

# torquay allotment holders

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

St Martin's Church Hall, Barton Hill Road, Torquay, Devon

Monday 30 March 2015 at 7pm

### **Number of Attendees:**

**Chair:**

**Secretary:** A.Ditton

**Treasurer:** S.Pearce

Apologies: C.Jefford, T.Basten, K.Dennis, G.Lane, K.O'Sullivan, J.Whitely & J.Peak.

A.Ditton opened the meeting; Andrew stated that there was no chair at the meeting following Tony Mason's resignation from the committee. (Please see Election of Officers)

### **3. Minutes of the previous AGM and approval of**

Proposed: Gary Poston

Seconded: Wendy Davidson

### **4. Business arising from the minutes**

There were no objections to the minutes and there were no additional notes or amendments to be made.

### **5. Election of Executive Officers from nominations received by the committee.**

Election for Chair : Mr T Mason, Mr B Disley.

55 members had voted by the postal vote, a show of hands for those which had not participated within the postal vote was also undertaken being 16 members attending.

Resulting in the following:

Mr B Disley being received a total vote of 58, being 42 postal and 16 in the show of hands against a total vote of 13 for Mr T Mason; being 13 postal and 0 in the show of hands.

It was agreed that Mr B Disley had been elected Chairman and he joined the Executive Officers table to take up the position.

Election for Secretary: Andrew Ditton agreed to continue as the association secretary and this was agreed and carried.

Election for Treasurer: Vacant position.

Sharon Pearce has agreed to continue within the position for another year and this was agreed and carried.

## 6. Election of Stewards

<u>Beechfield:</u>	Julie Johnson	Proposed by: , Seconded by Richard Johnson
<u>Stantaway:</u>	Godfrey Lane	Proposed by J Hardman Seconded by C Pearce
<u>Quinta:</u>	Eugene Moron Peter Draper 3 <sup>rd</sup> position (vacant)	Proposed by J Taylor Seconded by B Mosdel
<u>South Parks</u>		
A Section:	Tony Pearce Dave Mortimer	Proposed by Mrs Clarke Seconded by Julie Clarke
B Section:	Eric Patterson	Proposed by A Ditton Seconded by B Disley
C Section:	Gary Poston	Proposed by L Jones Seconded by L Jefford

## 7. Election of Auditors

A Ditton said that the committee were very grateful to John Hart and George Green for the independent audit of the accounts and they agreed to continue to stand as auditors. This was carried.

## 8. Secretaries Report

Starting with a summary of membership and our current waiting lists, the total number of plots on the four association sites is 174, with total membership of 225 people.

We have 16 people on the waiting lists, a decrease from 37 last year, the current waiting times are as followed:

Southparks:	2-6 months	- 7 waiting
Quinta:	12-15 months	- 6 waiting
Beechfield:	first person on list waiting since 2010	- 3 waiting
Stantaway:	no vacancies	- 0

A number of smaller projects took place on the allotment sites and one more major project to improve the area of road next to the main entrance at Quinta. On behalf of the committee Andrew thanked all who took part, particularly Dave Mortimer who lent his skill and time to the Quinta Road project.

The committee is committed to two major projects, improvements to the top car park at Southparks and entrance to Beechfield; ideas for and volunteers to help carry out improvements on all sites are always sort, please speak to your steward or our chairman.

As most of you will know, we have been asked to remove corrugated iron and poles, which are considered a safety hazard by the council, having sort clarification on what this means.

Beth Dove of Torbay Council, who amongst her duties has taken on responsibility for allotments has written stating; "The council have concerns regarding corrugated iron sheeting and sharp pole edges on all of our sites. Torbay council does not allow corrugated iron sheeting unless it is part of a manufactured structure, such as a raised bed or a shed."

The council are referring to pieces of sheeting that are exposed on plot boundaries, which are a hazard if fallen onto. Your steward has a full copy of Beth Dove's letter, which you can refer to.

On 14<sup>th</sup> April, Beth will be visiting the allotment to introduce herself to members, so if you want to be there on the morning and if you have question you can query the position with regard to corrugated iron on your individual plot.

We are negotiating the renewal of the lease, this is a slow business, for example; the council first wrote on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014 and only one issue has been concluded on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. This was on the issue of the council either charging us for the management and maintenance of trees, currently provided at no cost or the Association maintaining the trees ourselves.

As a committee, we opted for the latter but questioned the practicality and who was ultimately responsible for judging the trees 'safe'. The council after deliberation referred back to being responsible for the trees at no cost as they conceded their proposal to be unreasonable due to the particular onerous nature of maintaining trees.

I am hopeful that the process on the two items outstanding items may be quicker, those being the revised wording regarding water to recognise our self-harvesting of water policy and secondly the size of building the council require us to seek permission to build before doing so.

Lastly in the notice of Annual General Meeting, we mentioned the need for a Minute Secretary at our committee meetings, which I am please to say Sasha Edinborough has agreed to fill; and a Show Secretary, which Alex Edinborough has agreed to take on. However, he inherits a situation where more members are needed on the committee and I ask that should you be interested in joining the show committee, then perhaps you could approach Alex at the end of the meeting. I can assure you that the Show Committee is very friendly and being on it is not a large commitment.

In conclusion, I believe we should thank our retiring Show Secretary, Gary Poston for taking on the position for eight of the last ten years.

## **9. Presentation of financial statement**

John Hart stated that the accounts looked very healthy as shown in the balance sheet comparison between y/e 31.12.13 with total reserves of £7554 and y/e 31.12.14 with £11758. The main areas which had been highlighted within the audit were Rents, Water butts and Insurance:

Rents: The rents received have doubled between 2013 and 2014 with no increase in footage on the sites, it was established through looking through the accounts that this is due to late invoicing of the previous treasurer and early invoicing of the new treasurer. With invoices being raised prior to Christmas 2013 and made for payment by

January 2014 this means that any payments received would have been banked in the following year and be seen as rent paid in advance. There could be the issue of invoices being issued late and then money held over until January 2014.

