

**Minutes of the
Chiswick Horticultural and Allotments Society
Annual General Meeting
held on Sunday 23 April 2017 at 3.00pm at
the CHS Trading Hut, Staveley Road, London W4**

In attendance:

Chairman and Committee/Trustees

Henry Gewanter, Chairman
Alastair Britten, Joint Trading Hut Secretary
David Burton, Treasurer
Dennis Flaherty, Allotment Secretary
Mike Flinders, Show Secretary
John Gill, Show Secretary and Schools Co-ordinator
Fran Goloway, Membership Secretary
Benjamin Jones, Secretary
Jill Morris, Joint Trading Hut Secretary
Katja Schneckloth-Odinet, PR Officer

Society Members

Lilian Baker, Susan Bennett, Angela Brown, Jim Brown, Rita Chesney, Roger Cook, Betty Cooper, Lizzie Drake, Clare Ellen, Susanna Everton, Roy Forshaw, Sue Gewanter, Andy Heath, Joanne Hodges, Graham Hughes, Jennifer Jenks, Noreen Jones, Moyna Leithead, Paula Leyburn, Samantha Mackey, Aileen Murphy, Penny Morris, Brian Pow, Lu Pradere, Jo Rabin, Cornelia Rulf, Anna Rumian, Lou Spencer, Andrew Steele, Suzanne Tanwell, Mike Thomas, John Todd.

1. Welcome

The Chairman, Henry Gewanter (HG), welcomed Society members to the 101st AGM. He noted that we would change the format to reduce the formal part of the meeting to the legal necessities and devote the rest of our time to a social event. Copies of the agenda, 2016 AGM minutes and the annual report (condensed version) were available at the entrance.

2. Apologies for Absence

Paul Lynch, Vice President.
Society Members – Pamela Mayorcas.

The Chairman noted the deaths of long-standing members, Judith Ormsby, Pat Postle and Terre Margolis, as well of that of Everard Whitehouse, our former Events Secretary and founder of our Centenary Plate Competition for schools in Chiswick.

3. Minutes of AGM held 24 April 2016

These were approved.

4. Chairman and Committee's Report and Outlook for the Society

The Chairman noted that, thanks to Dennis Flaherty's work with allotment holders, Fran Goloway's work as Membership Secretary and Mike Flinder's arranging a recruitment/information table inside Sainsbury's Chiswick, we've had over 90 new members this year. We reached 300 members today with John Todd joining as our 300th!

The Chairman noted the new roof on the Trading Hut, fixing the electrical supply, improved winter heating (thanks in large part to Dennis). We need to repair the ceiling of the Trading Hut and, when money is available, replace the Nissen Hut.

He cited the schools program initiated by Everard Whitehouse and taken up now by John Gill, which has been a great success for the second year in a row.

He asked for volunteers to help in the Trading Hut when it is open on weekends as the work has increased due to the additional members.

He then handed over to Dave Burton for the Treasurer's report.

5. Treasurer's report and adoption of 2016 Report and Financial Statement

The 2016 Report and Financial Statement for the Society was available for members prior to the meeting for their perusal with condensed financials (prepared according to the same legal and accounting criteria as the full version), and the full version was available for anyone who asked. The Financial Statement had been examined and signed by an Independent Examiner.

David Burton, the Treasurer, reported on the financial condition of the Society.

The income from trading was up and membership income was steady despite the simplification of the membership fee.

A leaking roof prompted the installation of a new roof to save the integrity of the Trading Hut, which was accomplished quickly thanks to Dennis Flaherty's efforts. Members donated money for this purpose to the extent of £2,762.50, for which we are grateful.

He thanked members for ticking the Gift Aid declaration, which enabled us to recover £829.64 from HMRC.

2015 was an unusual year for events, due to the costs of Centenary events, but 2016 was more normal such that events brought in a healthy £2061.80. Income from advertisers was down slightly but still good at £1700.

Costs of buying for the trading operation was down due to thrifty buying by the trading hut team, the cost of printing the handbook was reduced, and we managed to reduce the cost of our insurance significantly. On the other hand our rent-free period for our plot has expired so that cost has gone up. The costs of the new roof and upgrading the electricals have already been mentioned.

