**Weybridge Allotment Holders’ and Gardeners’ Association (Registered Charity1189633)**

**MINUTES of the AGM, Thursday 17th March, 2022.**

**St James’ Church Hall, Weybridge**

**Committee Members Present**: Phil Murphy (Chair), Pippa Graeme (Vice Chair), Laura Yates (Treasurer), James Higgins, Leila Brown, Sophie Murphy

41 members were present.

**1. Phil Murphy, Chairman**, welcomed the members to the meeting and said that we would be using the (CIO) Charitable Incorporated Organisation format for the meeting. Legal constraints meant that the Committee would be unable to respond to some questions - in particular those relating to the Trading Hut. Phil stressed that there would still be plenty of scope for questions and he hoped that, after the meeting, many members would stay for a social drink and conversation.

**2. Apologies**: Apologies had been received from Wendy Andrews, Justine Billett, David Brown, Eleanor and Nick Butler, Carlye Case, Sue Ellis, Diane Ewart, Christopher Farrow, Peter Harman, Martin Major, William Melville, Anthony Ridge, and Simon Todd .

**3. Minutes of the previous AGM** (July 2021): The minutes of the WAHGA AGM, held on 19th July, 2021, were circulated to all members as an attachment to our formal AGM Notice e-mail of 24th February 2022.  They are also on the WAHGA website in the Members Area (Society Information). These were approved by the meeting.

**4. Report from the Chair**

* Phil Murphy said that 2021 had been a year of two halves. For seven months, the Committee had managed the site and put new procedures in place to improve efficiency. Whilst we welcomed new plot-holders, we had sought to be fair to existing plot-holders and to balance their different requirements.
* Throughout the year, much time was spent by Committee members individually and in committee preparing WAHGA proposals to the Charity for how we might manage responsibilities mutually.
* The Committee discussed and put into effect new member offerings from WAHGA, offering support and expertise to members as well as arranging social events, negotiating member discounts and putting in place a range of additional offerings.
* Annual membership subscription was reduced to zero for the year beginning September 2021, given the healthy state of our reserves.
* The Trading Hut continued to operate strongly, though without repeating its extraordinary turnover of the previous (Covid) year.
* Six editions of the Newsletter had been distributed: key focus had been telling personal stories of our members’ love of the allotments and on giving guidance for good gardening practice – particularly from one of our expert members, Diane Ewart.
* Membership levels remained high, with only two plot-holders deciding not to renew their membership for 2021/22.
* Phil stressed that the WAHGA Committee was ready and able to step up and take on additional plot- and site-management responsibilities at any time.

**5. Activity Report from the Vice Chair**

Pippa Graeme reported that:

* MEMBERSHIP We have 330 members. Three hundred members renewed their membership in September. Thirty new members have joined WAHGA since September 2021.
* The WAHGA website has been relaunched and enhanced. We are grateful to Katie Bell for the new look and to Lesley Tilling for her hard work putting together the previous Website and its excellent content.
* WAHGA Facebook Group has been relaunched. We have 137 very active members!
* WAHGA Member Discounts. Businesses have very kindly agreed to discounts for our 330 members. We are always ready to approach other relevant suppliers.
	+ Gok’s Kitchen - 15% (10% off take away drinks)
	+ Fish’d -10% on Wednesdays
	+ Danieli Chocolate (online) -15%
	+ Rocket Gardens (online) -15%
	+ GardenSkill (online) - 10%
	+ HOTBIN Composting - 10% for 2-5, 15% for 6+
	+ Blackmoor Nurseries - £5 off online orders
* Supported youth activities: Sophie Murphy welcomed Duke of Edinburgh Award participants’ help on plots.
* WAHGA has offered 1-to 1 mentoring to newcomers.
* Social Events were organised by the committee and were well-supported.
	+ Summer BBQ - August
	+ Bonfire and Sausage Sizzle - November
	+ Photo Competition - January
	+ Quiz Night - March. 67 people attended and the quizzing was excellent.
* RECYCLING week in October was promoted, with the Sharing Table in constant use, for cardboard and other materials, plants and plastic.

**Plans for the coming year**

* Sunflower and Pumpkin growing competitions - 9/10 April launch of the event in collaboration with Weybridge in Bloom.
* More social events
* Plot Judging – The Committee is working on changing the format for Plot Judging.
* Talks with visiting speakers; onsite advice from external experts.
* Projects to enhance the site’s unique biodiversity (eg: bughouse building, jobs for the month, attracting pollinators)
* Work-parties to help members in need of help with plots.
* Provision of collection and distribution point for Runnymede Food Bank. This has been a great success thanks to Sophie Murphy. Members have been extraordinarily generous and the bin is emptied every month with the contributions taken to St James’s Church.
* Partnership with Weybridge In Bloom and local primary schools
* Increased support for external activities such as D of E, Scouts etc
* Establish more formal links with other allotments and horticultural groups (eg: Walton Allotments Association)
* More discounts - local or online (suggestions welcome)

Laura Yates (Treasurer), then presented a summary of the Accounts to add some detail to the previously circulated Treasurer’s report.

**6. TREASURER**’**S REPORT 2021**

* As you will have seen in the treasurer’s report, 2021 was another strong year for WAHGA.
* The trading hut generated a healthy gross profit of £2k which was reinvested in capital equipment to loan to members such as lawn mowers and strimmer’s and also in supporting members in need.
* Whilst membership income fell following the decision to charge a £0 membership fee, the bank balance was largely maintained with only a net out flow of £105 and is £34k. Of which, £6.6k is restricted Greenspaces Grant funds.
* Looking forward into 2022, the healthy bank balance allows us to fix the membership fee at £0 for another year. We will additionally look to raise funds through events and charitable donations.

