

# **BARNES HORTICULTURAL AND ALLOTMENT SOCIETY**

AGM 2025 SATURDAY 28 June 1400-1600

## **Draft Minutes**

**Apologies:** Pam Islip, Michael French, Amani Orr-Ewing, John Page, David Foster, Tally Foster, Penny Cowell, Sheena Clark.

### **1. Minutes of AGM 2024**

Approved

### **2. Matters arising from the minutes**

None

### **3. Chair's Annual Report**

The chair drew attention to his previously circulated written report and highlighted:

- Completion of Community project on time and within budget
- The list of 17 main actions taken by the Committee during the past year
- The growth in volunteers for BHAS roles, largely as a result of the pro-active work of the Allotment Secretary
- The special thanks offered to David Abel and Mary Thorp for their major contributions to BHAS over many years.

### **4. Allotment Secretary's Annual Report**

The Allotment Secretary drew attention to her previously circulated report, highlighting:

- The fact that only 2 plots remained unlet.
- That there had been 33 changes in plot, about a 15% turnover in the past year.
- The waiting list currently stood at 271 and she was now contacting applicants from 2018.
- The considerable help she had received from Susan Moore and John Page with plot changes.

In question time, there was a question about time taken to move on plot holders who were apparently persistently failing. The Allotment Secretary outlined the detailed process that the Council required us follow once an inspection had occurred and reached a negative view. In fact, this had become more efficient and speedy, however, it required local representatives to put forward plots for inspections in the first place in order to trigger the process (which normally started with a warning letter) and that was where the problem might lie. Site reps were urged to be vigilant and active in initiating inspections where plots were of concern. There was also a discussion about tree pruning. It was confirmed that fruit trees on plots were the plot holder's responsibility but the large boundary trees, the Council's responsibility. The Allotment secretary commented that, notwithstanding the work undertaken in the last year on some trees bordering Beverley Brook, she had raised this issue and there was a need to keep pressing for action (the Council's tree team seemed over-burdened).

### **5. Treasurer's Financial Report**

A written report by the Treasurer had been circulated. The Chair gave an oral summary in his absence (apologies had been received).

- That the overall financial position remained strong, thanks to the treasurer's prudent financial management, and reserves stood at £21K.
- The actions taken by the Committee had involved greater investment in the site than previously, but this had been covered by income.
- There was a small amount of RCF monies (£25K grant received from RCF for the

Community Garden Project) unspent but it was expected that this would be used on benches. Looking ahead, the Treasurer expected a small amount would be required annually for ongoing maintenance of the area.

- The Open Day and Annual Show had both done well and generated £989 (a sum potentially available for Charitable donations, should the AGM wish to make such donations).

In question time, a member commented that the reserves had been at the same level for many years and implied that this represented a failure to invest. The chair responded that the strong position was a result of prudent financial management by the current treasurer and his predecessor and had not been at the expense of investment. Indeed, the position had enabled the Society to attract the RCF investment of £25K, giving confidence in our financial management to third parties and enabling BHAS to offer an element of matched funding (as often required by third party funders).

## **6. Bio-Diversity Officer's Report**

The Biodiversity Officer had not circulated a written report in advance but had prepared a formal report for the meeting, reflecting a very busy year and great progress made. The main points were:

- She had completed a mammoth mapping exercise, showing the correct position and dimensions of all plots on all sites.
- In the spring last year, she had completed a reptile survey, indicating the presence of slow worms and grass snakes, which had been logged on the national 'Record Pool'.
- In the spring this year, she had completed an amphibian and pond survey, which had indicated the need to improve biodiversity in many ponds. The Committee had approved a small sum for this purpose. 6 new ponds had been added during the year.
- Last year she had been elected deputy of BRAG (the Richmond-wide organisation for allotments) and as a result joined the Richmond Bio-diversity partnership, which aims to get the contribution of allotments to biodiversity recognised.
- After some difficulties, she had managed to get a solution to the woody waste issue – (quarterly chipping on-site for a modest fee)
- Commenced butterfly monitoring with UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme and Barnes Common charity.
- Looking forward to next year, she planned to create a species list (in conjunction with Barnes Common Charity); participate in some additional work to restore Beverley Brook and had applied with Tanya James for a grant from Community Bluescapes to provide new water Butts to conserve water. She asked for the meeting's help in relation to Beverly Brook, to encourage neighbours to respect the one metre buffer and zone and, not to deposit waste down the bank.

The meeting thanked her warmly for her efforts with a round of applause.

## **7. Election of Committee**

The Chair thanked retiring officers for their efforts – David Abel (Pavilion site rep); Amani Orr-Ewing (Palewell Park site rep); Janet Bostock (Membership sec); Sarah Willard (web officer) and then moved to elections.

Palewell Park- Proposed Sorrel Coni (new rep replacing Amani Orr-Ewing)

Pavilion- Proposed Sheena Clark (new rep replacing David Abel)

Triangle- Proposed John Page (existing rep)

Hertford Av 16-31- Proposed Halina Kessler (new rep- role previously vacant)

Hertford Av 33a-51- Proposed Janet Bostock (existing rep)

Priory 1-25 Proposed Sarah Balian (existing rep)  
Priory 35-75 (odd numbers only) Proposed Annabel Fogden (existing rep)  
Priory 24-82 (even numbers only) Katie Lee (existing rep)  
Trading Shed Manager Proposed Mark Gourlay (existing Manager)  
Newsletter and social media Proposed Rachel Walker (existing rep)  
Treasurer Proposed Michael French (existing rep)  
All were elected unanimously.

Two vacancies without candidates were not filled at the meeting:

Events Organiser: Role Vacant (Phillipa McEwen providing and willing to continue providing, support)

New role: Database and Membership Secretary (combining the old web and membership roles). Interested candidates should please contact [BHASChair@gmail.com](mailto:BHASChair@gmail.com) or Moira Thomson.

Secretary and Chair roles. The chair confirmed that he was not standing for re-election and that he was delighted to say that Moira Thomson, Vice Chair and Allotment Secretary, was putting herself forward. After brief discussion, Moira Thomson was elected by acclamation. The Allotment Secretary role was thus vacant. There were no candidates for the vacancy at the meeting and interested parties were asked to contact [BHASChair@gmail.com](mailto:BHASChair@gmail.com) or Moira Thomson. As indicated previously, help was already in place for this important roles (from Susan Moore and John Page).

#### 8. **AoB**

It was questioned whether the Council should have paid for removal of potentially Hazardous waste from the site of the Community Project. The response was that, as a precaution, this was undertaken by a specialist contractor for £467, which should be seen in the context of an RCF grant of £25K to refurbish and improve the whole area.

Charitable donations. After a brief discussion it was agreed by unanimous vote to split the sum available (£989) between Barnes Common Community Association (who contributed significantly to the Community Project and in other ways): £600 to the Share and Care Collective (Local UK registered charity and community food resource covering SW13 & SW14 <https://www.shareandcarecollective.com>): £389.

The meeting thanked the outgoing chair for his efforts, especially in respect of the grant application for the Community Garden Project, which had been controversial at the last AGM but was now completed and looking good.