

**Roehampton Garden Society**  
Annual General Meeting  
7.30 pm Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017  
St Margaret's Church

**1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

Before the meeting started a cup was presented to a child for his pictures at the summer and autumn Shows.

Jackie Savage welcomed everyone to the meeting including our local councillor, Deputy Mayor Ian Lewer, Vice-Presidents Sheila Konig, Derrick Ratcliffe and Life Member Pat Davis. She asked everyone to sign one of the "sign in" sheets that are being passed round, this is our only attendance record. She said that our President The Rt Hon Justine Greening has sent her apologies as she has to be in Parliament for the Brexit vote. She has enjoyed five years as chairman and wishes to stand down at the 2018 AGM.

There is to be no recording of these proceedings. Please turn off your mobile phones. Draft minutes will be available in the December Bulletin and a draft version will be posted on our website. She invited everyone to stay after the meeting for refreshments.

Please note: - All the reports for this meeting were circulated on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November for pre-reading. They are below and questions about them have been added by the minute taker.

There were apologies for absence from: -

Vice Presidents: Paula Alderson and George Scandrett.

Members: P. Collins, Mike Cooper, Pat and Rob Dark, A. Fitzsimmons, Harriet and lowerth Harries, L.Maitland, J. O'Reilly, M. Renshaw, Brad Sanderson, David Savage Alan Smart and N. Whittaker.

Present were: -

R. Aveling	E. Barnwell	Ruth Barnwell
V. Bennett	Ciaran Carr	E. Chrominska
J. Crawford	P. Crawford	L. Davis
Pat Davis	A. Deliallisi	Helen Finch
E. Forrester	Vivien Fowler	J. George
Shirley Gillbe	C. Held	S. Hill
Janis Humberstone	John J. Ireland	MJ Ireland
Eva Knedlova	P. Knight	Sheila Konig
M. Kortelainen	B. Lattimore	Ian Lewer
Alison Linton	Robert Linton	A. Lodge
J. Ma	David MacDonald	Sue MacDonald
Carol Martinez	Pip Melotte	Georgina O'Reilly
P. Partridge	Raj Patel	B. Pencharz
M. Pencharz	E. Power	Derrick Ratcliffe
G. Rose	Jackie Savage	Gill Tamsett
S. Tamsett	Greg Willcox	(47) +

**2. Minutes of the 2016 AGM – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016**

These were published in draft form in the December 2016 Bulletin and emailed to the membership on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November (with the reports for this meeting). The minutes were agreed as a true record.

### **3. Chair's report** (Jackie Savage)

We have had another busy and interesting year, with successful Shows, Bonfires, Events and Trips and our weekly Trading Store. Our finances are in good shape and the applications on the waiting list steady. There will be more detail on those matters from my fellow committee members later.

My main concern has been to secure a new and long term Lease from Wandsworth Council. This has been going on for many years. The old 7 year Lease expired in 2011 and since then we have been trying to renew it. Be assured that Wandsworth have agreed that the terms of the expired Lease, as still valid as long as we pay our rent.

Since I became Chair in 2012/13 we have been working on securing a new long term Lease with the idea that if we became a Charity we could secure one. I am sorry to say that I have no real news for you at this year's AGM. At the AGM in 2014 we presented the case for becoming a Charity to you and you approved with the proviso we would come back to you to obtain your approval before finalizing anything.

Three years on, and with an enormous amount of work behind us, I thought we would be in a better position than we are now. We worked on the Charity application through 2015 (all the time checking that WBC was still OK with our plans) but until we got Justine Greening involved in October that year we just kept going round in circles with the Charities Commission. Finally we got agreement to become a Recreational Charity. But we didn't want to register until we had a Lease agreement with Wandsworth that would be acceptable. Otherwise the Charities Commission would just wind us up. Throughout 2016 we negotiated with the Wandsworth Borough Valuer, Peter Tiernan, to draft a new Lease and by the AGM last year we told you we had almost reached agreement on a Lease that would be acceptable to the Charities Commission, except for the length of term and the rent.

