

HAHA

Hungerford Allotment Holders Association

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, 24th JUNE 2013
AT THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION, HUNGERFORD**

Present:

B Robinson, J Hieatt, M Wood, D Barraclough, A Prestoe, V Drewe, A Waldie, D Broderick, J C Stanley G Greenland, R Rushmer, T Lavers, J Pike, N Pike, C Dancey, V Smeeton, J Sugden, B Hildred, P Hildred, Z Hindle, C Tout, T Davis, S Mann, R Young, O Young, L Marshall, D Benneyworth, D Loft, P Whitbread

Apologies: K Taylor, R James, F Chapple, D Wright, H Tracy

1) Minutes of the Last AGM

Acceptance of the minutes, subject to correction of date of meeting from 2011 to 2012, was proposed by D Loft and seconded by T Angell.

2) Matters Arising

We have tried to spray vacant plots to prevent spread of weeds to neighbouring plots and to make them more welcoming to new plot holders.

There is now a toilet ("portaloo" type) on the Marsh Lane. This is being rented.

3) Marsh Lane Chair's Report (Tony Drewer-Trump – HAHA Chair)

The Chair reported that it had been an interesting year, culminating our being granted an extension of 2 years to the lease on the Marsh Lane site (which is now due to expire in the spring of 2016). During the next 2 years we have to decide what to do to ensure the long-term future of allotments in Hungerford.

Fairfields currently has full occupancy and Marsh Lane plots are about 90% allocated. The Chair thanked Belinda and Paul for managing the waiting lists and allocating plots quickly.

The Chair advised that the toilet at Marsh Lane had been provided on a temporary basis (mainly due to the uncertainty over the renewal of the lease).

Thanks were extended to the "water boys", Geoff, John and David, with special thanks to all who have joined in on various work days. Support from more plot holders would be appreciated. Thanks also to Ted for his work as Treasurer and for acting as a "sounding board" and also to Belinda and Jamie for improving our communications considerably.

In future there would be no separate committee for Fairfields and the management of this site would be dealt with by the main HAHA committee. This was partly due to the present committee retiring and there being little interest from other plot holders in running Fairfields as a separate entity.

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3) Marsh Lane Chair's Report (Tony Drewer-Trump – HAHA Chair) (Cont'd)

Forthcoming events: on Wednesday, 26th June the Girl Guides would be visiting Marsh Lane to plant pumpkins. British Rail will be working on the Marsh Lane Bridge later this year and it is likely that they will use part of one side of the outer area for their compound. They will lay down a parking surface which they have offered to leave when they vacate the site.

3) Secretary's Report (Sarah Chatters)

Owing to a move, Sarah has given up her plot at Fairfields and hence was retiring as secretary. She asked plot holders seriously consider standing on the committee, noting that it was important to have an influx of "new blood" to support the existing committee and to plan for the future as committee members retire.

4) Treasurer's Report (Ted Angell)

Copies of the audited balance for the year 2012/2013 were circulated and are attached. TA reported year end assets of £1,719.33 and a general reserve of 1,491.33, which is a considerable increase on last year.

Income: Rental income was at around the same level as last year. TA reported that the collection of rent was now a relatively simple matters and thanked plot holders for prompt payment.

A grant had been awarded by North West Downs AONB for replacement doors to restore the Fairfields sheds to usable condition. Proceeds from community fundraising (including raffles etc, but mainly comprising proceeds of sales by Seed Secretary) raised £286.

Expenditure: **Ground rent** for Marsh Lane is £1,080 per annum and for Fairfields, £1 P/A. We now have a one year rolling contract (with Sovereign) for Fairfields, so that site also has short term tenure and might be under threat of development. **Insurance** with RHS provides us with cover for contents of the Marsh Lane container and Fairfields sheds. There will be one further **Marsh Lane sink fund** payment (due next year). The **HTC loan** has been repaid in full. **Site development and maintenance** costs were considerably lower than last year. **Miscellaneous expenditure** includes costs incurred in having a presence at the Hungerford Food Festival 2012.

TA advised that he has analysis sheets showing the breakdown of funds between HAHA, Marsh Lane and Fairfields.

