

**Roehampton Garden Society**  
Annual General Meeting  
7.00 pm Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018  
Roehampton Cricket Club

**1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

Jackie Savage welcomed everyone to the meeting including our President The Rt Hon Justine Greening MP, Vice-Presidents Sheila Konig and Derrick Ratcliffe and our local councillor Steffi Sutters also Cabinet Member for Community Services and Open Spaces. She asked everyone to sign one of the "sign in" sheets that are being passed round, this is our only attendance record. There is to be no recording of these proceedings. Please turn off your mobile phones. Draft minutes will be available in the November Bulletin and a draft version will be posted on our website. She invited everyone to stay after the meeting for refreshments.

Please note: - In order to reduce paper usage the reports for this meeting are on our website but there are a few copies of the agenda here.

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There were apologies for absence from: -

Vice Presidents: Paula Alderson and George Scandrett.

Members: Charles Gillbe, Ali Linton, Mariangela and David Renshaw, Gill Tamsett, Mike Cooper, David Savage and Christine Wolski.

Present were: -

R. Aveling	E. Barnwell	Ruth Barnwell
Michael Bower	Susan Clark	Liz Chrominska
Helen Compson	Jonathan Compson	Vince Cottary
Pat Dark	Robert Dark	Laura Davis
Helen Finch	Vivien Fowler	Shirley Gillbe
J. Hayes	Janis Humberstone	Sheila Konig
Brenna Lattimore	Robert Linton	David MacDonald
Sue MacDonald	Catherine Maunsell Bower	Carol Martinez
G. Melotte	Marc Moderegger	Georgina O'Reilly
Pamela Partridge	Raj Patel	Derrick Ratcliffe
Lorna Roberts	Gary Rose	Jackie Savage
Carole Sewell	Trevor Sutters	Steffi Sutters
Stewart Tamsett	Greg Willcox	Sylvia Willcox

(39 +)

**2. Minutes of the 2017 AGM – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

These were published in draft form in the December 2017 Bulletin and emailed to the membership on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October. The minutes were agreed as a true record.

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

I became chair in 2012 and am standing down this evening. I had hoped that by now we would have secured a new and **long term Lease** from Wandsworth Council and we would be a Charity. But we when Wandsworth altered the proposed Lease in a way we found unacceptable. The stage had been reached where they had a Land Valuation undertaken and it was as a result of this valuation they changed the terms and we found them unacceptable. We asked to see it but were refused. Anthony Fitzsimmons is now pursuing this under the Freedom of Information Act. The Information Commissioner Office (ICO) has taken this on but Wandsworth are still refusing to comply. The ICO wrote to the council on 7 September but no information has become available so Anthony has reported this failure and the ICO will be taking their next step towards enforcement shortly. However yesterday all information was received by email and we can now start to work again towards becoming a Charity.

In the meantime, a new approach to the Lease is underway led by committee member Patrick Crawford and the plan is twofold.

1. Secure the longest lease at the lowest rent (keeping the majority of the rents for the management of the plots).
2. To establish the RGS as a charity. Patrick is supported by some new faces from the committee and from the membership, a meeting has been arranged with Peter Tiernan of Wandsworth on November 20<sup>th</sup>, which our nominated new Chair, Helen will also attend. We also hope that we will have the support of our local councillor Steffi Sutters (who is here this evening and will present our Cups) she is also the Cabinet Member Community for Services & Open Spaces.

The committee has been working on renewing and updating our Letter of Agreement and Rules and the associated Policies. This has been in conjunction with Enable (who manage the other Allotment plots in Wandsworth) and with advice from other Allotment Societies. The current drafts have been on the website for a few weeks now and some of them in practice for 10 months or so and we have received no comments from the membership. Are there any now? The main additions are the Behaviour Policy and the Complaints Procedure as well as the Data Privacy Policy now mandatory for all organisations.

Please can I have a show of hands for the acceptance of the draft agreement and rules? Accepted no disagreement. Any questions?

