**DRAFT MINUTES**

**EWAA Annual General Meeting 2021**

EWAA Shop - Sunday 17th of October 2021 at 12.00

**Chair:** Meryl Wilford (4b)

**Present**: 24

Mike Yeadon (127); Smilja Vinicic (133b); Clare Ferguson (57b);

Dan Thorpe (89b); George Murray (12); Jane Millar (147); Michael McNaboe (113FL); Pat Mansfield (114); Karen Spiller (121); Nina Allen (7a);

Stewart Young (77); Tony Flett (210); Chris Flett (212b); Bridget Henderson (87); Sean Robinson (4a); Carl Morrow(4a); Zoe Adamson (2a); Nenad Vranjes (73); Andra Pirvu (214a); David Burn (214b); Chris Clifford (14); Simon Bazley (8a) Sue Stanten (218)

1. **Apologies:**

Colin Gammon; Sarah Pollard; Helen Edwards; Jon Willis; Wendy Davis;

Josie Procter; Jane Nimmo-Smith.

1. **Minutes of AGM 2020 (Thursday 29th October, 2020 via Zoom conference)**

Approved

1. **Chair’s Report**

Thanks to everyone for the effort put into their plots. Thanks also to everyone who has helped keep the site open all through the Covid restrictions allowing the site to provide a haven for everyone during the 2nd lockdown after Christmas.

Bearing in mind the importance of maintaining green spaces as community resources, leads on to the main issue for EWAA over the past year: the renewal of the lease with Oxford City Council.

The 20-year lease expired in September and a new lease agreement now needs to be signed. The association of Oxford Allotments (ODFAA) has been carrying out the new lease negotiations on behalf of all the Oxford allotments and the Committee subgroup took an active part in that process by contributing detailed comments, amendments, and suggestions on the draft lease. The lease is nearly ready and may even be signed before Xmas.

For those unfamiliar with the administration of allotments in Oxford, here is quick reminder. Up until now most sites across the city have had 2-3 Trustees who sign a lease with the council and in effect take on the tenancy on behalf of members of their associations. One of the key decisions EWAA needed to take was to decide whether to change the organizational structure. Several sites have decided to incorporate, becoming either limited companies or coops. After looking at the pros and cons, the committee decided that there was no urgent need to change the EWAA existing structure, so we have decided to remain “unincorporated” for the time being and the three Trustees will again sign the lease on behalf of the members.

However, a new constitution and revised rules will be needed as part of the new lease. Members of the Committee have been working on this and when we have a final version, we will need members to agree on the new documents. Therefore, I am giving notice that we will be calling an Extraordinary General Meeting to vote on our new constitution and rules when they are ready. Watch this space.

Other matters we have dealt with include working with the other organizations who share this site: the Oxford Urban Wildlife Group and the Children’s Allotment. We have a very good working relationship with both organizations.

With OUWG, we have worked together to clarify boundaries and the way these are to be maintained and we are working on a Joint Management Agreement (also needed for the lease) to cover water, access rights and other issues. It has been a pleasure to take part in some shared projects: for example, the slow worm project which saw the introduction of slow worms onto the site and which are now being regularly surveyed across the site.

It has also been a pleasure to see how the Children’s allotment have transformed their part of the site and we have liaised on electricity and water supplies, and access. They are hoping to have their fencing finished by the end of the year. Thanks are due to both organizations for keeping communication fluid and working in a spirit of cooperation.

The day-to-day running of the site, and maintenance concerns have included the following issues:

Thefts, pilfering and antisocial behaviour in the car parks has been reported by members but there is not a great deal we can do, except log incidents and urge people to report cases to the local police.

We share the site with a variety of wildlife, some more welcome than others. The deer are a perennial problem at the moment, and we are continuing to look at ways of out-witting them.

Tree management is also something which members contact us about. Hopefully the council will take more responsibility with tree management as this is something that is specified in the new lease.

Earlier in the year, we surveyed members about asbestos on site and again had offers from the council to help with disposal. However, perhaps with Covid and the changes after the local elections, this help has so far not been forthcoming, but this is something that I aim to follow up on.

