

Weybridge Allotment Holders' and Gardeners' Association

MINUTES of the AGM Thursday 19th July 2021

Large Hall St James's Church, Weybridge

Committee Members Present: Phil Murphy (Chairman), Leila Brown (Secretary), Guy Phillips (Treasurer), Laura Yates, Pippa Graeme, James Higgins, Lesley Tilling

Fifty-one WAHGA members were present, two of them currently on the waiting-list.

Phil Murphy (Chair) welcomed the members to the meeting. Before moving to the main content of the agenda he tabled an Extraordinary Point of Order.

Minutes of the meeting:

1. Extraordinary Point of Order

The first part of the meeting was taken up with the Weybridge Land Charity letter that had been sent to WAHGA a few hours before the WAHGA AGM. The letter informed WAHGA that WLC was issuing formal notice of Termination of the Agency Agreement giving one year's notice - up to July 31st, 2022.

A member asked if there was an Agency Agreement. PM said there was and that WAHGA were hoping that the WLC would update it, but the situation had now changed.

Another member wanted to know if it was because the WLC want to sell the land off to developers. PM responded that he did not believe this to be the case but that the WLC said that WAHGA was working against WLC objectives – an assertion that the WAHGA Committee contested.

PM continued that there had been so much change over the years and WAHGA needed to get the right agreement for the plot-holders which aligned with WLC objectives. He stated that WAHGA wants to find a way to work together that meets the plot-holders' interests. The WLC had not been specific about what WAHGA has done wrong. WAHGA had been working to negotiate a lease with WLC but this had not been achieved.

WAHGA had proposed taking on formally more day-to-day activities but that option was not acceptable either. We now have a sub-committee which has two WAHGA reps and two WLC reps and WAHGA had hoped to make progress there.

Another member commented that the allotment is about to be designated as an open space but was concerned that it has not happened yet. PM said that it was his assessment that the current WLC trustees did not want to sell off any land.

After completion of the Emergency Point of Order, the AGM continued in accordance with the planned agenda and prepared presentation.

2. WAHGA finances

The accounts were presented by Guy Phillips (*see WAHGA Website*). Approval of the accounts was proposed by Caroline Freeman and seconded by Peter Harman.

3. Report from WAHGA shop

The allotment shop report was presented by Lesley Tilling. Lesley gave a vote of thanks to all the shop volunteers. A vote of thanks also went to Lesley for all her sterling work with the shop.

4. Tenancies: plot turn-over

Pippa Graeme reported that 44 plots had been let since September 2020 - this despite Covid restrictions.

The May 2021 plot review resulted in one plot being surrendered and three terminations. The next plot reviews were planned for September.

5. Biodiversity

James Higgins gave an update on biodiversity projects, including the native hedgerow project, plans for the pond, nesting boxes and the new mats being placed across the site to help identify, protect and house the slow worm colony. James would like more people to be involved in the WAHGA Wildlife Team and asked volunteers to contact him *via* the Website.

Question: JH has been persuasive in regards the importance of the biodiversity work; however, in reading today's e-mail from the charity, there is a tension between WLC and WAHGA on this matter.

Answer: Our plans are still valid and we believe that the WLC do not want to be seen as forcing us to hand back grant funding awarded by Elmbridge Borough Council.

6. Q&A – Plot-holders

Comment: A member mentioned it was good that plots are being maintained and marketed. Felt that the work needs to continue to keep generate interest.

Question: What can be done about overgrown hedges on plots?

Answer: Members can trim back hedges if they are overgrowing paths. They can also send photos into WAHGA and we can ask the relevant plot holder to cut the hedge back or we can ask the community payback team to do it.

Question: Is it possible to open the Church gate?

Answer: There are some concerns about security. We are cautious to have a full open gate policy. There have been problems with break-ins and people accessing the allotments without authority. The combination on the main gate will be changed shortly.

It had been suggested that WLC may approve open gate access in the future.

Question: Is it possible to have a buy/sell trade function on the webpage?

Answer: We can have that function on the Weybridge Allotment Facebook page. We also have the sharing table just outside the shop.

7. Election of WAHGA Chair and Committee

The committee were elected as follows

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| ■ <i>Phil Murphy</i> | <i>Chair (Acting Chair since resignation of previous Chair, Tony Palmer)</i> |
| ■ <i>Pippa Graeme</i> | <i>Vice-chair & plot administration (Change/New in-year)</i> |
| ■ <i>Laura Yates</i> | <i>Treasurer (New in-year)</i> |
| ■ <i>Leila Brown</i> | <i>Secretary</i> |
| ■ <i>Brett Ford</i> | <i>Plot Steward (New in-year)</i> |
| ■ <i>Lesley Tilling</i> | <i>Shop</i> |
| ■ <i>Sophie Murphy</i> | <i>External relations links (New)</i> |
| ■ <i>James Higgins</i> | <i>Biodiversity and Sustainability Projects</i> |
| ■ <i>Caroline Freeman</i> | <i>Without Portfolio (New)</i> |
| ■ <i>Peter Harman</i> | <i>Without Portfolio (New)</i> |

No other nominations were received for committee membership. Hopefully, as new plot-holders settle in, they may volunteer for the next AGM.

8. Any other business

Question: Can a WLC representative be invited in future so we can get their view?

Answer: Yes, we can ask.

Vicki Macleod then stood up as a WLC trustee and stated then the WLC is planning to run some open meetings and maybe host a BBQ.

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

Note: The AGM had been delayed due to lockdown restrictions. Alternatives had been discussed previously such as holding it in the car park or via Zoom but it was felt that would have restricted access and meeting outside would not be practical as it would be weather dependent.