



Hollin Lane

Allotment Association

Annual General Meeting of Hollin Lane Allotment Association
Tuesday 24 October 2023 at Meanwood Institute, Green Road, Leeds LS6 4LD.

Present: J Foster 30 & 31B, G Foster & N Clarke 20T, R Hall 12B & 21B, J Willers 36TR, S Knight 32TL, B Landon 4TL, C Hull 29BR, R Dunlevey 37, S Monether 5BR, J Matthews 10BL, J Ward 45, H & A Booth 8TL, P Shore 25T, P Monedero 43BR, S Heleine 29T, C Foren 38BL, D Shan 28, S Thirkill 43TR, M Sutherland 40TR, J Harnett 15BL. *(If you were at the meeting and your name is not here please let us know).*

1. **Apologies:** L Gibbs, J Eisenberg, J Tennant-Jackson, J Heywood, R Lawton, P Vithalbhay, S Petzold, L Allen.

2. **Minutes of the AGM held on 1 November 2022** were agreed as a true record.

3. **Reports:**

Chair and Trustees Report was given by Joe Foster.

- 6 Trustees inspections were carried out in the 2022/23 year with follow up inspections after 6 weeks.
- The Committee met 6 times over the year.
- 1 person was evicted and several plot holders gave up their plots voluntarily. On the whole the standard of plots on the site is high.
- The loss of Peter Blakey early this year was sad as he not only diligently cut the grass but was a friendly encouraging face on the Allotments and contributed a great deal to our Plant Sales and the Annual Show. We are grateful that Roz Dunlevey has taken on the task of cutting the grass.
- **Events:** We have not been able to find an external judge to decide Best Plot. The Plant Sale raised £477.00 and the Annual Show went ahead with Eric Wells and Roger Storr judging at the Show. Jenny Ward commented that the entries to the Show were down this year.

Work Parties: Pruning and trimming the brambles, clearing paths at the top of the site to enable people to walk around and enjoy the view. Apple Juicing Day was held on 22 October but perhaps a bit late as there were not as many apples as last year.

- **Problems: Rats.** Reminder to remove food sources once rats have discovered them i.e sweet corn and sunflowers. Free wire mesh available at the hut shop to rat proof compost bins. Keeping your allotment tidy helps. **Paths** are also always a problem as over the years they have rutted and become overgrown in places. Plea to ploholders to try to keep paths tidy and levelled up to make the site safe and secure for walking around.

Security: In January the site was broken into and vandals set fire to a number of sheds and broke into others. There was a lot of damage and we need to reinforce our boundaries and be diligent about scrambling the gate code. The small side gate is particularly vulnerable.

Treasurer's Report: Jane Willers our new Treasurer presented the unaudited accounts for the year 18 September 2022 to 30 September 2023. Janet Matthews 10BL (an experienced auditor) has kindly agreed to do an independent review of the accounts.

We are still healthily in the black. Rent demands have gone out and are due to be paid by 1 November. Fortunately more people are now paying by bank transfer but we were reminded to identify the payment with our name and plot number. Polytunnel rental demands have just been sent out. Discussion on the breakdown of rental for people taking plots at different times of the year. **ACTION:** It was agreed the following wording would be used in the Tenancy Agreement and on the Allotment Rules and website. **Full rent charged up to April. Half rent charged up to August. No rent if plot taken after August until the next year.**

Water charges remain high and do not reflect our usage. We have a new system to read the water meter regularly and record the readings. Jane is in touch with the supplier and hopes to get them to recognise our meter readings.

Jane answered questions about the manure and seed sales and pointed out that there would be significant expenditure when we order the new huts.

Letting Secretary's Report: Rosie Hall said that we had 114 plot holders and 110 names on the waiting list for plots at Hollin Lane as well as 4 existing plot holders who want to extend or swap their plots. Rosie explained the system used for offering plots to new people and the difficulty of letting $\frac{1}{2}$ plots as people prefer $\frac{1}{4}$ plots. The Starter plots have moved to 21BL and are now easier to manage. Work parties have started to clear the area behind the toilet and shed block and although full of nettles and bindweed the soil is good and it might make a $\frac{1}{4}$ plot. There are 3 x $\frac{1}{2}$ plots available at the moment but dividing them needs a lot of work and although we have more ploholders we have fewer volunteers for work parties. Discussion on creating a schedule of work parties and advertising them early on the gates, website and social media so people know when they will be held. We also agreed that it might help to offer different days and times to be led by different Committee members.

4. Election of Officers for 2024.

Chair : Joe Foster will stand.

Treasurer : Rachael Munro-Fawcett will stand down

Jane Willers will stand.

Letting Secretary : Rosie Hall will stand.

Secretary : Jayne Harnett will stand.

Committee:

Ness Clarke will stand.

Giles Foster will stand.

Chris Foren will stand.

Jo Ann Eisenberg will stand.

Louise Allen will stand.
Simon Knight will stand.
James Heywood will stand.

Sharon Heleina agreed to join the Committee.

Mary Davies will stand down.
Harry Fenton will stand down.

All the Officers were re-elected. Sharon Heleina was elected and welcomed to the Committee. There will be a Committee meeting later this month or early November to formalise the new Committee.

5. **Prize Giving** for the Autumn Show. Rosie Hall swept the board with the most points, best in show and the winner of the Joe Maiden cup for beautifully presented vegetables.
6. **Projects and Grants : New Huts** Giles Foster presented two layouts for the proposed new huts and these were discussed. Many at the meeting were keen for the new huts to have an improved covered seating area to act as a social focal point. **Agreed** we would crack on with getting 2 quotes for supplying the huts, creating the base if necessary and removing the old hut. When the Committee has made a decision on the final choice, we will have an Extraordinary AGM to present the plan to all members. We also agreed that a plaque thanking Gillian North for her bequest would be fixed to one of the huts.
7. **Opening Up the Top of the Site** : This is problematic in a number of ways. A lot of clearing work needs to be done. The wall has collapsed in places and there are 2 particularly dangerous trees that need to be removed but are not on our land. There have been discussions with the owner of the land the trees are on and although he said he would have them removed this has not happened. We have also had discussions with the Council but they are unable to help due to lack of money. We cannot remove the trees without the land owner's permission. We do have trees on our site in the wrong place that can now be removed and we have quotes from a tree surgeon for this work.

Security : Another on-going problem. We are getting a trail camera to monitor the small gate and the gate code will be changed again. We did not make a decision on how to secure the SE border but if we get a grant from LCC we could install fencing.

Land Sale : The waste land on the SE side of the Allotments is being sold. It has recently been cleared which has made our site more vulnerable on that side. We do not know what will happen but need to make our borders secure. Joe Foster is in contact with the owner who is also the owner of the dangerous trees to try to find out what plans there are and how they are progressing. **ACTION:** Rosie Hall to ask via a LAF meeting whether there is Council support for security here.

8. **AOB** : Roz Dunlevey questioned the projected cost of the 2 new huts and we do anticipate to be in excess of £10,000. Roz wanted to know what the remainder of the Gillian North bequest would be spent on and suggested very good quality rechargeable strimmers and hedge trimmers.