1. Do we have any idea about the term of lease for the Charity? *50 years*
2. What is the current situation of the lease? *It expired in 2011.*
3. Does Wandsworth set the rent? *Yes and it has been agreed that we would charge the same as Wandsworth.*
4. Has any reason been given for the non-disclosure? *No*
5. Do we know the value of the land? *It is nothing because we are allotments.*

#### Expenses

We have had a lot of work done on the site 3 water system. Initially the plan was to overhaul it completely with new pipes and tanks but that would have cost more than we have in our bank, so we spent £1,300 on renewing all the taps and stabilising the stands. This was organised by Greg Willcox and we are very grateful to him for doing such a brilliant job.

We really need to get the store replaced or the roof fixed. We have been talking about this for a while but now it is leaking badly. It has been estimated that to replace the roof (which we have had tested and is a "mild" type of asbestos) would cost in the region of £10,000. Our monies in The Scottish Widow's Endowment Fund could be used for this. (To replace the whole store would be £40 - 50K approx.).

#### Talks etc

We had some good visits and talks. In April there was a well attended Hedgehog talk and then in June a most successful evening when 4 experts came from the RHS to a question and answer session here at the cricket club.

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

The detailed accounts **are attached to these minutes.**

1. Enable has not yet charged us any rent which is why there is so much money in the Lloyds account. We owe them approx. £12,000
2. We have had two generous anonymous donations totalling £183.00
3. £14 was given at the RHS Q and A session in June.
4. £20 at the June Show.
5. No major purchases with the exception of £1,300 for Site 3 water system.
6. The Store takings are slightly down this year maybe due to the weather, but 2 weeks ago we took more than ever on one Sunday.
7. The monies in the Scottish Widows Endowment Fund are suitable for use on a Store upgrade.
8. Show profits are slightly down because of extra printing.
9. We have made a profit on the rents, mainly because of people relinquishing their plots and not claiming a refund.

10. Thames Water have handed over to Castle Water, we have obtained a refund of £684 + £7 interest. The meters are just outside the gate of Site 2.

Janis was thanked and the accounts agreed.

## **5. Trading Secretary's Report (Gill Tamsett) read by Jackie Savage**

It has been a challenging year for the Store mainly due to the weather. Early in the year the weather was so wet and cold that no one wanted to venture onto their plots let alone come to the Store to purchase things. Also the potatoes arrived late due to temperatures of -8C in Scotland which is where we buy them from.

Then we had good gardening weather for a couple of weeks and everyone wanted their Country Natural. I think we just manage to match supplies with demand!

The weather was then too hot to work on our plots. Watering was the priority rather visits to the Store.

However, members flocked to the Store for the garlic, shallots, onions and potatoes. We know we have to order many more shallots for early next year and we had several requests for red onions for Spring planting not just in the Autumn.

Spring bulbs have continued to be popular and it has been difficult to keep up with demand.

We trialled opening the Store on Saturday mornings in March and April this year with mixed success. We believe that our members appreciated the opportunity to come on Saturdays so we will be opening on Saturdays next year but only for an hour between 11 and 12 noon from mid March to the end of April, dates to be confirmed.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers who have helped with the running of the Store, particularly this year as I have had to deal with my health issues. When I could not do my Store Duty or a particularly admin task for the Store, there was always someone who would step up to help. I also knew I didn't need to worry about the Stores on Sites 2 and 3 being stocked as I knew that Greg Willcox would have sorted it. I really do value and appreciate all the support I have received to ensure the Store runs smoothly.

JS thanked Gill for all her hard work and on behalf of everyone sent her all our good wishes for her health.

## **6. Show Chair's Report (Carol Martinez and Mariangela Renshaw joint chairs)**

This year has seen unusual weather. A cold wet spring ensured that the June show was missing the usual abundance of some exhibits such as strawberries and asparagus. There were some specimens, but they were sparse. But, as usual there was plenty of rhubarb.

A heat wave followed in the summer and meant that most things grew in abundance. At the autumn show we had a great display of squash and other sun loving vegetables such as tomatoes and aubergines. The dahlias had obviously also enjoyed the weather as they were stunning.

The cuddling carrots in the ugly or funny shaped vegetables had me in stitches and next year we plan to let the public vote for the winner in this category, as they vote for the best photograph.

The autumn show saw 2 rather large pumpkins – for one we held a guess the weight competition and the other won the heaviest pumpkin prize. Both were kindly donated for auction at the end of the show and were carried home in wheelbarrows. Several extremely big marrows were also donated for auction, along with a variety of other vegetables, flowers and cookery items, which kept our auctioneer busy to the end. Thanks to David Renshaw for doing this which has become an end of show event that many look forward to.

