

Committee Reports and Notes from the AGM 2021

Held at 7.30pm on 12 Nov 2021 in St Margaret's Church, Putney Park Lane.

1. Welcome and Apologies: Helen Finch, Chair, welcomed all present. There were 43 members present at the meeting.

Present:

Jean Crawford	Sally Harvey	Michael Bower	Marianna Pencharz
Bill Pencharz	Georgina O'Reilly	Jackie Savage	Amelie Broering
Raj Patel	Helen Finch	Sylvia Willcox	Greg Willcox
Carol Martinez	Sue MacDonald	David MacDonald	Robert Aveling
A Phelan	Jocelyn Ma	Annie Hardinge	Catherine Mausell-Bower
Richard Standen	Shan Karwatowska	Debbie Elliott	G Jackson
Gill Tamsett	Sheila Konig	Kate Hunt	Patrick Crawford
Jon Compson	Helen Compson	Vince Cottam	Vivien Fowler
Sue Illingworth	Ruth Tigue	Jeremy Tigue	Mariangela Renshaw
David Renshaw	Elizabeth Smart	Julian Abbott	Emma Blackwell
Christine Wolski	Alan Strowger	Florence Terry	

Apologies from: C Gillbe, R and P Dark, A Deliallisi, L Maitland, J Eskdale, F Behnoud, A and R Linton, D Savage, I Finch, L Davis.

2. Chair's report by Helen Finch

Last year we were unable to have a real AGM so were not able to welcome our new President, Fleur Anderson to our meeting. This year she will be with us and has kindly agreed to present the prizes. It has been lovely to see her at both the Summer and Autumn shows meeting members and gamely participating in the auctions.

What has the RGS achieved over the last year? The communal area on site 3 is now fully operational and used a lot. We had an official opening ceremony on 7 th August with Valerie Minifie cutting the ribbon. She knew Sonia Sawyer, whose legacy to the RGS made the project possible. She also knew Daphne Dare who gave us money to install the toilets on both sites. Valerie was able to give us some insight into the lives of these two generous ladies. Kate Hunt also knew Sonia and Daphne so was able to add to the biographies which she shared with those at the party. It was a very happy event celebrating the rewards of monetary donations, as well as all the time members have given, together with their expertise. Vivien Fowler, who worked as a professional designer, not only conceptualised the project but has vigilantly continued to maintain the area keeping it looking so lovely. She also did most of the horrible job of washing the stone chippings - it is a wet, heavy unpleasant job! The lovely result is there for all to see and such a wonderful facility to be able to enjoy. Jackie Savage has also worked tirelessly to source materials and furnishings and to ensure the work was done. Greg Willcox has done a lot of the construction work, in particular the raised beds using old pallets, and the lovely cushions were made by Sylvia Willcox. Also thanks to Jenny Seddon and Gary Rose for their artistic signs. We all owe a big thank you to these people.

Now we have power on site 3 we have our own shredder in its own posh shed alongside the new trading sheds. John Ireland has been training site 3 plot holders on its use so we are hoping there will be less green waste to be taken at the November rubbish collection. Many thanks to John for agreeing to do so many Sunday training sessions. Many thanks also to Charles Held and his merry band of volunteers, Gerrard Ryan and Mick Mosol, who laid the concrete base for the sheds. Charles also led the volunteers laying the stone pathway down to the communal shed.

Heather Harrison has continued to tend and beautify the pathway to the back gate on site 3. She has put down some gravel to make the path less slippery and therefore safer as well as planting the beds either side of the pathway to make a charming area. Many thanks to Heather. (AOB included questions about this area and how muddy it has become. HF will investigate concerns)

The communal area on site 2 is now fully functional as well. The shed was repaired by Alan Strowger so the floor and walls are good and solid now. It was painted and prettied up by Carol Martinez and Georgina O'Reilly. Lee Fennel made the raised beds, again from pallets, minimising costs as well as reusing good timber. With power going into the shed it is now possible to make a cuppa whenever you like. Many thanks to all those who have contributed to making the communal area so pleasant. There have been improvements around the back of the toilet shed mainly done by Catherine Maunsell-Bower, creating a pathway where there was previously just a heap of rubbish rotting the shed.

