

2014 Draft Minutes for the Oxford and District Federation of Allotment Associations Annual General Meeting. 22nd April

Attending: Federation Committee; Wendy Skinner Smith (Chair), Ian Sheppard (Vice-Chair) Richard Barrett (Secretary), John Lardner (Treasurer), Tim Treacher (Competition sub-committee chairman), Caroline Duffy.

Associations; Barns Court – Barracks Lane- Andrew Fairweather-Tall, Bartholomew Road – Neil Holt. Bartlemas Close (Links) – Rachael Coney. Barton Fields – Caroline Duffy . Cowmead – . Cripsey Meadow – Wendy Skinner Smith Cutteslowe - Ian Sheppard. East Ward – Mike Harris. Eden Drive – John Lardner. Elder Stubbs - . Fairacres Road –. Fairview – Pam Taylor. John Garne Way – David Ruffles Kestrel Crescent Reg Curnock. Lower Wolvercote –Peter Mayne . Marston Ferry & Blackhall – Gillian Morriss-Kay. Minchery Farm – . Osney St Thomas – . Ramsay Road – . Risinghurst – . Rose Hill (Lenthal Road) –. South Ward - David Allen. Spragglesea Mead – Tim Treacher . St Clements/Pullens Lane – . Town Furze - Heather Armitage. Thompson Terrace –. Trap Grounds - . Upper Wolvercote – . Van Diemans Lane – Samantha Chapman. Watlington Road – Bill Wright.. 21 associations represented

1. **Welcome by the chair.** The chair thanked all for attending.
2. **Apologies for absence.** Clive Bevan and Colin Sharp.
3. **Minutes of the last AGM.** These were accepted as a true account of the meeting. There were no Matters Arising.
4. **Annual Report.** The chair asked for any questions on the report which had been circulated. There were no questions. Wendy clarified that the committee had developed a web site and launched initiatives with regard to training, site visits and gardeners' question time as well as spending considerable time on negotiating the approach for the rent review and bringing more potential plots into use with the Barton and Minchery Farm schemes.
5. **Annual accounts and treasurers report.** JL summarized his report of which a printed copy was available to all members. The funds owed by OCC had been paid but these fell outside the 2013 accounting period. Basically the Federation's funds had a healthy balance and this partly due to changes in catering contracts which meant tea and coffee could not be ordered for meetings.
 - a. RB queried why member associations who paid later than the 8th May could not claim insurance cover? JL asked WSS to explain. This applied only to renewals where associations wanted to ensure continuous insurance cover. New members would be covered from the date their membership fees were paid.
 - b. **The committee recommended that the 40p membership fee be maintained for 2016 and this was endorsed by a unanimous vote by members.**
 - c. There was query about online payments and **JL agreed to circulate information for next year so that this was possible.** The question of whether the account was to remain with co-op banking depended whether the Oxford branch would remain open.
 - d. WSS proposed a budget for training and development with a maximum allowed to be spent as decided by the executive committee. £150 was mooted by the committee but

this was raised by the members to £300 after the matter had been discussed and when venue hire and speakers fees were considered. A vote was taken with a majority in favour with only one vote opposing.

- e. The accounts were accepted and approved by unanimous vote. TT would make enquiries on whether town hall rooms were still available to affiliated Oxford on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.

6. **Election of Officers and Committee members** – The existing officers and committee members were unanimously elected and unopposed: Chair – Wendy Skinner Smith; ViceChair – Ian Sheppard; Treasurer – John Lardner; Secretary – Richard Barrett. Tim Treacher, Caroline Duffy were re-elected as committee members. John Hastings and John Piggott were elected as new committee members.

7. AGM items -

- a. TT made a brief report about the competition. Documents had been transmitted electronically by Parks but only some paper copies had been received by members. All members had received the letter sent by the federation secretary. Allen Drake, a retired Parks horticulturalist, had been recruited as new competition judge to replace John Alcock. The closing date for entries was the 16th May. Tim would follow up on whether everyone had had the details. A request was made for another person to join the competition committee.
- b. The 'without prejudice' rent review proposal by Corporate Assets came under discussion. There were some initial questions. The answers were made mostly by members comments.
 - i. Q Why could actual rents not go down where appropriate? A terms of lease
 - ii. Q Was RPI a fair increase when it had risen faster than incomes? A Fair as in retrospect and without this the budget would lose value.)
 - iii. Q Would the proceeds from rents go back into the allotment budget? A yes

After much very positive discussion Rachael Coney clarified succinctly that the proposed approach: resolved the outstanding issue of fair comparative rents; would protect investment in allotments; and was fair as the RPI was in for the past 7 years. The chair commented that compared with some of the approaches of bench marking that had been suggested this was a very moderate proposal which took into account the changes over the past 7 years with regard to allotment officer and associations taking on more responsibility for managing their sites financially. The chair proposal proposed that ODFAA supported and accepted the proposed approach. A vote was taken with unanimous approval. The chair reminded the meeting that information on indicative rents as a result would then be available at ALM.

AOB Rachael Coney asked members to endorse the petition against Eric Pickles plan to annul the requirement for Councils to provide allotments when requested. The chair agreed to put this link on the web site.

Meeting closed at 7PM