While we were negotiating the terms we heard (in March 2017) that the Charities Commission had closed our Application as it had been taking so long. We appealed but they promised that once we had the Lease agreement in place they would look at our renewed application without delay.

So we ploughed on all year (2017) and then it was agreed, in principle, that we could have a Lease for 50 years with a peppercorn rent. However Wandsworth then had to take legal advice (from the South London Legal Partnership) and amendments were made which would give the Council (as landlord) considerable control over our finances. We knew that the Charities Commission would not accept such control from a "State Body". The whole point of becoming a Charity was so that we would be able to have a long Lease!

We responded to the council and are now waiting for the results of an Internal Officers meeting which is scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> November.

I would like to thank Anthony Fitzsimmons (member and plot holder) for all his help and support through this and also our President the Rt Hon Justine Greening, Ian Lewer (our local councilor) who have supported us throughout and Barnet Allotments Federation whose advice and guidance has been invaluable. I must also thank the officers of Enable and Wandsworth Council who have also spent a lot of time and effort working with us to achieve our aim.

During these years, with Charitable Status in mind, we have worked on becoming a more integrated part of our Community. We now work with local schools, mainly Paddock who have an allotment plot, and making connections and sharing information with Putney Community Gardens, Community Orchards, Growhampton (Roehampton University) and other local community gardens. We support the Putney Society and Dover House Residents and their popular Table Top Sale on the Pleasance in June. Our Bulletin goes to all these organisations and we disseminate their news too.

In May this year we launched our lovely new website, designed by plot holder member Jean Crawford, who now keeps it up to date. So special thanks to Jean and to Vicki Bennett for her advice and some of the gorgeous images.

We introduced a new membership fee structure in April with the rent collections. Full membership is £5 per year and you can only be a full member if you are a plot holder. All other members are Associate Members (£2.50 per year).

Looking to the future we investigated having a borehole for our water. A few of us visited Pitshanger Allotments in Ealing earlier this year to look at their borehole. The discussions on this topic have been interesting and sometimes heated. I don't think it would be suitable for us to pursue this any

further, but that does not mean I won't support anyone who does want to investigate further. I think the most important thing is to get a new water ring and tanks installed on site 3. We would need this whether we had a borehole supplying the water or not. Plot holder member Robert Linton is currently getting advice and estimates for this work which I hope can be carried out in 2018. If we can achieve a 50 year lease with peppercorn rent then we can really move ahead with improvements to both sites and with facilities that the community can enjoy.

Finally I would like to propose that we add 5 new Life Members in recognition of the length of their service. Georgina O'Reilly is standing down after many years as Site 2 Secretary to be replaced by Mariangela Renshaw, and I also propose Raj Patel, Shirley Gillbe and Pip Melotte. The 5<sup>th</sup> person is Helen Saberi who is not a plot holder but is a local cookery writer who comes along and judges the cookery for us at the Shows. The membership voted and agreed unanimously.

*Note:*

*Currently we have 5 Life Members: Pat Burke, <sup>[SEP]</sup>Janet Long, Pat Davis, David Rossiter and John Horrocks We have 6 Vice Presidents: Judith Glaysher, <sup>[SEP]</sup>Paula Alderson, <sup>[SEP]</sup>Derrick Ratcliffe, Sheila Konig, <sup>[SEP]</sup>Alan Rake and George Scandrett.*

Questions: -

Q.1. Could we become a CIC (Community Interest Company) or a recreational charity?

Yes and we have explored these but our preferred option is to be a registered Charity.

Q.2. Roehampton Playing Fields have obtained a 30 years lease will these facilities still be available to the young in the area?

Yes. The lease is to a business. Ian Lewer explained that the costs will be frozen, it is currently a very "political" issue. They are trying to ensure that existing users e.g. The Doverhouse Lions will be able to use it for the existing fees.

#### **4. Treasurer's Report (Janis Humberstone)**

The detailed accounts **are attached to these minutes**. Janis Humberstone reported that the Society has a deficit, the money provided by WBC does not cover the expenses incurred in maintaining the allotments and their infrastructure.

- The 2 Shows and the Store have an increase in profits.
- Our electricity bills have increased and we have negotiated a 3 year fixed term.
- Our water costs have been transferred from Thames to Castle water and we will have a refund for overpayment.

