

RUSHDEN PERMANENT ALLOTMENT AND SMALL HOLDING SOCIETY LIMITED

Registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014.

Register no. 3126R

E-mail rushdenallotments@hotmail.co.uk

Minutes of the Annual General Held on Tuesday 7 September 2021 at the Masonic Hall

The Chairman (Russell Jarvis) opened the meeting at 7:32pm

In attendance

46 Members plot holders including Vice Chairman (Dave Flook) and Treasurer (Pasqu Di Salvo)
1 Associate member

Apologies:

Paul Barrett, Bob Cowper, Lynne Powell, Trevor Powell, Richard Batton, Lydia Everall

1. Minutes of last Meeting

This meeting has been delayed due to Covid-19 Pandemic Restrictions. It was due to be held in February 2021.

The minutes of the AGM held on 18th February 2020 have previously been displayed on the Field Notice Boards and the member's area of the allotment website members have been previously asked for any amendments required. The minutes were not read out. There was no comment from the floor. These minutes were asked to be passed as a true record.

Proposed Peter Wright

2nd Anita Medlock

The minutes were passed as agreed

2. New Members

Chairman informed the attending members that there were 49 new members. Chairman asked the members to vote the new members in to the society.

Carried and voted in

3. Chairman's Report

The Chairman informed the meeting that his Chairman's report and the list of new member's names had been removed from the Chairman's book which was on the table at the end of the room by someone in the meeting and that he would have to use his electronic copy from his iPad. These documents were not returned to the Chairman during or after the meeting therefore he has requested that they are to be considered to have been stolen.

The AGM is late this year due to Government restrictions for Covid-19 pandemic. Hopefully we are beginning to return to some form of normality.

Effectiveness of CCTV

We have installed CCTV at all of the Allotment fields. We have had instances of "visitors" in the early hours at our gates.

Back in January the CCTV picked up 3 individuals using a rubbish bin to climb over the main gate at Highfield Road. The Police were called and several Officers responded. Although they did not catch any one the intruders had obviously been "freighted" off by the arrival of the Police. 2 of these individuals returned the evening of the same day and again the cameras picked them up and the Police attended again, this time with a Police dog. The intruders had left soon after they had entered

the field. The reason they had returned appears to have been that one of them lost their phone on the field which was found by one of our members some months later. This has been handed in to the Police.

There has been an occurrence at Washbrook where we had two individuals at one gate and two at the other at the same time. They were having a look over the fence until they saw the cameras and then they were off. No entry made.

Bedford Road has also had early hour visitors. They backed their car off the road into the gate entrance. It appeared to be two women and a plumpish man who did not walk very well. They shone torches over the gate and up at the camera. They left without entering.

Only about four weeks ago at Highfield Road, a male in a hoody appeared at the gate a few minutes after the last member had left. He was having a good look over the gate and when he looked up at the camera he left hastily.

They would appear to be proving their worth.

Heritage Family Day

The Society will be having a display at the "Heritage Day" on Sunday 19th September at Rushden Lakes. Even though we currently have a large waiting list it is still important to be seen at Community events such as this. If any member has any veg, unusual or not and would like to show it off please contact me. (it will be returned).

Stores

Last year the stores sales had a large increase on the year before. This was despite stock shortages caused by the pandemic.

Our store sales this year are going to be up on last year. The profit made from the stores is rolled back into keeping your rent down.

There are price rises due, Mother Earth compost will be going up approximately 50p a bag, so we are buying in at the pre-increase price in order to keep our prices down for as long possible.

4. Treasurers Report (provided by Chairman with Treasurer, Pasqu Di Salvo, present)

Members have received a copy of the accounts prior to the meeting (were previously sent last year).

Income from the sales at the Stores was good, producing a profit. The more sales i.e. profit, helps to keep the rents down.

The Chairman invited members to ask questions about the accounts. No questions were put forward.

Proposed Wendy Payne
Seconded Mick Spallding
All agreed to approve.

5. Annual Rent Review

There will be no rent rise this year will remain at £2.50.

6. Election of Reporting Accountant

The Accounts for the year 2019/20 were agreed. There were no objections to re-elect Denton Tavera as Reporting Accountant for the society.

A show of hands showed unanimous agreement

7. Investment accounts

The £63,000 investment fund – only made £33 interest. Chairman suggested that the members should allow the Treasurer to invest somewhere safe with the assistance of Chairman.

The money came from a piece of land that was compulsory purchased. We have tried to buy other pieces of land but after several months we get turned down probably because we only want to pay agricultural prices instead of developer prices.

Discussion

Shaun Evans (SE)- after the SGM and the accusations raised at that meeting, should we allow 2 people to deal with the finances, it should be more to ensure openness and transparency

Peter Wright-(PW) I propose that Treasurer and Chairman to find somewhere and discuss with the committee.

Chairman – We have been trying to do that for a year. We suggested an account with 0.75% interest.

Alan Martin (AM) – I found an account for 1% but the rest of the committee were not allowed to vote on it because I wasn't there

Chairman-- the rest of the Committee would not push on with it as Alan Martin was not present.

Ray McDonald (RMCD– that is not correct, you are lying again Russell.

