

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**OF THE POVEREST ALLOTMENT LIMITED**  
**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7<sup>th</sup> August 2021 AT 14.00**  
**IN THE ALLOTMENT SHED**

**PRESENT: Committee:** Bill Whatley, Chairman; Sam Whatley, Membership Secretary; John OConnell, Treasurer; Graham Garnett, Bob Vine,

**Members:** Alison Chattaway, Ann Robarts, Shirley Gore, Brian Harris, June Garnett, Julie Groves, Paul Greenslade, Rane Ranasinghe, Katrina Harradine, Rob Winkley, Jamie White, Allison Morey, Barbara Czech, Amanda Hurcombe, Brian & Gail Black, Sheila Pitt. Ra Senniappan.

**APOLOGIES:** Derek Fry, Richard Brook, Peter Stevens, Richie & Carol Mackie, Colin Chattaway, Mary Cooke, Tim & Pam Mercer, Derek Power,

**1. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 April 2019, were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

**2. MATTERS ARISING**

Shirley Gore confirmed she had investigated the use of Smartwater Security Marking for the Allotments. The cost proved prohibitive, no further action is proposed.

**3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman welcomed all and thanked the members present for coming despite the downpours today.

A number of projects have been completed during the year, including the resurfacing of a major part of the roads. It is hoped to do some more next year. He thanked the small team of members who helped, mostly the same people over both weekends with Padma and Rane Ranasinghe providing lunch free of charge on both weekends.

The lower gate requires restructuring. This involves replacing the pillars and rehangng the gate. Decision made to get quotations for this job.

It is proposed to enhance our security by erecting a sensor-controlled light at main gate and consideration is being given to CCTV. We thank Paul Greenslade for advising and carrying out these tasks for us.

Lock on the main gate has been problematical recently. A new lock has been purchased and will be fitted by Bill Whatley shortly. Some strimmers and lawnmowers have been replaced during year. The main noticeboard is being refurbished at present by Bob Vine and will be back in position shortly. There is a second notice board at the side of the shed and the sign

on the main gate , both will be refurbished. We thank Brian Harris for maintaining the website and keeping our Facebook page updated.

A number of overgrown plots have been returned to a lettable state, this involved considerable work by Derek Fry and Bill Whatley.

The new lease from Bromley Council for 25 years has been signed and the new company – **Poverest Allotments Limited** -limited by guarantee established as required by Bromley Council. This involved a significant amount of administration by Sam Whatley, Membership Secretary. Directors of Poverest Allotments Limited are Bill Whatley, Samantha Whatley and John O’Connell.

As at the date of the meeting, we have a waiting list of 14, regrettably the Committee have had to issue 25 weed letters which has resulted in a few ploholders giving up their plots.

A number of ploholders have old tyres on their plots. This is in breach of the terms of their leases. These tyres are difficult to dispose of and are frequently left on abandoned plots. In view of this, ploholders are required as from August 1, 2021 to either remove the tyres or contribute £20 per tyre towards the cost of having them removed by a contractor. Thank you to the ploholders who have already removed tyres from site.

I would like to thank all members of the Committee for their hard work, especially Ann Robarts and Shirley Gore , who served on the Committee for many years and are now standing down.

#### **4. TREASURER’S REPORT**

The year ending 31/12/2020 is the first year of our activity under **Poverest Allotments Limited**.

A copy of the independently verified Accounts has been distributed to all members.

The key figures in the Accounts are:-

Rents received up to 31/12/2020 amounted to £4,671.20 up from £4,266.11, thanks to the Membership Secretary who constantly follows

up letting opportunities.

Shop Sales were £867.14. Some stock was brought forward from the Association entity.

Water bill amounted to £2,019.75, this figure was higher than normal due to numerous errors carried forward from 2019 in the bill which Castle Water took almost a year to resolve. The water bill continues to be an issue since Castle Water took over the administration from Thames Water, not just for us but for other allotments within BALGF. This year, the usage from April 1 to May 19 has been 173 cubic metres which cost £331.85, since then we have used 330 cubic metres which has not been charged to date. We estimate this will cost approximately £650. We now supply weekly meter readings to Castle Water, which they confirm upon receipt by email.