Membership fees have increased to £5 and £2 for associate members. (Please note you do not have to be an associate member to be on the waiting list although we do encourage it).

Questions: -

Q.1. What happens to the excess stock in the Store? Especially the seeds.

We have a very high turnover in the Store. We have a contract with King's Seeds (sale or return) and sometimes sell at half price ones which are about to go out of date.

Q.2. The Store roof and the pipework on site 3 need replacing, how can this be funded?

We do have monies in our Scottish Widow's account, and if we become a Charity we will be able to fund these improvements to our infrastructure.

#### **5. Trading Secretary's Report Gill Tamsett)**

The Store continues to provide a community hub where members can share experiences and expertise.

Products that have continued to be popular this year are Country Natural Composted Manure, our loose fertilisers, particularly Fish, Blood and Bone, Bonemeal and Growmore, Maxicrop Original and Tomato liquid feeds, and garlic.

We have introduced some new products to the Store. Particularly popular was our selection of seed composts. John Innes Seed Compost continued to sell well and members appreciated the easy to carry packs of Gro-Sure Seed and Cutting Compost.

We also introduced a wool based seed compost called Lakeland Gold made by a farmer in the Lake District Fells by mixing wool from his flock with local bracken. This proved very popular and had good results.

We trial new products before introducing them to the Store. This year new products include top soil, weed suppressant fabric, cloches and spring bulbs. The daffodil and allium bulbs sold well at our Autumn Show. This month, the Ballerina Tulip bulbs sold out in the first 10 minutes of the Store opening! We welcome suggestions as to other bulbs that we will stock next year.

We spruced up the tea and coffee area, thanks to Greg Willcox. We also now offer a selection of specialist teas.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who help with the Store; Liz Chrominska for sourcing the seeds and garlic, Carol Martinez for the potatoes, Greg Willcox for helping with the deliveries as well as general improvements to the Store and allotments (his structures for the manure and wood chip bins on Site 3 are works of art!), and Jackie for her support.

Also, the Store could not operate without all those who give up their Sunday mornings to help at the Store and bring fabulous cakes, so a big thank you to all of them. Thank too to Jackie who always gives us unfailing support.

There were no questions.

## **6. Show Chair's Report (Carol Martinez)**

We had 2 very different shows this year but they did have one thing in common – it wasn't a good year for the roses. But the summer show was awash with sweet peas and the autumn show with dahlias.

It is never a good year for everything which makes each show unique. The autumn show in 2017 was one of those that you just feel so proud of arranging; along with my co-chair Mariangela who has helped with the organisation. It was a successful show because it was busy from beginning to the end and the tables heaved with harvest. Obviously the society makes money from the sale of refreshments, tombolas, entry money, plants and the auction but the purpose of the shows are to be a community event for both the allotment members and the wider public – there are always new faces of people who have seen the poster and popped in to see what it is all about.

At every show we encourage novices to enter for the first time and hope they will keep coming back. We also like to keep children entertained. Georgina put together a work sheet for the little ones this year and it was well received by children and parents alike.

Our friend and former plot holder George Scandrett was too unwell to judge for us this year and so Sheila Konig stepped in to judge the flowers while Charles Gillbe also gave us his precious time to judge the vegetables and fruits. Both of them did an excellent job and we hope they will be able to take up the honour again next year. Once again our cookery judge was local cookery writer Helen Sabieri.

All of the judges have come up with comments which the show committee have reviewed and some of the suggestions have been taken on board – these will be incorporated into new categories on the schedule for next year.

We rely very heavily on volunteers for the shows and our thanks go out to everyone who judged, ran the auction, transported tables, set up and run the tombolas, made cakes, donated plants and helped to sell them, cracked the whip in the kitchen, washed up, took the door money and swept up afterwards.

### **Question: -**

Would it be possible to have a "Bran Tub" for the children at the Show – I would be happy to help with it?

Yes of course.