The new water system on site 3 was finally connected up by Thames Water in April this year. It is fully operational and the old system decommissioned. It is wonderful to have so many more water points and generous dipping tanks that fill automatically. Thank you Patrick Crawford for all the chasing up this project involved and to the Council for funding the upgrade.

What about plans for next year? Patrick Crawford has led a small team looking to have a new lease with the Council that makes RGS independent. The plan is for us to have a 30 year full repairing lease at a peppercorn rent. Catherine Maunsell-Bower has been researching the best corporate charity structure that would suit RGS managing the allotments. There has been new legislation that allows Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies (CCBS) to be formed. It specifically mentions allotments as being a suitable society. Thank you Catherine for looking into this and other options too.

We have only one change with the committee this year. During the summer Brenna Lattimore and family returned to her home country, Canada. Thanks to her for making a contribution to the committee, in particular for organising the 'Plant Walk and Talk' event this year. 20 members joined Roy Vickery, a very knowledgeable botanist, who gave a lot of insight into old folk lore about weeds (weeds - what weeds!) he found on site 2. We wish Brenna all the best to her and her family. We will also miss Mike Cooper who has decided to resign from the committee after about 20 years of service. Many thanks to Mike for all his work and practical advice over those years.

The RGS is very fortunate in having such a stable and able committee who generously give their time. It is very good indeed to have such a competent, supportive and excellent team. Nothing would happen without them. The site secretaries do a demanding job as does Carol Martinez who organises the shows and puts the Bulletins together. Jean Crawford manages the RGS website of which we can be very proud. The membership list is fastidiously kept by Robert Linton and Dorcas Johnson has kept our accounts immaculately and ensured the bills were paid. The stores are stocked and managed by Gill Tamsett, Greg Willcox and Jackie Savage. Waiting for deliveries that never arrive has been a huge trial this year, but somehow the stores have been stocked. Jackie has managed the waiting list and RGS email in her usual super responsive and organised way. I owe her a personal big 'thank you' as she has continued to be a stalwart support to me in her role as Vice Chair. We all owe a huge thank you to all the committee members. However, it is important not to forget that jobs crop up from time to time and given that we have such an amazing array of able, resourceful members, jobs get done and problems are solved. This all makes for a very strong community which can aspire to continue to develop with a bonding passion for gardening and enjoying our wonderful allotments.

A change has been drafted in the 'Offering Plots to let' document. The role and process for managing Plot Holder Partners (PHPs) has been reviewed by the Site Secretaries and Chair. There was a concern that there may be some plots exclusively being worked by a PHP and there may be an expectation that the PHP may inherit the plot thus circumventing the waiting list. The suggested wording to address this issue is:

The purpose of a PHP is to assist/support a plot holder (tenant). A tenant must not use a PHP to exclusively cultivate their plot long term i.e. sub let it. A PHP must be an Associate member or Member of RGS. If The PHP does not share the same household as the Plot Holder he/she must be on the Primary Waiting List and therefore resident in Wandsworth. A PHP has to work their way up the waiting list and will not be permitted to inherit the plot which they partner until they reach the top of the list.

The amendment was passed with no objections. There was a question about why it was necessary to change the previous wording, which was that a PHP needed to wait 3 years, was explained: The old 3 year rule did not take into account the enormous increase in the waiting list, so now it would be more like a 5 year wait to get to the top of the list. This new wording will take care of any future fluctuations.

