---	---	---
Young Gardeners' cash **	111.08	521.00	945.77	223.69	---	---
Site Maintenance	8368.72	6317.31	1865.91	6545.35	6502.81	5666.00
Keys	1170.00	335.00	---	---	---	---
RHS	---	---	35.00	255.00	---	---
Honoraria	---	---	500.00	1000.00	---	---
Miscellaneous	---	---	354.10	27.20	---	---
TOTAL	<u>19,852.22</u>	<u>12,958.41</u>	<u>8,972.61</u>	<u>12,482.66</u>	<u>10,979.94</u>	<u>475.75</u>

Net Income 2021-2022: £10,879.94 – first year recovering after the pandemic, and in 2020-2021 it was £475.75, mainly to do with lockdowns and no shows or cafes etc.

GCAA Income & Expenditure 2021-2022

	<u>2021-22</u>	<u>2020-23</u>
Opening balance	12733.63	12257.88
Closing balance	16857.77	12733.63
Increase over year	41124.14	475.75
Income		
Autumn Show	1519.85	442.00
Shop	3742.49	3945.60
Monthly lunch café	1380.38	0.00
Calendar sales	1134	646.00
GCCA subs	615.00	715.00
Cash taken on behalf of Young Gardeners	1111.08	521.00
Fundraising/donations	572.76	36.50
Key deposits	1170.00	335.00
Site maintenance	8368.72	6317.31
Total income	19852.55	12958.41
Expenditure		
Autumn Show expenses	338.34	338.34
Shop stock	3489.62	3866.46
Lunch café operating costs	131.96	00.00
Calendar production	545.16	564.96
Cash passed out to YGC	945.77	223.69
Volunteer expenses & gifts	500.00	1000.00
Miscellaneous	354.10	27.20
Site maintenance	1865.91	6545.35

Toilet maintenance & products	792.75	00.00
RHS Affiliation	35.00	255.00
Total Expenditure	8972.61	12482.66
Net Income over year	10,879.94	475.75