

MINUTES OF THE 2nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
OF THE CITY OF ELY ALLOTMENTS AND GARDENS ASSOCIATION

Held at Centre 'E', 24 Barton Road Ely, on 9th March 2020 at 7.30 p.m.

**Apologies** Niall Pearcey, Dianne Scott, David Watts, Helen and Terry Moore, Pete Wells, Ken Brown, Julie Elsey. Til Utting Brown.

**Present** – Committee members: Graham Bond (Chair), Katie Taggart (Treasurer), Linda Adams (Minutes), Ian Kearney, John Mitchell, Tamsyn Hardy, Peter Clarke. Andrew Stephenson, Jenny Warren, and members to a total of 27 people.

**Opening comments** - Graham Bond, current Chair of the Association, welcomed everyone to the second AGM of the City of Ely Allotments and Gardens Association. He said that the National Allotment Society are celebrating their 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They asked if there are still any sites that were allotments 90 years ago. The first meeting in Ely was in 1919, they appealed for more land so that soldiers who had served in the First World War could have allotments to feed their families. In 1920 the land at Bridge Fen was purchased by the Isle of Ely Council on their behalf.

He thanked those who have offered to help with the stores and St Marys Garden.

**Apologies for absence** - were not read out, but are listed above.

**Minutes** The minutes of the first AGM of the new Association, were confirmed and signed.

**Site Reports:** This is just a brief outline of what has happened over the last year.

**Bridge Fen:** This has been the worst year for wind and flooding in a very long time. Three greenhouses were destroyed in a series of gales. The ditch along the Stuntney side of the site was dredged to help the land drain. The middle road, front and middle car park were tidied and a new layer of stone was added.

Discussions with the county council are still underway about ways to improve accessing the site through the increased volume of passing traffic.

A new drainage system for the road is being installed on the Stuntney side near the entrance.

**New Barns:** Has not had much damage from the wind and no major work has been done on the site this year. Because part of the site has been repeatedly affected by flooding the committee is seeking permission to install a land drain to connect to a culvert in Clayway car park.

**Upherds Lane** has had some damage from the storms. The vegetation overhanging part of a boundary fence, and several trees have been removed. The house owners, who are responsible for it, have been informed as to its condition.

Cambridge Housing have been contacted about the state of fencing that is their responsibility. It is hoped that they will replace the entire fence rather than repeatedly repairing sections. The installation of extra drainage has kept flooding to a minimum. The paths have been extended and vegetation cut back.

**Back Hill and Canterbury Avenue:** Both Back Hill plots are very tidy and well stocked. Canterbury Avenue site clearance and reorganisation has produced two more plots.

**Trading Stores:** Trade is going well and Stores are very busy. More helpers are needed to keep the store open for 2 hours on Saturdays and 1.5 hours on Monday evening. Tony Edmondson was thanked for his hard work. The Kings seed and potato schemes were successful. The electricity and rent money need to be paid to the Beet Club.

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**St. Mary's Garden:** Volunteers are needed to help with dead heading the flowers, weeding and tidying up. Replanting was delayed this year because the beacon was lit for VE day.

**Treasurer's report:** The full year report will be done when the Stores stocktake has been completed. She thanked Tony Edmondson for stepping in and sorting things out and helping with the potatoes. The insurance certificate has been received and will be copied and displayed on in the Stores.

**Election of officers;** The Chair introduced the officers and explained that the committee is composed of allotment site reps and former members of the horticultural society so that all interests are catered for. He asked if anyone would like to join the committee.

The current officers are Graham Bond, (chair), Ken Brown (Vice chair), Katy Taggart (Treasurer), Linda Adams (Secretary).

No-one else has come forward to stand as an officer. The current officers have all indicated that they are prepared to continue.

It was proposed and carried unanimously that they be elected to serve for another year.

**Honoraria** - An honorarium is an ex gratia payment, i.e., a payment made, without the giver recognizing themselves as having any liability or legal obligation, to a person for his or her services in a volunteer capacity or for services for which fees are not traditionally required.

The decision to award them was made some years ago at an AGM by members of the Allotment Association and has been voted to continue at every AGM since then.

Following a discussion, it was decided that the Honoraria be awarded to the officers for giving their time and expertise. Since much of the Secretary's work is now being done on the web, half of the Secretary's honoraria should be awarded to the Webmaster.

It was proposed that the award should be Chair £500, Treasurer £200, Webmaster £200, Secretary £200.

This was carried unanimously.

**Allotment rents.** Rents for the 2019-2020 season were

Plot Size in Poles.	Standard	Pensioner
Less than 5	£21.00	£18.00
Between 5 and 9.9	£26.00	£22.00
Between 10 and 14.9	£31.00	£26.00
Between 15 and 19.9	£43.00	£36.00
Between 20 and 29.9	£54.00	£45.00
Between 30 and 39.9	£77.00	£63.00

As before: Tenants with multiple plots will pay for the total size of the plots they rent.

Leisure gardeners' membership fee remains at £5.00.

Following a steep rise in allotments rents some years ago it was decided that the rents would rise by small amounts every year by RPI rounded up to the nearest 50p.

It was suggested from the floor that as we have money in the bank the rents could be frozen for the year.

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It was explained that there are some pending expenses.

- New Barns have applied for permission to connect a land drain to a drainage culvert in Clayway carpark.
- There may be a cost involved in sorting the Bridge Fen access.
- The costs for Orchard Green allotments should not be high because Hopkins Homes have agreed that the site should be fenced, gated, and have a water supply fitted.
- Some money needs to be kept in reserve for emergencies that have not been planned for like the fence in Back Hill.

Following the discussions, it was proposed that the rents should be increased in line with previous years. Vote 4 against, 22 in favour.

From 1 October 2020 plot rent will be

<b>AREA OCCUPIED (poles)</b>	<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>PENSIONER</b>
less than 5	£21.50	£18.50
5 to less than 10	£26.50	£22.50
10 to less than 15	£31.50	£26.50
15 to less than 20	£44.00	£36.50
20 to less than 30	£55.00	£46.00
30 to less than 40	£78.50	£64.50

**Waiting list** Bridge Fen has several vacant plots, a plot holder has just been allocated a plot at New Barns after waiting for 18 months.

**Website and Gmail** G-suite has been paid. The website is paid every 2 years. The anticipated total cost for 1 years email and 2 years website is around £200

**Changes to the tenancy agreement**

1. In future glass cannot be used on sites. This includes in greenhouses, cloches and shed windows. Any existing glass can be retained but should only be replaced with Perspex.
2. Tampering with the fencing in any way, shape or form will result in immediate termination of tenancy.

**GDPI** We are now compliant.

**Any other business:** Thanks to Katie for the drinks and delicious cakes.

**Policy on overgrown plots on Bridge Fen** anyone taking on an overgrown plot can rent a strimmer from Stores. There are several large ex Christmas trees, these will be checked and taken down if they are dangerous.

**Risk of flooding at Bridge Fen from the ditch next to the bypass** Chair is going to find out who owns the ditch and see what can be done to help the situation.

**Meeting closed** at 8.45pm