## **7. Allotment Secretary's Reports**

### **Site 2** (Georgina O'Reily)

#### **Lettings.**

In the period November 2016 to November 2017 10 plots were let to new plot holders. There have been 3 moves of existing plot holders to large plots and 1 requested downsize move to a smaller plot from an existing plot holder. There are now a total of 85 plots on site 2.

#### **Site management**

The communal herb bed was reinstated this year along the path to the store. It is now well-established and we hope that plot holders will use it.

Two dangerous paths along plot boundaries have been repaired.

A new fence to the rear of plot 42 was erected following a request from the Society.

The long-standing problem of bamboo on plot 13B continues to be periodically tackled.

Rubbish has been repeatedly thrown from a garden behind one of our plots. This has now been resolved as the householder has apologised and made a generous donation of £100 to the RGS.

It has not been possible to mend the shredder yet. After further discussion last week Mike Cooper will contact his electrician about another way to solve the problem.

#### **Thefts**

There have been no known break-ins to the site this year although a few items have been reported missing. The police were called to investigate a series of thefts from one plot including an alleged shed break-in. The case was dropped due to lack of evidence.

#### **Plot inspections**

Plot inspections this year have revealed a consistently good level of cultivation overall. Where problems arise we precede along the Enable/Wandsworth guidelines to alert plot holders of our concerns and agree a timetable for improvement. The Procedure for Dealing with Poor Cultivation (Wandsworth Letting Agreement 3.5) has been invoked on one occasion leading to a termination of tenancy. Two further warnings have been given and we are now waiting for a response from these plot holders.

#### **Thanks**

Finally, I'd like to extend thanks to the many plot-holders who give of their time freely in many ways. Thanks, particularly, to Pip Melotte who maintains the toilet to an impeccable standard and to Alan Smart for managing the bonfire again, to Melanie Tham and Alex for maintaining the herb bed and Derrick Ratcliffe for his continual support. Also to thank the many plot-holders who communicate with me on issues as they arise and help out in many ways so that the site can be managed effectively and continues to be a welcoming place to come. Thank you all for your support.

There were no questions.

### **Site 3** (Helen Finch)

This has been my fourth year as site secretary. I have continued to enjoy getting to know more and more plot holders and know the quirks of site 3. It is great to see the community grow and function well (almost all of the time). We are very fortunate in having a rich source of helpful, resourceful plot holders that are willing to do that bit extra for our community and in so doing keeping it going in a constructive forward thinking way.

**Lettings:** 5 plots have been split generating 6 more plots and 2 plots have been amalgamated. We now have 168 plots altogether on site 3. Over the year since the last AGM there have been a total of 21 lettings (13% of 166 plots), 18 to new tenants and 3 to existing plot holders. 8 of these plots became available after the incumbent tenant had been encouraged to give up their plot due to poor cultivation.

#### **Improvements and repairs:**

The biggest improvement on site 3 is the new arrangement for manure and wood chip. Having the manure and wood chip delivered on the main path was always a bad arrangement but the structure that Greg Willcox designed and made is truly fantastic. The finishing touch of the much admired

signs were done by Garry Rose. These storage bins have been an amazing success; they are functional, aesthetic, eco and did not cost much – what more could we want!

The water supply system continues to need propping up from time to time. It no longer is fit for purpose as it is an old installation which has been patched and repaired that has become a mixture of iron, copper and plastic pipe work cobbled together. It often springs a leak so fixing these is a never ending story. Many thanks to Alan Tribe and Ian Finch who have done repairs throughout the year. The plan is to replace the whole lot with plastic and have more standpipes throughout the site. The toilet flush was a problem for some months and finally the flush button was lost so the whole mechanism was replaced. Thanks to Chris de Courcey, Patrick Savage and Ian Finch all of whom had a hand in getting it working. The flush is functioning well now. Some plots that tenants have relinquished and were unlettable as they had been so neglected. Artan Deliallisi helped to get them into a state that has made it possible to let them.

#### **Security:**

There have been a few garden implements stolen throughout the year and some produce has been taken. However, annoyingly no perpetrator has been caught. Much of the annoyance is around the nasty, petty nature of the thieving and disrespect of plot holders' efforts and that the thieves are safe in the knowledge that they are very unlikely to be caught.