The Annual Report and Accounts will be submitted to the Charities’ Commission forthwith.

**7. Annual Report of the CIO Trustees for 2021**

**OBJECT 1) TO PROVIDE OR ASSIST IN THE PROVISION OF FACILITIES FOR ALLOTMENTS IN WEYBRIDGE, SURREY IN THE INTERESTS OF SOCIAL WELFARE FOR RECREATION OR OTHER LEISURE TIME OCCUPATION FOR THE PUBLIC AT LARGE WITH THE OBJECT OF IMPROVING THEIR CONDITIONS OF LIFE**

* Twenty-three plots rented between April and August
* In excess of 1,000 hours of voluntary work for WLC carried out in the first half of the year
* Plot monitoring
* Managing waiting-list
* Issuing Tenancy Agreements
* Shipshape and efficient system of plot management handed across to WLC in September
* Practical advice and support for members
* Reintroduction of plot-judging competition
* Social events programme

**OBJECT 2) TO PROMOTE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC THE CONSERVATION PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE PHYSICAL AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN, AND BORDERING, WEYBRIDGE ALLOTMENTS, SURREY IN PARTICULAR THROUGH THE**

**CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES, THE IMPROVEMENT OF WILDLIFE DIVERSITY AND PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING ABOUT SUSTAINABLE HORTICULTURE**

* Programmes to improve soil, increased yields, and a reduction in pests *via* healthy balanced ecosystem
* Attraction of pollinators a key objective
* Allotments’ site had met Elmbridge Borough Council’s specified criteria for greenspaces funding
* In 2021, members, family and friends continued to maintain and add to the native hedging planted in 2019/2020
* New nest boxes added
* Reptile mats installed to provide protection to slow worm colony
* Much progress on managed hazel coppice area/orchard
	+ Within two years, edible hazel crop
	+ Staggered cutting (coppicing) will provide pea sticks and bean poles for plot holders.
	+ Native bulbs planted to increase pollination
* Multiple sightings of rare and interesting flora and fauna (eg: pygmy shrew recorded during 2021 bat survey);
* SBIC (Surrey Biodiversity Information Centre) regularly updated on sightings.
* Multiple sustainable rubbish-clearing around the large site-perimeter prior to WLC take-over

**8. WAHGA Annual Subscription September 2022**

**It was proposed and agreed that the annual subscription remain at zero for the year starting September 2022**

**9. Resignation and Election of the CIO Trustees**

In accordance with the WAHGA CIO Constitution all current trustees (as listed below) resign.  All are willing to stand for re-election apart from Lesley Tilling, who has decided not to stand again:

* Phil Murphy
* Pippa Graeme
* Leila Brown
* James Higgins
* Lesley Tilling

The number of Trustees must be between three and twelve.

These candidates were elected as Trustees of the CIO by a show of hands indicating a large majority. There were two abstentions.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Position** | **Person nominated and plot number** | **Proposer and plot number** | **Seconder and plot number** |
| **Trustee** | **Phil Murphy Plot 2** | Val Venning 15 | Eileen Jackson 58C |
| **Trustee** | **Pippa Graeme Plot 17A** | Diane Ewart 19 | Caroline Freeman 19A |
| **Trustee** | **Leila Brown Plot 16** | Phil Murphy 2 | Sophie Murphy 103 |
| **Trustee** | **James Higgins Plot 55** | Wendy Andrews 43 | Brett Ford 19C |

**10. Resignation and Election of the WAHGA Committee**

**Candidates for Election**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Position** | **Person nominated and plot number** | **Proposer and plot number** | **Seconder and plot number** |
| Chair | **Phil Murphy Plot 2** | Val Venning 15 | Eileen Jackson 58C |
| Vice-Chair | **Pippa Graeme Plot 17A** | Diane Ewart 19 | Caroline Freeman 19A |
| Treasurer | **Laura Yates Plot 69D** | Beth McCarey 65A | Anna Shrapnell 65B |
| Secretary | **Pippa Graeme (Acting) 17A** |  |  |
| Marketing and Events | **Katie Bell Plot 126** | Pippa Graeme 17A | Phil Murphy 2 |
| Membership Sec | **Leila Brown****Plot 16** | Phil Murphy 2 | Sophie Murphy 103 |
| Biodiversity and Sustainability | **James Higgins Plot 55** | Wendy Andrews 43 | Brett Ford 19C |
| Strategy | **Peter Harman****Plot 123** | Pippa Graeme 17A | Phil Murphy 2 |
| External Relations | **Sophie Murphy****Plot 103** | Phil Counsell 20  | Nicola Doyle 67D |

CHAIR: There having been no other candidate for election Phil Murphy stood for re-election and was duly elected by all members - with the exception of two abstentions.

TREASURER: Laura Yates stood for election and was elected by all members - with the exception of two abstentions.

SECRETARY: The post is at present not filled and members are invited to consider coming forward to take up the post.

COMMITTEE: Those who had filled in forms indicating that they were willing to stand were the current members of the Committee, see table above.

No other application forms had been received.

* In addition, Katie Bell, plot 126, has agreed to stand as Events Coordinator/Marketing and has been proposed and seconded.

The committee above was elected *en bloc* by all members - with the exception of two abstentions.

**11. Chair’s Closing remarks**

The Chair thanked the Vice Chair for her hard work and presented Pippa Graeme, Vice Chair, with a bouquet.

The meeting was closed with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

Minutes taken by Lesley Tilling - 17th March 2022