George Green stated that the rents received for the y/e 31.12.15 will potentially look ridiculously small in comparison to 2015, but will make the surplus income more modest.

The idea of changing the financial year end to 1<sup>st</sup> April and raising invoices for a 15 month period was raised. It was agreed a separate meeting between the Auditors and the Executive Officers would be held to discuss this matter further.

Mrs Marion Taylor pointed out her husband, David Taylor; the last treasurer had not invoiced later but banked money received after the end of the financial year.

Water butts: The increase was down to being provided with water butts rather than purchasing them and increased any derived income, however it is to be noted that this income stream is likely to decrease in the following year.

Insurance: This cost has jumped as the association has to pay insurance per membership head, and this is likely to increase with more than one member per plot being registered. This insurance covers Public Liability Insurance and any external contractors working on site. It was mentioned that the association was not able to obtain this insurance cheaper. Is this figure skewed due to the amount of members and should all Associate members pay the standard yearly membership.

Items raised from the floor in respect of the accounts were General and Post and Stationery. The increase in expenses within General is maintenance issues and incidental expenses, being the repair on the access to Quinta Road and additional building materials needed. A suggestion was made to send invoices and correspondence by email rather than post to reduce the cost of the Post and Stationery within future years accounts.

The overall view of the accounts would mean that the association could increase spending on areas that need to be addressed on all sites, in 2015 there will be a decrease in surplus but having the additional monies now is no different to a normal business cashflow.

The accounts package had been purchased during the year and this has been a substantial cost, this should assist with Sharon preparing more reliable and accurate accounts.

## **10. Adoption of the accounts**

Proposed: Denise

Seconded: I. Hall

## **11. Proposals and Resolutions**

1. External funding from National Lottery to improve various areas including security, paths, disabled access and friendly plots.

T. Thomas said that it seems to be a source of money not being tapped into, he mentioned that Paignton allotments have plots on site and have improved access and other facilities.

A. Ditton stated that Mr Thomas could look into the potential funding opportunities.

B. Disley said there is so much paperwork involved within the application process.

L. Jones said that he had presented a lot of information and spent months collating the information and this had disappeared.

S. Edinborough said that majority of funding now has got to be matched by the organisation.

It was left that Mr Thomas would get back to the committee with the information.

## 2. The reinstatement of water for the main growing season

A.Ditton said that this matter about mains water on site had been played to death, with the ideas bought forward in previous meetings being metered per plot. The water has been off for a few years now and if the water were to be reinstated this would lead to leaks arising all over Southparks and the majority of the existing pipework needing to be repaired or replaces.

T. Thomas said that this could be reinstated but on a Pay as you use system.

L Jones stated that some years ago a quote for the relaying of the C-Section pipework was in excess of £4000; however it was £3500 to repair.

A.Ditton said that the water had been turned off the disconnection fee would be £196, and as the new lease with the council is still be negotiated that it would be better to leave the current pipework in place and disconnect with the terms about water harvesting being clear within the new lease paperwork.

A vote was taken on the reinstatement of water, to turn the taps on and have all waters metered. This was voted against and the motion was carried.

## 3. Reinstatement of any other business (AOB) in the AGM

A. Ditton said that any proposed items of AOB can be entered into the AGM as long as they are submitted 7 days prior to the meeting. The reinstatement of AOB could be reinstated up to 9am of the day of the meeting; this however would exclude proposals if altering the rules which will follow the standard notice of 7 days prior to the meeting.

A vote was taken on the reinstatement of AOB, This was voted in favour and the motion was carried.

## 4. The publishing of full minutes of the AGM within 28 days.

The minutes will be circulated on the association website, facebook page, site noticeboards, the leaflet box on Southparks or through the stewards on the other sites.

A vote was taken and voted in favour and motion carried.

## 5. Association site maintenance.

A.Ditton said that any issues with the sites should be bought to the attention of the stewards to be bought up at a committee meeting. It was also mentioned that for works to be undertaken and completed that members should help with the works on their site.

## 6. Return of seaweed, leaves, wood chipping and manure.

Tor2 will be spoken to about potential deliveries.

J.Johnson said that other sites will not get the benefit of these deliveries.

A.Ditton said there will be notices on the site notice boards, email or word of mouth and available to all plot members, it would be down to stewards on each site for these resources to be distributed fairly amongst plot holders, either by volume of wheelbarrow or some other method.

#### 7. Communal Area on C section of South Parks.

A.Ditton said the proposal of the communal area remaining as a communal area and not changed back into a plot.

T. Thomas mentioned about the accessibility to the communal area from the main path.

A vote was taken on writing this into the association constitution; this was voted in favour and carried.

#### **12. Review of Rule 26 'Quorum at Committee Meetings'**

The proposal is to reduce the amount of committee members from 7 to 6.

G.Green said that a required percentage of the committee membership has to attend for a meeting to go ahead.

It was agreed that if the minimum quorum of 7 committee member was not met then the committee meeting would not be held.

This was carried.

#### **13. Amendment to Rule 18 to remove 'No two members from the same plot to serve on the Management committee'**

A.Ditton said that this was changed last year to allow two members to serve on the same committee.

It was agreed by the room that this should be reviewed on a yearly basis.

A vote taken and motion carried, allowing two members to serve in 2015/2016.

B.Disley thanked everyone who had attended the meeting and voted, he stated it was time to move on and enjoy gardening.

The meeting was closed at 20:15