

---

## Moulsecoomb Allotments and Horticultural Society (MAHS)

---

### Draft Minutes of Annual General Meeting, held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2017 at Meadowview Community Centre

**Minutes:** taken by Maude Casey

**Present:** Dave Witts; Maureen Winder; Liz Yeats; Maude Casey; Mike Hedgethorpe; Tony Firmin; Mick Wallis (Wally); Sue Bull; Adrian Burton; Cheryl Paine; Richard Howard; Sally Griffin; Sally McGregor; Giuseppina Salamone; Sean Howes; Dan Yates (Councillor); Amelia Mills; Alan Brown (Chair of BHAf)

- 1. Welcome and Introductions:** At the start of the meeting, it was agreed to change the order of the agenda in view of the non-arrival of the Guest Speaker, Nick Mole of Pesticide Action Network.
- 2. Apologies:** Sue Mallinson; Nicola from Plot 80; Jim Grozier; David Cooper (Allotment Officer)
- 3. Minutes of AGM 2016 and Matters Arising:** Minutes Agreed and No Matters Arising
- 4. Chair's Report:** Dave Witts thanked the committee for hard work and commitment in sometimes lengthy meetings during the year, and for the excellent progress made this year in the running of the Site. The Shop in particular has become magnificent, thanks to the work of the committee and the amazing unstinting work of volunteers, Sean maintaining the equipment for years.  
Chair gave thanks to the work of David Cooper. The feeling on the site is lovely. 15-20 new plot holders; all being guided to garden organically following the mission statement. The meeting gave thanks to the Committee for the Nature Site Reports; and the Newsletter and the Website, which looks great following Jim's work, and which people enjoy very much, particularly the helpful articles which are regularly posted there.
- 5. Treasurers Report and Accounts:** Maureen Winder, Treasurer, gave a very clear account of income and expenditure, and future plans. There are two accounts  
1) Main Account: For this, a Cash Flow situation is the aim, in order to provide a secure base in order to successfully operate the shop and all operations needed to run the site. This has to be monitored all the time. For this reason there doesn't seem to be a good reason to decide to put money from the Development Account into this account annually, as priorities and needs change throughout the course of a year. The shop turnover has increased from £3000+ to £4000+ in twelve months.  
2) Development Account, which, after deduction of the cost of installation of the new shop roof, now has a current balance of £430.00. A suggestion is to use this to replace the glass in the windows to opaque glass, for security reasons. This account is handy for putting money into from other sources, for example, the surplus balance from the Main Account, in order to make a long-term plan. It is a community account, and therefore is set up not to have any interest.
- 6. Shop Manager's report:** Wally reported that this has been a wonderfully successful year. Organic Manure has been rushing out of the shop. The ground cover material is being sold at half price and is still making a big profit; the shop would not exist without Sally – she does all the seed orders; deals with Fargro and King's; arranging deliveries; big thanks also to Sean, who maintains all the machinery and mends the gate and is always there to sort things out. The Key Money is held in deposit: £1,804.01 in the Bank; Cash £55 Wally made a suggestion that the money could be used to buy equipment/stock and then repaid, as we did with the new strimmer. Alan pointed out that it is rather ridiculous to be holding on to money from key deposit when the people might have left ten years ago; perhaps we should fix up a cut-off point for writing off the deposit. It was agreed that this should be left to the Committee to discuss and decide. Alan also expressed admiration at the Shops healthy finances, as shops on other sites are losing money. Liz suggested that some money be put towards arranging something to thank the volunteers for their magnificent contribution towards making the shop such a success. It was agreed that £60 be put aside

for this purpose. There was a discussion about how to encourage more people to renew their £2 subs. It was agreed that the subs should continue, because subscriptions mean that the shop is not a trading organisation. Maureen takes the sub for the initial membership when she gives the plot holders their keys. A dual price labelling system for the shop was discussed, in order to make it clear just how advantageous the discount is to members. It was agreed that all matters pertaining to the subscription should be discussed and decided upon by the Committee.

- 7. Site Reps Report:** Maureen Winder explained that the role of Site Rep is a supportive role. Site Reps exist in order to encourage gardening rather than to be disciplinarians. There are discussions on-going with BHAF about the development of a Site Reps description. 4 sites are collective plots: New Roots; Magpie; Plot 50 and Arthurs Old Plot. 20 plots are having problems. Plots have three letters plus right to appeal before leaving. When people run into problems with their plots, they are given support and suggestions in order to encourage them and to help them get back on track. There are 24 people on waiting list; only 15 plots are free. Next Site Rep election will take place next year as it is a two-year role. There was a discussion about whether the Council can deliver us some woodchip regularly. The Committee will look into organising this, perhaps by liaising with Alan re: Roedale's frequent surplus of woodchip.
- 8. BHAF Rep's report:** Richard Howard explained the role and explained that anyone can be a BHAF Rep. The meeting agreed that Richard should continue in the role.
- 9. Nature Site Report:** The Nature Site is now going into its third year. Liz presented a beautiful report. She had sent the report to three Wildlife Rangers. Unpacking the response from Huw of Sussex Wildlife Trust, Liz gave a passionate analysis of the point of the Nature Site: to create a corridor hospitable to biodiversity; to foster maximum biodiversity on the Site. Liz reminded us that everything is inter-related: plants, insects, soil. She gave the blue butterflies as a key example: these depend on ants bringing their caterpillars into ants' nests to over winter. Ants do this because the caterpillars exude a little bit of sugar, upon which the ants feed over winter. All this is even more important with climate change stresses. We aren't ecologists; we don't count insects, but we do count plants, and over the last year the number of plant species counted has increased by 40. Perhaps this is also an indicator of increased bird, insect and all-round bio-diversity. There was discussion about bees and the beauty of the Dawn Chorus, with particular note of, and pleasure in, the increase in song from a wider range of bird species.
- 10. Elections to Committee:** Tony Firmin nominated himself for the Committee. This was agreed. Nominations for all posts were all agreed unanimously. The Committee is: Chair: Dave Witts Vice-chair: Maureen Winder Secretary: *Vacancy* Treasurer: Maureen Winder Shop manager (Key & Seed secretary): Mick Wallis (Wally) BHAF rep: Richard Howard Ordinary members: Maude Casey, Cheryl Paine, Adrian Burton, Tony Firmin
- 11. AOB:** There was no other business. The Meeting thanked Chair for focused Chairing of the Meeting, and the Committee for work done throughout the year.
- 12.** Because the Speaker did not arrive, the meeting ended at 8.40pm. When Chair followed this up later by emailing Nick Mole, Mr Mole explained that he had entered it in his diary for June, rather than May.

***Minutes approved at AGM 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2018***