

East Ward Allotment Association Extraordinary General Meeting Sunday, 17th March 2024

Location: EWAA Shop
Time: 12.00 noon
Chair: George Murray

Attendees - 33

Jane Millar, Sarah Pollard, Pat Mansfield, Anne Keen-McGuire, Bridget Henderson, Stuart Meanwell, Harry Lane, Tony Flett, Chris Flett, George Murray, Chris Clifford, Janita Good, Samuel Perez Ramirez, Jen Henderson, Chrissie Earl, Bridget Wheatley, Maurice Leen, Carl Morrow, Stewart Young, Suzette Starmer, Simon Bazley, Elizabeth McIntosh, Dan Thorpe, Mike Yeadon, Helen Edwards, Gregor Gorski, Katherine Miles, Rosemary Cameron, Will Smith, Mike McNaboe, Sunil Abeyasekera, Claire Lefort, Clare Ferguson

Welcome and Introduction

The Chair opened the meeting and explained the context. The landlord, Oxford City Council, is in the process of preparing a new twenty-one year lease which is expected later this year.

Through the Oxford Federation of Allotment Associations (ODFAA) the Council has communicated that it needs all allotments to incorporate as legal entities, and move away from their historic status as Associations under which trustees have been required to bear the burden of personal liability.

The existing constitution did not provide enough detail in its definition of how the Association operates and takes its decisions, and the proposed Constitution would create a robust framework to allow the EWAA to formally move to one of three possible models of incorporated entity – cooperative, Community Interest Company (CIC), or small limited company.

Thanks went to Janita Good who provided her legal expertise to ensure that the document presented was legally compliant.

Proposals

The meeting considered the [Constitution](#) and the [Licence](#), both documents that had been circulated in advance of the meeting, and one proposed amendment to point 5.1 of the Constitution.

1. [Constitution](#)

Discussion of feedback received from two members, following circulation of the draft document:

- The Committee received a suggestion that the EWAA's Privacy and GDPR Policy's should be included. However, policies and legislation are prone to change, and as the objective is to confirm a constitution that will last for many years, the Committee prefers to fulfil its obligation by publishing policy statements on the Association website.

Question: Will this constitution remain unchanged when the allotment becomes an incorporated legal entity?

Answer: It will need to change slightly when the EWAA transitions to an incorporated status, but it has been drafted with the legally required changes in mind, so that the work involved is minimal, and the adoption of a revised version is straightforward.

2. [Amendment](#) to point 5.1

- The Committee received a query regarding the voting rights of plot holders who tend multiple plots. This highlighted the need for clarification so the revised wording of

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this point confirms the “one member one vote” entitlement, and explains that two people, and no more, can share any single plot, regardless of its size.

3. Licence granted to each Member (plot-holder) by the Association

Clarification of point 3 of the licence: any new member taking on a plot during the course of a year would be charged a proportional rent, calculated to the nearest quarter.

Question: Are we required to use this Licence?

Answer: The template was drafted by ODFAA for any Oxford site to use, but we could write a different one if we preferred, providing it met the legal requirements.

Question: When will existing members sign the Licence document?

Answer: At the Autumn 2024 rent day, which will be “in person”, at the Shop.

Question: Will members need to sign a Licence annually when they pay their rent?

Answer: No. When rent is renewed each year the existing licence carries forward.

Question: How many plot holders sign the licence?

Answer: If two people share they will both sign the same document.

Question: What if a member shares one plot with one person, and another plot with a different person?

Answer: The member will sign two different licences, one for each plot.

Janita Good explained the legal instrument of the Licence, clarifying the law regarding “the Conditions” and how these apply to the Member (plot holder) who is granted a Licence.

Vote

The meeting took a single vote on all three items proposed:

- Constitution
- Amendment to point 5.1 of the Constitution
- Licence

Result:

In favour - 32

Against - 0

Abstention - 1

Vote of thanks

The Chair gave a vote of thanks, on behalf of the EWAA Committee, to all members who attended the meeting, expressing gratitude for this show of support, and reiterating that this was the first key step in the process, which prepares the way for a smooth transition to a legal entity, using one of the three possible models of incorporation.

Meeting closed