

# Linlithgow and District Allotment Society AGM

Monday 4 March 2020  
7 pm Masonic Hall, Linlithgow

## Minutes

### 1 Attendance and apologies

33 members attended. Apologies received from Anna Pink, Lorna and Colin McLay, Alan Thomson, Adam Jaworski, Niall and Yvette Wilson, Hazel Duguid, Alison Campbell, Kirsty Leonard, Neil and Pamela Barnes, James Farrelly, Eddie Caulfield.

### 2 Approval of minutes from 2019 AGM and matters arising from minutes

Proposed by Colin Young  
Seconded by Ian Harkness  
No matters arising

### 3 Chair's report – Paul Taylor

Since the last AGM there have been a few events involving Oakwell allotments.

We held our Harvest Celebrations at the end of July when vegetables and fruit were still growing well, and plots were looking good. Stewart McKenzie from Inverleith allotments judged the plots and, as agreed at the 2019 AGM, the previous year's winners were not excluded from the competition. Unfortunately, it poured with rain, the first time this has happened at our Harvest Celebrations as far as I know.

In November a working party cut the hedges and carried the clippings to a bonfire in the car park. A strong south easterly wind blew the smoke towards the houses on the opposite side of the road from the allotment, so we gave up trying to burn the prunings. Nevertheless, helpers were able to enjoy a free barbecue afterwards.

In addition to the hedge pruning in November, there is other maintenance work to be done such as painting the Community Hut, weeding the main path and spring cleaning. Unfortunately, this work is carried out by a fraction of the Oakwell plot holders. Can I remind members of one of the rules for plot holders?

Members of the Society will be required from time to time to join working parties for the maintenance of the site including rabbit proof fencing and shelter belt hedging.

The Committee is considering an addition to the rules to ensure that every member abides by this rule while recognising that some people cannot help much because of illness or disability.

The Committee has made three rule changes during the year all of which we think will be helpful to members:

- We removed the words in Rule 8 Personal conduct, "Plot-holders are requested not to arrive before 8am" recognising that some members like to start early in the morning, in some cases before work.
- Rule 16 Sheds, Glass Houses and Other Structures the Committee removed the words, "Small plots will not normally have a hut", recognising that all plot holders need somewhere to store tools, whatever the size of plot. However, plot holders are expected to abide by the rule, "A plot holder wishing to erect a shed must seek permission from the Committee who will usually grant it".
- We also made an addition to Rule 17 Rent to say, "If a tenant is unable to pay their rent at the due time, they must let the Committee know the reasons by email or in writing at or before the AGM".

In December we had a most enjoyable evening at Delhi's Winter and would hope that more members would join us for this year's meal.

Our Potato Day was quite successful although the ferocious winds, heavy rain and snow and sleet showers accounted for lower numbers than usual. Thanks to all members who helped with setting up, selling potatoes, running the kitchen or serving on the checkout

### **Bee report for 2019-20**

In comparison to the previous year last year was a little disappointing. With very unsettled weather we had very unsettled bees. Our Queens kept disappearing then re-appearing, it was a very strange year. Despite this we still managed to harvest 37.5kg of honey and finished the year with 2 hives.

We are still looking for new members to join the bee group, please let one of the committee members know if you might be interested.

I would like to thank several people. Fenella Duncan our Secretary for her efficient minutes taking and communicating with members. Margaret Mundie our Treasurer for keeping the accounts up to date. Duncan and Margaret Mundie for organising the barbecue for the Harvest Celebrations and hedge trimming day. Margaret and Val Corry carry out the plot inspections on behalf of the Committee. Suzanne Ralston, helped by Alan Nichol, who has taken over as Membership Secretary. Neil Valentine for regularly mowing the grass paths and verges at the allotment. Thanks to Val Corry, Alison and Neil Valentine for organising the purchase of goods for sale on Potato Day. Thanks to Claire Metivier for designing the Potato day poster and for arranging our speaker for the AGM. All members of the Committee for the work they do behind the scenes.

I would like particularly to thank Ian Harkness for all that he has done during his time as Membership Secretary, a role he has undertaken with great enthusiasm. He has digitised our membership list which helps greatly with keeping track of who are plot holders, plot sizes, change of addresses and rentals.

Finally, to all LADAS members who have participated and helped in various events – Potato Day, spring cleaning and shed painting, Harvest Celebrations and hedge cutting.

### **4 Membership report from Suzanne Ralston**

Suzanne thanked Ian for all his help as she recently took over from him as membership secretary. She has let six new plots since taking over and is aware of the increasing interest in the allotments since the regular articles in the Black Bitch magazine. There are now 15 names on the waiting list.

We have stopped using membership cards as they're not required by New Hopetoun gardens or LADAS.

There are new membership agreement forms, Suzanne has emailed those who still don't have one and asks them to contact her. These forms will in future be given to new members and will last for their full tenancy.

### **5 Treasurer's report from Margaret Mundie**

BoS balance at 1 March 2019 - £6,790.68

RBS account has been closed and added to BoS account.

#### **Income –**

Membership fees £436

Deposit keys £85

Plot rentals £7,532

Relets £172

Lockers £50

Bbq £150

Honey sales £524.84

Jam sales £101

#### **Expenditure –**

Rent paid to landlord £8,406

Others £550.41

Subscriptions £306.67

Site maintenance £172.07

Bbq costs £145.94

Honey/bee costs £162.94

Potatoes, seeds, etc £526.65

Hut sales £1,055.21  
Potatoes, seeds £445.81

**Total £10,551.86**

**Total £10,270.68**

Surplus of Income over Expenditure £281.18  
Bank balance at 1 Mar 2020 - £7071.86

- Tom Byrne asked about resurfacing the main path; Claire has researched quotes for entrance at main gate. Lesley Nock says a quote from the second contractor is at Oakwell Nursery.
- Duncan Mundie asked if we should apply again for further lottery funding; this could be considered if doing whole car park and main path – this will be discussed at next committee meeting.

## **6 A proposed change to the LADAS Constitution**

Item 6 of the LADAS Constitution reads:

6 Committee

- 6.1. The membership shall appoint the following office bearers at each AGM who may hold the post for a maximum of four consecutive years:
  - 6.1.1. Chairperson
  - 6.1.2. Secretary
  - 6.1.3. Treasurer

The LADAS Committee proposes that the following be added to 6.1: *"If at an AGM no replacement for an office bearer who has served four years comes forward the existing office bearer may, if they are willing and with the approval of the AGM, continue in post until a replacement presents them self."*

Proposed by Paul Taylor  
Approved by membership

## **7 Election of committee members and officers**

All committee members and office bearers happy to continue in office for another year; Ian was Membership Secretary for five years; Margaret has been Treasurer for six years; Fenella Secretary for five years.  
Tom Byrne has volunteered to join the Committee.

The meeting was followed by a very interesting talk on organic farming from Ben and Lindsay Cadell from Grow Wild at Bonnytoun Farm. They spoke about soil enriching and preparation, composting, green manure, weeding, planting more densely to prevent weed growth, and pests and how to control them. They brought a basket of beautiful cabbages and kale as proof of their methods. Many questions from the floor followed the talk – in all a very informative and relaxed talk with thanks given by Paul. Coffee, tea and biscuits ended the evening.