Site rent payable to Bromley Council amounted to £505.89, Electricity cost £126.44 and Insurance £280.76

At close of year 2020 the bank balance was £2,935.30, of this figure £749.50 was due to prepaid rent for 2021.

Corporation tax is chargeable; however, we have written to HMRC at the end of June seeking an exemption on the basis that we use our surplus for the benefit of the members and we do not distribute dividends. No reply has been received from HMRC to date however Initial indications from telephone conversations are that they intend subjecting us to tax. The tax rate of 19% results in a tax charge of £73.72 payable by August 6 and £109.82 by October 21. Pending receipt of definitive guidance from HMRC we have not paid the £73.72 to date, there may be an interest charge of 2.6% applied if we must ultimately pay the tax.

Accounts for Poverest Allotments Limited have been filed with Companies House as required.

#### **4. ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS**

The meeting unanimously adopted the accounts.

#### **5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS & COMMITTEE**

The Chairman indicated his and the Committee's willingness to continue in post in the absence of any volunteers to take over any of the functions. No volunteers were forthcoming.

The election of Mr. Denis McCarthy to the Committee was proposed by the Chairman and Seconded by John O'Connell. Bob Vine was co-opted to the Committee during the year.

The members present approved the election of the Officers and Committee unanimously.

#### **6. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR**

Brian Cooke, who had examined the Accounts for a number of years indicated during the year that he was unable to continue due to a conflict of interest. Rob Winkley stepped in at short notice and has agreed to continue in the role in 2022. We thank both for the time generously given free of charge. The appointment was proposed by June Garnett and seconded by Denis McCarthy.

#### **7. PROPOSED CHANGE TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

A change to terms and conditions in relation to the extensive work required by the Committee when some departing ploholders abandon their plots in a poor condition was discussed. It was unanimously agreed that new ploholders as from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 would be required to deposit £60 which would be refundable on leaving, if the plot was in good condition.

#### **8. INSURANCE**

The members discussed the current Zurich Third party Insurance policy which covers the common areas and unanimously agreed that it should be replaced by an Ageas Insurance policy which also covers members liability on their individual plots in respect of the member's immediate family, parents and children, and friends when gardening at the

member's plot so long as the member is present. The new policy became effective on 9/8, there are endorsements in the policy in respect of Ponds, Chickens, Bees and Bonfires, comprehensive details will be provided in a newsletter. The premium for the current year will increase from £280.76 to £613.14.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The members present discussed the extensive involvement of the Committee who are all volunteers in maintaining and refurbishing the site.

Most members are unaware of all the work done by Bill Whatley and Derek Fry. A considerable amount of their time is spent strimming overgrown plots, repairing plumbing, maintaining equipment, manning the shop and shed at weekends etc.

Whilst other members help occasionally, it was felt that for a number of years site maintenance and work days has been left to the same small group of volunteers.

Ann Roberts suggested that there were 2 key elements involved, plots being left untended and one-off projects. It was proposed that an

incentive to maintain plots before leaving would be a returnable deposit per plot. Barbara Czech suggested a deposit of £30 per half plot,

payable at the same time as the 2022 rent, John O'Connell seconded the proposal, this requirement will be added into the Terms and Conditions. These deferred liability funds will be kept in a separate Poverest Allotments Limited deposit account with Lloyds bank. Members present unanimously agreed this proposal. The members present felt the skill requirements for the one-off projects should be communicated to the members by email, notice board and Facebook initially and if insufficient support is forthcoming or skills are not available the plot rents which are among the lowest in the Borough should be increased to cover the expenditure required to complete the projects. Julie Groves suggested and the meeting agreed that we have a work party schedule which identified the particular skills needed to accomplish the work, this will enable members to decide if they are equipped to volunteer for particular work parties, members felt that that in most work parties there will be jobs to be done which are similar to the work involved in keeping plots. Work parties, in general, last about 2.5 hours weather permitting.

Members raised the issue of dogs on site, owners please be aware that your dog should always be on lead and under control of the handler,

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Saturday August 6, 2022, at 14.00.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman and the Committee was proposed and carried.