The question was asked from the floor as to whether HAHA would be liable for legal fees in connection with the new Marsh Lane lease. We understand that HTC will be responsible for such legal fees but this matter may be debated.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Jim Sugden and seconded by Geoff Greenland.

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5) Seed Secretary's Report (Derek Loft)

We have been offered a donation of manure. This will technically be for Marsh Lane. It will be placed at one end of the car park and the charge for a wheel barrowful will be 50p (on an honesty basis). DL advised that users should be aware that it would bring thistles onto their plot.

Fleece, netting and ground cover is still available. DL commented that the sales total reported by the Treasurer were for sales last year and that totals for 2012/2013 would be lower as sales of fleece, netting and ground cover this year had been minimal.

There will be a seed evening later in the year (September / early October) and seeds will be delivered just before Christmas. Kings Seeds give us 40% discount.

6) Election of Officers

The elections were as follows:

		<u>Nominated</u>	<u>Seconded</u>
Chair:	Tony Drewer-Trump	Derek Loft	Geoff Greenland
Deputy Chair:	To Be Nominated		
Treasurer:	Ted Angell	Chris Tout	John Stanley
Assistant Treasurer:	Louise Marshall	Tony Drewer-Trump	Ted Angell
Secretary:	Forbes Stephenson	Chris Tout	John Stanley
Assistant Secretary:	Belinda Robinson	Tony Drewer-Trump	Sarah Chatters
Membership Sec.	Paul Whitbread & Belinda Robinson	J Sugden	Sarah Chatters
Seed Secretary:	Derek Loft	Geoff Greenland	John Stanley

7) Any Other Business

Provision of toilet at Marsh Lane: The current facility has been leased on a 31 week programme which runs from Marsh till the end of September. The total cost is £720 which equates to £21 per week. It was proposed to carry on with this arrangement next year (but the total charge will be higher as the contract will start one month earlier). It was also agreed that other options, such as a compost toilet, should be investigated. Geoff Greenland offered assistance in this regard.

Blackleg: Chris Tout commented that potatoes on some plots at Marsh Lane were infected with Blackleg. Signs are leaves turning pale green or yellowish. Stems turn brown or black 10cm above and below soil level, and may wilt and die. Not all the stems on one plant are necessarily affected. Affected plants need to be dug up. The potatoes can be eaten but the plant needs to be taken off site and disposed of, to prevent spread of the infection.

Mower: The mower is cutting well. Users are asked to avoid overfilling the grass box and to watch out for flints.

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Tony Lavers offered to help Louise Marshall at Fairfields (as she is now the only plot holder at Fairfields elected to the HAHA committee) and to join the HAHA committee if required. His offer was gratefully accepted.

Dennis Benneyworth addressed the meeting. Dennis is a Marsh Lane plot holder and also a member of Hungerford Town Council and is chair of the HTC Recreation & Amenities Committee.

DB commented that following the extension of the Marsh Lane lease we now have two year's breathing space. Over the next two years we need to think about a possible "Plan B" in case we have to move off Marsh Lane at the end of that time. He thanked HAHA on behalf of HTD for running a very slick operation and for attending R & A meetings to keep HTC abreast of events.

JS asked if HTC could lobby West Berks Council regarding planning permission for the Marsh Lane site in terms of its unsuitability for development. DB advised that HAHA and HTC will attempt to get another meeting with the developer to try to ascertain the reasons for his change of heart. He also commented that that councils have a responsibility to do their utmost to provide allotments to meet the needs of those people in the community that want one. Therefore, if Marsh Lane site had to be given up, HTC has a responsibility to provide an alternative site.

HTC would consider very strongly providing funding for the legal costs incurred over the new lease.

DL asked if it would be possible to have a new lease ending in May rather than the end of March.

The question was asked from the floor: from HTC's point of view, is there anything HAHA could do to strengthen our position? Councillor Benneyworth said HAHA should carry on what it is doing and that both sites are being well-managed.

Thanks: The Chair extended thanks to North West Downs AONB for their grant to repair the shed doors at Fairfields. HTC were also thanked for their support and assistance during this difficult year.

The meeting was closed.