

**FAIRACRES ALLOTMENT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017**  
**March 31<sup>st</sup> Gladiators Club, Iffely Road, Oxford.**

**Apologies:** Apologies were received from Rob Waygood, Kelly Jones, Diana Cosford, Brian Hills, Eleanora Hills, Gaby Hock, Jackie and Jeff Rose, Clive Lindley Jones, Simon and Jane Fisher, Caroline Maas.

28 members were present, including the committee

**1. Matters arising from minutes of 2016 AGM:**

- 1.1 In relation to the issue of being able to afford payment for labour outside of working parties, we this year employed 2 enthusiastic men to clear two plots which had not been lettable, allowing them to be let.
- 1.2 In relation to new equipment, we acquired as a gift a second hand mower in good working order. We have also acquired a petrol driven pole chain saw which can be used on hedging.
- 1.3 In relation to signage, the council has now supplied a sign to supplement our own.
- 1.4 In relation to A.O.B., Iffra Open Gardens was a great success and raised a lot of money for charity. They appreciated our opening the site for the day to support them.

**2. Officers Reports:**

**2.1 Treasurer's Report**

Stephen Kearsey reported we held a sum of approx. 2,500 in the bank, more than 800 at same time last year. Most of the report reflected similar profit and loss as last year, except that the seed scheme had brought in money and the annual bill has gone down, as we are no longer are paying VAT on our water bills. This has now been corrected. We are up on our rent but we have spent less on maintenance this year, apart from some tree surgery. With a healthy ongoing sum, the next committee need to decide what to spend it on, and for this it is helpful to note that our annual expenditure does not seem to exceed around £2000 a year. Accounts were formally approved by the meeting.

**2.2 Lettings report**

Jane King reported a current waiting list of 18, of which a number have postponed taking up a plot. No vacant plots are available but one is coming up shortly. We now have 89 separate numbered plots and there is a need to keep up to date with contact details.

Jane King noted that a number of people have signalled that they want help with their plot, so Jane would like a list of people who would be interested in helping out. Jon Piggott as Chair thanked Jane for managing the role so efficiently. The waiting list had been very big when she came on but now it is much more efficiently checked to make it accurate and manageable.

**Chair's report**

Stepping down: Jon Piggott reported that he was stepping down after 4 years. He reflected that although being Chair is not about doing everything, one often feels in this role that one should. He joked that he was mainly stepping down to overcome the feeling of guilt he would have when things needed to be done and that he always should be having to do them. He reflected that perhaps we don't have enough working parties, and that next year we might be more focused on this.

Perimeter fence :A major change this year was the new perimeter fence over areas at the back of the site which had been previously an eyesore and unsecured. JP joked that he had been amused in reading the suggestion of the gardening correspondent of the most recent Iffely

Fields news letter, that manna had dropped from heaven on to the council, and had suddenly persuaded them after an 8 year lapse to finally fix the fence. In fact there has been over the years a lot of committee lobbying, and this year although there was some spare money JP noticed Fairacres had somehow been lost off the list. Fortunately he was able to shame the chair of the federation meeting into finally honouring old promises, and to follow this up, otherwise as always nothing would have been done. JP reflected that this kind of lobbying is important in future if we are to get our share of any funds going.

Grants: JP also reported that he had put in a flexible application to the council for a grant of money available for projects. This has been approved but we are yet to learn whether we have been approved for all the bid or part of it. Repair of the orchard bench has been approved , but we are waiting to hear about whether two more benches have been funded and/ or a water capture system for the polytunnels using a solar pump, which would cost £1500. Originally we had thought to dig a well and use the solar pump to access the water but that may be a future project.

Orchard: David Morris was invited by the Chair to speak about the acquisition of two new trees for the orchard, a damson and a quince. Within 2 days of planting someone unfortunately had vandalised the damson but it may still survive. It was also noted that it is 10 years since Patsy Woods, an earlier Chair, had died. It was she who had instigated the orchard and with George Monbiot had researched the rare trees to plant and so it was proposed that the seat in the orchard dedicated to her be renovated, with a plaque to commemorate Patsy's work. It was approved by the AGM that we would name the trees as the Patsy Wood Memorial orchard. DM had got in touch with the Wood family who also approved the idea, and in October we may think about arranging a ceremony to formalise this.

DM also asked for more volunteers to help with the spring working of clearing a 2 foot radius around each tree. In addition, in the longer term DM was aware that his health would not allow him to sustain full responsibility for the orchard, which is full of rare and special species. DM talked about the possibility of a funded training course in management of community orchards for an interested plotholder. This would be a good investment for the site, and give the interested party a qualification. Some volunteers for the orchard have come forward. Proposed rule change –see my written notes

Vote of thanks: Finally, DM proposed a hearty vote of thanks to Jon Piggott for his selfless work for our allotment community, and asked for recognition of all the things which Jon had achieved over his time as Chair.

### **3.Election of officers.**

**Chair:** Since Jon Piggott is standing down after 4 years, nominations for a new Chair were called for. No nominations were offered, so we do not currently have a named Chair, although it is a requirement of the Council to offer three names to be registered for the posts of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Polly Woolstone indicated that she would be prepared to act as an administrative support to the person in the role of Chair. Lynn Errey reminded the meeting that once in the past when no chair was in evidence we had had recourse to a rolling chair, and that the committee would have to determine how this might work. Paul Hopkins was nominated and seconded as a new committee member.

**Treasurer.** After several years, Stephen Kearsey is stepping down as Treasurer. A vote of thanks was offered to Stephen for being such a faithful and efficient treasurer over the years.

Lucy Watson was nominated to accept the role of treasurer, and this was seconded, welcoming her to the committee

**AOB.**

It was pointed out that the water mains needed to be turned on so that we could access the taps.

The meeting at this point was declared over.

Minutes recorded by Lynn Errey (Secretary)