3. Treasurer's Report and accounts by Dorcas Johnson, Treasurer.

Report for Financial Year 1st Oct 2020 to 30th September 2021

- i) At the start of the year our Lloyds bank balance was £28,664.21 with a further £10,000.00 in a fixed term account for a total of £38,664.21. The fixed term account matured in Feb 2021 paying out £105 to RGS and the funds were moved back to the Lloyds account. At the end of the financial year our total balance was £31,798.13
- ii) Most of our income comes from the store, our shows and plot rentals. The store made a profit of £3,013.76 this year and the shows a profit of £922.89. Enable (on behalf of Wandsworth Borough Council) takes 80% of the RGS rental income which last year was £13,520.00. The remaining 20% was £3,380.00 which goes toward allotment maintenance.
- iii) This year RGS spent £3,494.30 on maintenance including grass cutting, plot clearance, tree removals and new locks and keys as well as general repairs and maintenance. This was £114.30 more than the 20% of charges allocated by Enable and was covered with RGS funds.
- iv) An extra SUMUP card reader was purchased for the store at a cost of £118.80. Contactless payments made it possible to keep the store going while keeping safe during the pandemic.
- v) A number of improvements to the allotments at both sites have been made this year as well as the purchase of equipment for ongoing use. The total cost was £15,030.07. These include i. Electrical work for site 2 - £720.00 ii. Patio/tea area for site 2 - £2,968.90 iii. Shredder shed for site 2 - £410.10 iv. Sheds for site 3 - £4,123.08 v. Shredder for site 3 - £402.03 vi. Electrical work for Site 3 - £3,034.06 vii. Completion of work on tea hut for site 3 - £3,371.93
- vi) Approximate expected budget costs for the new financial year: Enable bill — £14,000.

A reassuring statement of accounts – all our liabilities are covered by our assets.
There was applause and no questions were asked.

Hard copies of the Full accounts were distributed before the AGM started. Further hard copies are available on request.

4. Other Committee papers: from Site Secretaries, Trading Secretary, Show Chair, Waiting list Secretaries. These available on website only.
There were no questions.

5. Questions from the floor

The committee was asked about the length of the current waiting list. It is 355 (up from 260 same time last year) and the estimated waiting time for those joining at this time would be 4 to 5 years.

6. Election of Committee 2021/22

The committee was duly elected as follows:

Elected Committee Members AGM November 2021

Committee member	Office/role	RGS member Nominator	Seconded at the AGM
Helen Finch	Chair	Sue MacDonald	Georgina O'Reilly
Jackie Savage	Vice Chair, Store Seeds, communications	Laura Davis	Sally Harvey
Dorcas Johnson	Treasurer	Julian Abbott	Marianna Pencharz
Catherine Maunsell-Bower	Site 2 Secretary and Legal	Florence Terry	Sylvia Willcox
Vivien Fowler	Site 3 Secretary (plots 50 to 100)	Lorna Roberts	Raj Patel
Alison Linton	Site 3 Secretary (plots 101 to 127) + Waiting list secretary	Mariangela Renshaw	Shan Karwatowska
Carol Martinez	Bulletin Editor and Show Chair	Stephen O'Kelly	Mariangela Renshaw
Gill Tamsett	Trading Secretary	Helen Compson	Jonathan Compson
Patrick Crawford	Buildings, Facilities and lease negotiator	Sue MacDonald	David MacDonald
Greg Willcox	Store Manager	Norman Wilson	Sally Harvey
Emma Blackwell	Site 2 representative	Penny Baker	Georgina O'Reilly
Sue Hodgson	Site 2 new committee member	Helen Finch	Elaine Barnwell
Annie Hardinge	Site 2 new committee member	Terry Johnson	Mariangela Renshaw
Kate Hunt	Site 3 new committee member	Sheila Konig	Christine Wolski
Shan Karwatowska	Site 3 new committee member	Christina Casley	Jean Crawford
Non Voting officers:			
Jean Crawford	Website manager	Pat Heery	Raj Patel
Robert Linton	Membership secretary	Pat Dark	David Renshaw
Charles Gillbe	Site Manager appointed by Enable [WBC]	N/A	N/A

7. Any Other Business

See item in Chair's report relating to pathway at rear of site 3.

A vote of thanks for Helen Finch was taken from the floor and a bouquet of flowers presented by the committee.

8. Presentation of Cups

The cups were presented by Fleur Anderson, MP for Putney and President of the RGS. Fleur said how privileged she felt to be asked to be President of RGS. She gave a short speech congratulating the RGS on the work it does, and has always done, to preserve the environment and to keep a low carbon footprint. All particularly relevant this week when world leaders are meeting at COP26 to try and reach an agreement on controlling carbon emissions and therefore climate change.

Cup winners and their photos are to be found in the November Bulletin, which can be found on our website.

9. Refreshments

Delicious food and drink was provided to all those present and the social aspect of the evening closed about 10pm.

Tacit membership approval of this document received by 01/01/22