#### **Plot inspections:**

These took place in November, a mini one in March, full ones in May and July. An average of 10 plot holders (about 6%) needed to be contacted as their plots required some attention. Eight plot holders gave up their plots during this year having been told that the standard of cultivation was lacking.

**Thanks:** There are a lot of plot holders who generously give their time and talents to help site 3 work. Many thanks the team led by Vivien Fowler who keep the toilet clean and to Bob Aveling and Sheila Konig who run the bonfire party. There are also several plot holders who have helped with repairs, generally keeping the common areas tidy, giving advice and encouragement to new plot holders, helping others who might not be well. Also thanks to those for doing bits of plumbing, those who turn water on and off. Without all of this input by such a resourceful group of people Site 3 would grind to a halt and cease to function as a community so thank you all for your help and support.

### **8. Waiting list report (Helen Finch)**

**Primary Waiting List:** There are currently 224 people on the Primary Waiting List (1 less than a year ago), of whom 29 are existing plot holders (same as last year). New potential plot holders at the top of the list put their names down in December 2014 so it is taking about 3 years for them to get a plot. There have been 49 names added to the list since the last AGM, (65 at the same time last year) of which 6 are existing plot holders (9 last year). This reflects a continuing downward trend of applications for an allotment with us. However, the length of the list is about the same at 224 with a waiting time of 3 years – not too long so people feel it is impossible to get a plot before they are too decrepit to work it.

**The Secondary Waiting list:** this list is for those who either have reached the top of the Primary List or have given up a plot but want to take on an allotment in future at a time more favourable to them. The list was growing and some names had been on the list for many years so we have introduced a policy of deleting names that have been on the list for more than 10 years. Also to avoid plot holders using the Secondary List as a way of moving plots anyone giving up a plot and going on the Secondary list would not be able to take on a new plot for 3 years.

Questions: -

Q.1. How many people are on the secondary waiting list?

90. Only 4 people have moved from that list to a plot.

Q.2. Why do we have it?

Sometimes people come to the top of the waiting list and owing to their circumstances do not want to have a plot at that time. Other plot holders who are struggling to maintain their plot are offered the secondary waiting list if they relinquish their plot at that time.

It would be unfair for these people to go to the bottom of the primary waiting list.  
Shirley Gillbe added that Enable (WBC) run the same system.

## **9. Site Manager's Report**

Shirley Gillbe explained that she is the ex-officio liaison between Enable and the RGS. She deals with any serious problems on both sites and attends the 3 yearly plot inspections. All appeals are dealt with by Enable.

Question: -

Who will deal with appeals if we become a Charity.

They will be dealt with by the Board of Trustees.

## **10. Bulletin Editor's Report (Pat Dark)**

Jackie Savage took the opportunity to thank Pat Dark, who was unwell, for the wonderful Bulletins she produces, a huge amount of work and an excellent means of communication for all members.

Nine Bulletins will be published in 2017.

July and October Bulletins are the most important as they report on the two shows the society holds each year. These two Bulletins give opportunity to show the achievements of our plot holders, through glorious photographs; celebrate the prize-winners and see plot holders and local people enjoying the refreshments, tombola, produce stall and auction.

December Bulletin gives an opportunity to read the reports of 2017 committee members and details the work that has been carried out over the last year on your behalf. You will also meet the new committee members and see pictures of the prizewinners being presented with their cups and trophies by our President, Justine Greening.

June, September and November draw attention to the shows and AGM.

All Bulletins have reports from the Chair and Trading Secretary and where relevant, from the Show Secretary and other members of the committee. Reports on visits and trips are featured and topical events such as open gardens and the orchid festival at Kew. Articles on events taking place such as bonfire night or Jeanette's swarm of bees are featured, and any items of national interest such as the plight of bees and insects.

A regular recipe features in each Bulletin and I am currently considering how we can most usefully get these onto the website so plot holders and members can easily access these.

I recently checked through back copies of the Bulletin and discovered that I took over from Paula in May 2008. It came as a surprise that I have been editing the Bulletin for over eight years.

