Leytonstone Allotment Holders Cooperative Association
Roding Farm Allotments

Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting held 20th January 2025 in the Churchill Room, Wanstead Library, Spratt Hall Road, E11 2RQ

The meeting opened at 7.30pm

Attendees: 55 members attended the meeting (a register was taken).

Welcome

Nigel Morton welcomed everyone to the meeting and was pleased to see a good attendance of longstanding and new members. He introduced the Committee and explained that there were tasks that had to be undertaken on an annual basis hence the need for an AGM. Also the Association was now a Cooperative and therefore this evening the agenda included 4 votes, summaries of reports from the Chair, Secretary and Trading Officer and a Statement of Accounts and Treasurer's report for which there would be an opportunity to ask questions. He stressed that the questions should be of a general nature and if anyone had queries about their individual plots they should speak to a Committee member after the meeting.

Minutes

The minutes of the 2023 AGM held on 15/1/24 and the Special General Meeting held on 30/9/24 were circulated in advance for people to check that they were an accurate record of what took place.

Katherine (plot 117) pointed out an error in the date in the AGM minutes which was corrected and acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Sally Kelly (plot 80) and seconded by Anne Traynor (plot 95). They were approved unanimously by a show of hands.

There was a query from Jeff Barber (plot 130) on the SGM minutes as to whether the Sites Rules and Tenancy Agreements were included in the resolution passed at the meeting and it was confirmed by the Chair and Secretary that they were included. They had not however had to be sent as part of the package of papers to the FCA who did not require to see them.

Katherine (plot 117) pointed out an error in her and her partner's name in the SGM minutes and this was corrected. There was a vote to accept the SGM minutes. In favour 48, abstaining 6, against 1. Jeff Barber requested that it be minuted that it was he who had voted against.

Chair's Report.

Nigel thanked all the committee members for their work and particularly to the officers Linda, the Secretary, Simon the Treasurer and Brian the Trading officer. He also thanked the members who were standing down : Colin for his work on the website, Angela as Vice Chair who organised the teas and coffees on Sundays and other social events. The year had been dominated by the changes in the

legal status but there had been some well attended social events including 90th birthday celebrations and Wanstead Festival with thanks going to Elena Cerniene (plot 74) and Roland Ramprat (and their team on the day).

Nigel announced he was standing down after five years as Chair and concluded that though there had been some big changes in administration this did not change the fundamental nature of the site which was growing fruit and vegetables.

Secretary's Report

Linda reported that most of her year had been spent preparing for the changes in the legal status. The Association's application to register was lodged with the Financial Conduct Authority and approved in November. Now that the Association is a Cooperative committee members are not personally liable as might have been the case in the past. What remains to be done is for London Borough of Waltham Forest to regrant the lease so that it is held by the Cooperative Association rather than via the Trustees. So far there has not been a response from LBWF but Linda had escalated the matter and was awaiting a reply. She also had plans to go to the local Councillor if this proved necessary. She stressed however that the delay was not unusual as the last lease (signed in 2015) had taken 4-5 years to negotiate.

Her thanks went to Neil Sindon (plot 66) and Lynne Roberts for their organisation of the Apple Day and also to Sarah Seaton-Burridge (plot 162) for arranging the repair of the entrance gate at the start of last year.

Trading Officer's Report

Brian reported that it had been a brisk year for business. He had sold all the potatoes, onions and garlic. Suppliers were not as reliable as in the past and costs had risen though the items in the hut are still considerably cheaper than they can be obtained elsewhere. Compost, though, is an item where it is difficult to compete with other suppliers. We benefited from the closure of the Woodford and District Horticultural Society by acquiring a significant amount of discounted stock and thanks go to David Jump for his input.

It was decided to stop hiring out rotavators and strimmers due to difficulty with insurance cover. There are various health and safety issues with their use. Lawnmowers will continue to be available for hire.

The two seed schemes, Dobies and King's seeds offer generous discounts and continue to be available to members.

Finally, in the new Cooperative Association the role of Trading Officer is no longer a formally elected one but Brian stressed he would continue to operate the Trading Hut for members in the future.

Treasurers Report

Simon reported that 2024 had been a positive year from a financial point of view. The Committee had committed to limiting expenditure to essential items only and this had paid off with total expenditure for the year being £12,290.

General Site Maintenance was the biggest expenditure at £2,647 less than half of the 2023 total, followed by Site Rental £2,164 and Toilet hire at £2,196. The water bill was more palatable at £1,732 and this was due to a cool summer and wet spring.

Income had increased with an increase in Trading Hut takings and some successful social events including the Plant Sale, Annual Show raffle thanks to Antoinette Bach (plot 138) and Wanstead Festival thanks to Elena Cerniene (plot 74) and her team.

Finally, thanks go to Nick Poore (plot 112) for his time in providing an independent check of our financial accounting information and bank statements and to Nigel Morton for his valuable advice throughout the years.

There was a question on how much the Wanstead Festival had cost to take part in and Linda replied that the pitch had cost £50 with £25 refundable deposit for rubbish disposal.

Acceptance of the financial accounts was proposed by Steve Richmond (plot 169) and seconded by Alison Charnock (plot 135) and the accounts were approved unanimously.

Following FCA registration, the Association has a choice of voting to continue having accounts checked internally or members can decide to pay an external firm of FCA approved auditors to audit and certify the accounts and this has to be voted on at every AGM. Nigel recommended the meeting to accept the first choice.

Resolution to disapply the requirement for audit was proposed was Mike O'Connor and seconded by Jeff Barber. In favour 55, abstaining 0, against 0. The resolution was therefore passed and met FCA validity criteria.

Election of Officers and Committee for 2024

The Committee was nominated with the Chair being Brian Kavanagh, Secretary Linda Kavanagh and Treasurer Simon Dicey. The Committee members nominated were Sharron Wright, David Jump, Gertrud Moghal and Noemie Kybett.

Nigel stressed this left 3 committee member vacancies and if anyone was interested in joining they should speak to a Committee member at the break. Acceptance of the nominations was proposed by Martin Waghorn and seconded by Sarah Seaton- Burridge. In favour 54, abstaining 1, against 0.

The meeting then took a 15 minute break.

During the break Ugo Norcaro (plot 58) volunteered to join the committee for 2025.

Trophy Presentation.

Linda presented the trophies to the winners:

Plot Competition winners:

Fred How Cup (Best plot): Sally Kelly (plot 80)

John Spears Cup (Runner up best plot): Simon Dicey and Wendy Boulton-Dicey

Albi Walton Cup (Best half plot) : Andy Parr and Matt Nelson (plot 155b)

Best New Plotholders Award: Andy Freeman (plot 76) & Rositsa Nikolova (plot 154b)

Show Trophy winners:

The Garden News Shield : Steve Richmond

FW Howes Shield: Steve Richmond

LEWCOS cup : Steve Richmond

Joseph Whittaker Cup: David Jump

Presidents Cup : David Jump

Arthur Earle Cup: Anne Traynor

Any Other Business

Steve Richmond asked about the trophies in storage as per list of LAHA cups, trophies and shields (2024) included in the papers for the meeting and Linda explained that some were in very bad condition and some were completely engraved so could not easily be used any more.

A member asked if the water leak had been fixed and Brian confirmed the leak was fixed and the water had been turned off for the winter.

Steve Richmond asked what would be done with the rotavators if they could no longer be hired out and Brian replied that work rounds to enable safe use that was properly covered would be looked at.

As there was no other business the meeting closed at 8.50.