We try to keep the cookery section fresh by changing a few things every year. In the summer show our cookery judge Helen Sabieri suggested 'my favourite tea time treat' it was very popular and allowed competitors to show something individual.

One of the novice entrants in the summer show also won the best vegetable in the same show with her gorgeous looking garlic. And again, in the autumn show a novice also won the best display of roses. We hope these two go on to experience the thrill of the win in future shows.

Charles Gilbe from site 2 judged the vegetables and fruits, Sheila Konig from site 3 judged the flowers and Helen Sabieri, a local cookery writer judged the cookery - they have become our resident judges and our thanks goes to them.

The extra attractions at the shows keep everyone busy. Thanks to John O'Reilly for tirelessly running the children's tombola the last few years. And to Penny and Sally Baker for taking on the adult tombola this year.

Thanks to everyone else who made sure that the shows happened – to everyone who made a cake or donated to the produce stall. To everyone who helped with putting up and taking down the tables, washing up the cups and sweeping the floors. Thanks to Charles Held for providing the transport to get the tables to the church hall and

thanks to everyone who entered the show or came along as a spectator. Let's keep the shows going for as long as we can, as part of both our own allotment community and the wider local community who enjoy them as much as we do.

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

### **Site 2 (Mariangela Renshaw) read by Liz Chrominska**

This has been my first year as Site Secretary of Site 2 and I am very grateful to Georgina O'Reilly, the outgoing Secretary, for her invaluable help and guidance. Without her willingness to share her time, knowledge and experience, it would have been a truly daunting task.

We were very sorry to lose one of our most enduring and popular plot holders, Leslie Harvey, who sadly died in June. Leslie was a very charismatic man and an exceptionally skilled gardener, always ready to offer his advice and help. He was also a valued member of the Committee for many years. Leslie will be greatly missed by us all.

#### **Report:**

We have 88 plots on Site 2 and below is an over-view of the last 12 months.

#### **Lettings:**

In the period November 2017 to October 2018, eight plots have been let to new plot holders.

#### **Re-numbering and re-structuring of plots:**

In the period November 2017 to October 2018 there have been a number of moves and changes as follows:

- 4 larger plots have been divided to give 8 smaller plots – each following a request to down-size.
- 4 smaller plots have been amalgamated to provide 2 larger plots resulting in greater cohesion of the site. Where possible, our policy is to retain as many larger plots as is feasible.
- 2 plots which were too small to let to new tenants have been amalgamated with larger neighbouring plots, adhering to our policy to offer these smaller plots to existing tenants whose names have come to the top of the waiting list for more land. This again conforms with our policy of overall cohesion of the site.

#### **Tenants:**

- We have nine new plot holders from the Primary Waiting List and one Plot Holder Partner who has become the main plot holder.
- Seven plot holders terminated their tenancy during the year.

#### **Site Management:**

Generally speaking the year has been trouble-free with just minor issues which have been monitored and resolved. No thefts have been reported and just one case of minor vandalism. The pathway between two plots has been stabilized and improved, making it easier and safer to negotiate. The fence of a neighbouring house has been reinstated after falling on to the adjacent plot.

There was an isolated incident when neighbours complained about noise from the site, but this has not happened again.

#### **Plot Inspections:**

The two plot inspections in April and July revealed a good level of cultivation from the majority of plot holders with some excellent produce being grown. A lack of weed control was obvious in a small number of plots and tenants were contacted and asked to address this problem. Most plots, however, are well-maintained and heavily cultivated.

I believe we are very fortunate to enjoy this great amenity and to be able to work together in harmony to ensure it perpetuates. So, I end by thanking all those involved in the running of the allotments, and particularly to the plot holders for making Site 2 such a cohesive and rewarding place to be.

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

This has been my fifth year as site secretary a role I have enjoyed immensely. Since April this year I have been fortunate in also having Vivien Fowler share the job with me; she has responsibility for the plots on the perimeter and I continue with those in the central area.