This year we have had to revise timescales for getting the Bulletin to the printers as WBC has outsourced its printing and it now takes longer between sending the copy to them, gaining agreement on cost and getting it printed and delivered back to me.

In November we started a new regular feature by Georgina O'Reilly. She will be writing about jobs to do each month on the plot.

Generally, all goes smoothly when producing each Bulletin. Many thanks to the regular contributors for their promptness and to people who send me photos, articles, recipes etc. Also to Robert Linton, for technical advice when needed.

## **11. Election of the Committee 2017-2018**

There is one resignation from the committee this year, Brad Sanderson who she thanked for his contribution. I have the following nominations for the Committee, they have all been proposed and I am inviting seconders from the floor.

<u>Committee nominations for 2015/2016:</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Seconded</u>
Jackie Savage – Chair & Website Editor	Shirley Gillbe	Carol Martinez

Carol Martinez – Vice Chair / Chair of Show	Jackie Savage	Shirley Gillbe
Janis Humberstone - Treasurer	Brad Sanderson	Jean Crawford
Alison Linton – Minutes' / Membership Sec.	Pat Dark	Pam Partridge
Mariangela Renshaw – Site 2 Allotment Sec. / co-chair of Shows	Carol Martinez	Pip Melotte
Helen Finch – Site 3 Allotment Sec.	Janis Humberstone	Edward Forrester
Pat Dark – Bulletin Editor	Alison Linton	Artan Deliallisi
Gill Tamsett – Trading Secretary	Carol Martinez	Vivian Fowler
Liz Chrominska – Store	Greg Willcox	Jo George
Greg Wilcox – Store	Gill Tamsett	Jackie Savage
Mike Cooper – Security	Jackie Savage	Artan Deliallisi
Georgina O'Reilly	Helen Finch	Peter Knight
Vivien Fowler	Sheila Konig	Alison Linton
Patrick Crawford	Helen Finch	Raj Patel
Elaine Barnwell	Georgina O'Reilly	Liz Chrominska
Shirley Gillbe – Site Manager for Enable (WBC) (non-voting position)		
President: The Rt. Hon. Justine Greening MP		
Vice Presidents: Judith Glaysher, Derrick Ratcliffe, Alan Rake, Paula Anderson, Sheila Konig, and George Scandrett		
Life Members: Pat Burke, Pat Davis, Shirley Gillbe, John Horrocks, Janet Long, Pip Melotte, Georgina O'Reilly, Raj Patel, Helen Saberi and David Rossiter		

## 11. AOB

1. A presentation of flowers was made to **Pat Davis** one of the RGS Life Members. Jackie Savage thanked her for her huge contribution to the Society, especially the Shows. Her magnificent displays of prize-winning flowers and endless hard work in the kitchen enabling the teas to run smoothly. The AGM's catering was masterminded by her and her mulled wine was memorable! Thank you Pat!

2. Shirley Gillbe said that a gift is also being sent to **George Scandrett** and said the following about him.

"Those of us who have been with the RGS over the years will remember George as one of the saviours of the Society. He, along with others, Sonia Sawyer, Pat Davis, Pat Burke, Paula Alderson and Derrick Ratcliffe kept the RGS going through the dark days when interest in allotments was at a low ebb.

Those of you who are relative newcomers will know George as the Show Judge who gave his time with great patience and was always available before judging to give words of advice and wisdom on presentation and quality of produce to old and new hands alike. And his ham sandwiches for lunch were the tuff of legend to the Show helpers!

What you may not know was that George was a superb gardener and cook. His plot was always wonderful and he shared his knowledge and expertise generously. As he couldn't show his produce her often entered the competition judged by visitors to the Show and I'm sure you can guess how often he won that.....! He also used to enter the cookery section and his ginger cakes were Show stoppers.

His other great passion was motorcycling and he rode a classic bike and his sidecar combo that was the envy of many until his health caused him to give up.

George is not in the best of health and so, sadly, has given up the role of Show Judge. But the committee and all the membership thank him for his generosity and skill and wish him well."

3. Thanks to Alison Linton, members of the committee, Vivien Fowler and Sue MacDonald for organising and providing the delicious refreshments.