SE – I want this minuted – that you don't want to take it to the committee

Chairman- that is not correct - the treasurer and myself will find an account and go to the committee with it

Mike Taylor (MT)– is there anyone in the committee that has had experience of a financial adviser – if not could we ask someone to act as a financial advisor outside of the committee and do this.

Chairman- in 2012 we paid for a financial advisor (so that they didn't get commission) it cost £750-£1000 but the interest rates were so good so we covered the costs. It may be different now that interest rates are lower and the costs would be higher. We still have money in the account that the financial advisor suggested. We will always look for FCA bonds so that we don't lose money like we did before.

Julie Kinsella (JK) – we were advised to buy land that couldn't be built on – possibly in Scotland

Chairman-We were offered land in Shropshire but we can't manage allotments at a distance and allotments is what we know.

JK – what are we doing with the money we get as interest-is it reinvested in our current fields?

Chairman- rent pays for the standing costs and general maintenance – we call this revenue. Anything that is capital costs such as fencing gets paid from this money.

There has been nearly £62,000 invested from the money across all of the fields such as fencing and water at Highfield Rd.

JK – do we need more allotments?

Chairman-we have over 100 on the waiting list – I thought a lot would drop out but it only seems about 30-40% of people are dropping out.

JK- is the land across the road from Grafton Rd no good for allotments

Chairman- all of the small holdings are being rented out and we don't know what the town plan is.

Outcome = Chairman and Treasurer to source an investment and take to the committee.

8. Election of Officers

Peter Wright (PW)– have we got a full committee?

Chairman- we have 5 vacancies. There are 6 names that have come forwards

PW- Can we co-opt onto the committee this evening

Chairman- we will do this at the committee member after the AGM

PW - do you have enough for a quorum

RJ - yes we do.

Dave Flook (DF)-what about the cut off time

Chairman-it doesn't apply to co-opting

9. Any Other Business

SE- Mr Chairman I would like to bring something up as Any Other Business

Chairman-you have to put it in writing 21 days before the meeting

Anita Jarvis (AJ)-he hasn't even been a member for 21 days

SE- My understanding of Any Other Business is that there are agenda items and then AOB brought up at the meeting. I have discovered something in the last 21 days that I feel is a security matter but your rules mean that I can't bring it up.

Chairman- yes that is right unless it is of interest to the members

SE- we have a large portion of our fence at Washbrook Rd, we have had vandalism on our plot and I have seen people coming over the fence and I chased them away. I want to ask the Chairman why we can't have our fence finished.

AJ-why didn't you ring the police

SE – it was my choice not to

AM- we have a quote for the fence, but you said it had to come to the AGM

RMCD- it was very expensive and we all thought it would be better to have Herras fencing with barbed wire as a fraction of a cost. Nothing else has been discussed about it

Chairman-projects over £10K have to be voted on by the members at an AGM It also has to be in 21 days before the AGM because it is a large sum of money.

AM-the committee meeting where I supplied prices and everything, it was agreed that it needed to go to the AGM.

Chairman-no one has put it in for the agenda

AM-so you are saying that someone has to request it to go on the agenda

Mike Bayliss (MB)-If you are going to spend over a certain amount, it needs to be put in a formal format 21 days. Its really simple. Its not rocket science

Expletives were used, members made some comments and MB apologised

Chairman-not all of the prices were obtained and we are still waiting for a full cost for the work. I cant do everything for everybody.

JK-do we have to wait for a year – why can't we fence all of the fields.

Chairman-the next AGM will be in February unless we are in another lockdown. I am not sure how this has suddenly become open. Because to our horror we found a tonne of asbestos. It was not on our field it had been thrown over the fence and into the ditch. When we did the survey back in 2018 4 plots away we found a large amount of asbestos and had it removed, and we went up that line with the surveyors and there was areas we could not see out of the field. Then suddenly there is a piece of field now that has had part of its hedge cleared. And we found a tonne of asbestos.

JK-why don't we just fence off the fields all the way round. Those with plots at the back of the field on Highfield Rd will just have to pay for gates to get access.

Chairman - What I don't understand is that this portion was very thick hedging, and now it has got holes in it. How did that happen?

Kevin Bradshaw (KB)- I am amazed with all of this, what is the point in investing in cameras if there are holes in the fence. If the committee gets the quotes together, why can't they be sent out to the members electronically?

AM-are you saying that we have made the holes

Some members made inappropriate comments

AM-the holes have not just appeared overnight, a policeman walked through the field and got through the gap but Russell told him that he couldn't have but he did

Graham Beadle - we have now moved on past that point and we are now in the future.

AM-you asked it to stop because it was too expensive

Chairman-no I didn't, was you not supposed to have the fencing company visit to do a full quote.

Elaine Rumble– can we not put in fast growing laurels

Chairman-the government will give us hedging for free, its mixed

SE- and how long will they take it to grow

Karen Watson-are there no builders in the society that can do it cheaper.

JK-we need to have a meeting because of the expense

Chairman-it needs to be bought to the next AGM. We have to do things properly as we are audited.

KW –if you can send out a generic email to see if anyone can help with the fencing it may be cheaper

DF- we have already discussed buying palisade fencing to do what we wanted but because it wasn't a recognised supplier and the vote went against us, we could have done it ourselves at a much cheaper cost. We have been down the path before but it hasn't been allowed.

The Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting.

Meeting Closed: 20:25

Signed_____

Counter signed_____

Date _____