**Lettings:** 1 plot has been split but none has been amalgamated. We now have 167 plots altogether on site 3. We have had fewer lettings over the year since the last AGM: there have been a total of 13 lettings (21 last year), 12 to new tenants and 1 to an existing plot holders. Eight of these plots became available after the incumbent tenant had been encouraged to give up their plot due to poor cultivation.

**Improvements and repairs:**

Last year I reported that the water system was being constantly in need of repair and our vision was to replace the standpipes that we have and add some more giving us a much improved water system. Unfortunately, the cost was prohibitive so we went for a simpler solution of making the existing standpipes more robust and better supported so reducing flexing of the joints that was causing all the leaks. All the taps were replaced as the old ones leaked. Altogether the water situation has been significantly improved with no leaks. Many thanks to Greg who organised and supervised the upgrade as well as installing the firm supports for the standpipes.

**Security:**

There continues to be some petty thieving of produce on site 3 with no perpetrator being identified and caught. Many ex plot holders have keys to the allotment site and many of the houses surrounding the allotments have access to the site so there are many possible suspects additional to those who have plots. We increased the deposit on keys from £10 to £20 but are still finding that not all keys are returned.

**Plot inspections:**

These took place in November, May and July. An average of 20 plot holders (about 12%) 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 and one has been evicted due to consistent very poor cultivation.

**Thanks:** The allotments keep going due to the generosity of many plot holders who give their time, knowledge and skill to the allotment community on site 3. In particular Greg Wilcox, Artan Deliallisi and John Ireland who are always helping out with repairs and general maintenance. Also the team led by Vivien Fowler who keep the toilet clean and Bob Aveling and Sheila Konig who run the bonfire party. Raj Patel is very helpful with new plot holders with giving advice and encouragement. Also thanks Albert Tuin and Alan Tribe who turn water on and off. There are always people willing to help others that makes site 3 tick along as a well-functioning community of gardening enthusiasts – thanks to you all.

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

**Primary Waiting List:** There are currently 228 people on the Primary Waiting List (4 more 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 June 2015 so it is taking just over 3 years for them to get a plot. There have been 55 names added to the list since the last AGM, (49 at the same time last year) of which 3 are existing plot holders (6 last year). Last year there was a concern that applications to go on the waiting list was falling off but the above data reflect a stable waiting list with consistent demand.

**Secondary Waiting List:** There are 90 names on this list. Any names that have been on the list for more than 10 years are removed)

**9. Site Manager's Report**

Shirley Gillbe had nothing to report.

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

In 2018 nine Bulletins were produced. The numbers of hard copies has reduced but are still available in the Store and on both sites. In April the format for hard copies changed to a booklet format. Plot-holders and members receiving their Bulletin electronically are now sent a link to open via the website.

This is progress! When I first started writing the Bulletin, after collecting them from the printer I took some to the Store, posted about a dozen, then the rest were delivered by number of members.

This is my final report to an RGS AGM as I am passing the baton to Carol Martinez who will be editing the Bulletin from now on. I will however, produce my last Bulletin, the November 2018 that will report on the AGM and prize giving.

I took over writing the Bulletin from Paula Alderson in May 2008, so have been editing the Bulletin for ten years, producing over 100 editions. It is worth noting that Paula used to chair the society, edit the Bulletin, was Site Manager for the RGS and Site Secretary for Site 3, amongst other things!

The early Bulletins consisted of one or two sides of A4, written by me, reminding plot-holders about shows, plot inspections etc. Colour photos were gradually introduced of show produce, then committee members and prize-winners. At the July 2008 Show George Scandrett was the produce judge and in October 2008 Derek Ratcliffe took the prize for best dahlia. George only recently retired and Derrick is still taking prizes, this year for his HT rose. The Bulletins have developed as my IT skills have. I have had some computer crisis's and been helped by Robert Linton.

Shirley Gillbe took over as Chair from Paula in November 2008 and Jackie in 2012. The Bulletin gradually became more of a joint effort with members contributing articles, plot information, gardening advice etc. Bulletins also had more photos, since photos could be taken with a phone it was easier to be spontaneous and transfer the photos to the computer for inclusion.