He pointed out that we need to become less reliant on income from trading, which has largely supported us. The Committee is therefore looking at letting out the Hut to third parties for events, particularly as the number of venues available to the public in the borough seems to be declining, but this will require some redecoration.

Given increasing costs from ground rent and electrical charges, he indicated that income would probably be down next year, perhaps involving a small loss.

Andrew Steele proposing, Noreen Jones seconding, the annual report and financial statements were unanimously approved.

6. Election of Committee members for 2017/2018

All existing Committee members had put themselves forward for election. Those present were asked to approve the re-election of Committee members for the next twelve months. This approval was duly given by a unanimous vote.

Those thus re-elected were Alastair Britten, David Burton, Dennis Flaherty, Mike Flinders, Henry Gewanter, John Gill, Fran Goloway, Benjamin Jones and Jill Morris. Katja Schneekloth-Odinet, co-opted onto the Committee during the year, was also unanimously elected.

Those present were asked to approve the appointment of the Chairman (Henry Gewanter), Secretary (Benjamin Jones) and Treasurer (David Burton). Each were approved unanimously.

7. Election of President and Vice Presidents for 2017/2018

The Chairman noted that Felicity Barwood, our President for several years now, is unable to stand for re-election, so Paul Lynch, one of our current Vice presidents for many years, has consented to stand for election as President. John Todd, a local councillor (who introduced himself to members), and Noreen Jones, a longtime member, have agreed to serve as Vice Presidents. Those present were asked to approve the election of President and Vice Presidents for 2017/2018. This approval was duly given.

Paul Lynch, President

Noreen Jones, Vice President

John Todd, Vice President

8. Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2017/2018

Members were advised that Wayne Hirst has agreed to serve as our independent examiner for another year. He was unanimously elected by those present.

9. Any Other Business

The Chairman reminded members of the discussion at last year's meeting about the possibility of the Council devolving management of the allotments. Since then, he has met with representatives of the Council to discuss options, but no further decisions or feedback have been received. In the meantime, Dennis Flaherty has developed a good working relationship with Hounslow and Carillion about the Chiswick allotments. The members agreed a vote of thanks to Dennis for his work with the allotments, especially for helping reallocate plots not being used and thus dramatically shortening waiting lists.

Jill Morris repeated the request for more help for the Trading Hut and also asked for help in the greenhouse, as well as for the plant sale on 13 May. She noted that there are still spaces for the Munstead Wood visit on 15 June.

Aileen Murphy asked if we had considered being on Gardeners' Question Time. Jill advised that we have applied and been trying for several years, most recently in conjunction with Chiswick House, but so far without success. Sue Bennett suggested tours of particularly interesting allotments, which the Chairman promised to have someone look into.

Mike Flinders asked if any members wanted to go on the proposed Malvern Show trip on 13 May.

Katja reported on recent discussions with a producer of a Canadian documentary series 'Moosemeat and Marmalade', looking to include a feature on Chiswick allotments. She asked if anyone might be interested.

Mike Flinders asked members to vote on a caption for a photograph of the City gardens tour displayed in the Hut. Six proposals had been made and the winner was to get a free tea for 2 at the Summer Show – (1) "I can't believe they haven't cut the grass"; (2) "I can't believe I came all this way just to see

one tree”; (3) “Is that a weed I see before me?”; (4) “My lawn looks better than that”; (5) “Is that the stench of banking corruption?”; (6) “Not that story again!” Proposal (2), submitted by Henry Gewanter, won by a large margin. His wife Sue, a member of the Catering Committee, noted that she would have to make her own tea.

Dennis reported that Staveley Road and Burial Ground allotments are fully tenanted (with one on the waiting list for each); Chertsey and Dukes Meadow each have two plots vacant (with 6 people on the Chertsey Road waiting list and 28 on the Dukes Meadow waiting list); Promenade has 6 vacancies with only five on the waiting list; and Thames Road is fully tenanted with 30 on the waiting list. He noted that the annual inspection (to see which sites are being neglected) is due soon. He told members that, if they get letters advising them that their tenancies may be terminated, they can contact him to see what might be done to help. He noted that the contract with Carillion to look after the allotments is expiring soon and Hounslow is taking the work back in-house.

Alastair asked that we thank all the Trading Hut volunteers.

Finally, the members in attendance were thanked for coming to the AGM and, there being no further business, the meeting was called to a close.

Ben Jones

25 April 2017