Site security has become an issue. The keys are all very old and although the padlocks were changed recently, the gates are not secure, and the padlocks are not fit for purpose and need to be changed.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the current committee members for their fantastic work on behalf of all members – organizing workparties; keeping the mowers supplied with petrol; managing skips; changing taps; digging trenches for pipes; attacking overgrown plots to make them more presentable for new members; or working on new documents and keeping spreadsheets updated and bills paid. There is a myriad of small or large jobs that have been carried out behind the scenes.

And a special thank you to those committee members who are now standing down.

To Simon Bazley for his infectious enthusiasm for the shop; for making the deliveries happen; and, for keeping sales and deliveries going during first lockdown.

Also, to Jane Millar for all the prompt and attractive postings on the website and all the work she has done behind the scenes to make sure the committee was on track – thank you!

**Question (SY): What is main difference between old and new lease?**

* Clarification of limited liability for the Trustees.
* A much more thorough, organized and detailed document.
1. **Treasurer’s Report ( By email - Jon Willis sent apologies)**

A trading profit of £250 was made on shop sales totalling £2096. Shop sales were down 36% on last year, mainly as a result of the withdrawal of online shopping facility provided during lockdown.

Rents stayed the same this year, but rental income increased 10% as a result of new plot holders joining - £3378 vs £3094 the previous year.

Expenditure was up significantly from £2250 to £5058, as a result of a much larger water bill than normal (£2684) due to the water company under-billing us incorrectly over the previous 2 years..

As a result of this large water bill, we had a deficit of £1509 in 2021, compared to a surplus of £1102 in 2020

1. **Membership Secretary’s Report**

At the moment we have fifty-seven people on our waiting list and at the moment eight vacant plots.

As agreed by the committee the allotments waiting list was re-opened at the beginning of this year.

At the May plot inspection, the standard of the plots was generally good with thirteen warning notices sent and after one month six eviction notices.

So far this year we have taken on eight new plot holders.

At the Autumn inspection eight warning notices have been sent relating to twelve plots, a re-inspection will take place at the end of October.

Three plot holders have decided to voluntarily give up their plots at the time of the rent requests earlier this month.

Generally, the standard of plot cultivation is high.

There will be plot viewings at the end of this month and I hope a quick reduction of the waiting list

1. **Shop Officer’s Report**

With the 2nd lockdown coming at the worst possible time in the growing calendar, and personal matters meaning I couldn't commit the time needed to run an online service as per 2020, the committee decided the shop shouldn't buy live products such as potatoes, going into spring 2021.

With the lifting of lockdown in summer we did however have time to buy onions and garlic, and we have attempted to sell them in prepackaged amounts.

This has mostly been a success. We're fairly confident of breaking even having allowed for a modest level of wastage in the pricing. I'm still hopeful we can sell the remaining onions,shallots+garlic before they spoil.

Sadly my personal circumstances have meant I couldn't commit as much time to running the shop this year, as last.  As a result of that I have not managed to order any broad beans or green manure in advance of this winter.

I don't anticipate an improvement in the time I have available next year, so I've decided not to seek re-election as shop officer going into 2022

1. **Keys and padlocks**

Site security is an issue and we have therefore taken the decision to replace the padlocks. All members will need to be issued with new keys. New members will pay £12.50 as a key deposit and present members will need to pay an additional charge of £2.50 to make up difference with the old deposit of £10.00.

It will not be possible to make unauthorized copies of the keys.

[N.B Prices subsequently changed after meeting to £7.50 for all keys]

1. **Election of Committee for 2021-22**

Election of officers (proposed and seconded)

**Chair:** Meryl Wilford

**Vice-chair** (Vacant)

**Treasurer**: *Jon Willis*

**Membership Secretary:**  Mike Yeadon

**Shop Officer**: (Vacant)

**Communications Officer** Clare Ferguson

**Tools and Machinery** *Tony Flett*

**Secretary:** (Vacant)

Committee members –

*Dan Thorpe*

George Murray

Mike McNaboe

Nina Allen

Sarah Pollard

Andra Pirvu

Brigitte Henderson

Approval of non-committee shop duty only volunteers

*Helen Edwards*

*Vicky Bell*

*Jane Nimmo-Smith*

Trustees

Meryl Wilford,

Pat Mansfield

Chris Clifford

Next AGM - October 2022