For years the Bulletin was printed by Wandsworth Council in-house printing service, led by the very efficient and charismatic Lee. The service worked well as I could email my copy to Lee and pay for it when I collected it two days later from the Town Hall. In 2017 Wandsworth Council decided to close down the service and out-source it. We persevered with the new system for about a year, but copy had to be costed, put out to tender and a price agreed, then printed and delivered, making the timescale up to between two to three weeks. Also invoices became very erratic. This finally proved so difficult so we moved the printing to London Print Ltd on the recommendation of the Putney Society. This has proved a very efficient service with a fast turn around, courier service and instant invoice for payment.

I feel I am now the 'editor' of the Bulletin. I still write some articles, but the Bulletin is now a real team effort, with regular items, such as, the Chair's report, news from the Store Manager, plot jobs of the month, reports on activities and events, articles of interest, such as the report on stag beetles in this months Bulletin, recipes and updates form local groups, e.g. Putney Community Gardens, St Margaret's Church and Granard School.

My thanks to all who contribute regularly and those, that contribute occasionally with letters, recipes, photos and items of interest.

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

There are 2 resignations this year both of whom are really long standing committee members, Pat Dark and Georgina O'Reilly. Both have been on the committee for 10 years or more. Pat is best known for the Bulletin and organising trips to Wisley and beyond but she also did a lot of the ground work to improve the water system on site 2 and has been a stalwart supporter of the shows and the store. Georgina was best known as the Secretary for Site 2, but she has also been Minutes Sec, organiser of Gardeners' Question Times and the Best Plot competition, as well as a great supporter (and exhibitor) at the Shows and regular store volunteer. I have here a token of our gratitude.....

### **Committee nominations for 2018/2019:**

	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Seconded</u>
Helen Finch - Chair	Jackie Savage	Sheila Konig
Jackie Savage - Vice Chair / Minutes Sec.	Alison Linton	Pam Partridge
Carol Martinez - Bulletin Editor / Co Chair Shows	Pat Dark	John Thompson
Mariangela Renshaw - Joint Site 2 Sec / Show co-chair	Carol Martinez	Raj Patel
Elizabeth Smart - Joint Site 2 Sec	Mariangela Renshaw	Vince Cotton
Vivien Fowler - Site 3 Sec (Outer area)	Shirley Gillbe	Susan Clarke
Alison Linton – Site 3 Sec (Inner area)	Helen Finch	Stewart Tamsett
Janis Humberstone - Treasurer	Elaine Barnwell	Sue McDonald
Gill Tamsett – Trading Secretary	Janis Humberstone	Sylvia Willcox
Greg Wilcox – Store Manager	Gill Tamsett	Bob Aveling
Elaine Barnwell - IT Sec	Greg Willcox	Derek Ratcliffe
Patrick Crawford – Buildings and facilities	Jackie Savage	David McDonald
Mike Cooper – Security	Georgina O'Reilly	Carole Sewell

Brenna Lattimore  
Catherine Maunsell-Bower

Carol Martinez  
Raj Patel

Georgina O'Reilly  
Jill Pope

**Officers of the committee – non voting**

Jean Crawford – Website Manager  
Robert Linton – Membership Secretary

Jackie Savage  
Helen Finch

David McDonald  
Pat Dark

Shirley Gillbe – Site Manager for Enable (WBC)

N/A

N/A

*(Should we say something like 'All the above will serve on the committee in their designated roles') good idea*

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. Elaine Barnwell asked if everyone was receiving their emails as the system has changed during the year.

2. It was asked if we could have a hand held card reader in the store. *EB replied that it has been looked into but as there is no wifi it would have to be a mobile phone and would be too complicated.*

3. Pam Partridge asked if we could have smaller deliveries of manure as she thought it might be a haven for stinging insects. *It was suggested that we could sell insect repellent in the Store.*

HF thanked Elaine for organising the evening and refreshments and Councillor Steffi Sutters for coming to present the prizes.

**JS formally handed over to Helen Finch. HF thanked everyone for voting her in, she has learnt a lot from JS and the committee. JS has done a huge amount for the RGS moving it along, building a team and doing a massive amount herself. She presented her with a token of appreciation - an engraved vase and a bottle of Bollinger champagne. Applause!**

Steffi Sutters said that it was a great pleasure to come to such a well organised meeting and reassured members of her support.

The prize giving co-ordinated by Carol Martinez was followed by refreshments.

***Confirmed as a true record at the AGM on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019  
Helen Finch, Chair of Roehampton Garden Society***