

Minutes of the 2021 AGM of the Osney, St Thomas & New Botley Allotments Association held on 13 May via Zoom

Attendance: 33

Botley Meadow:

Ann Warrington
Mike Parkin
Pól Ó Ceallaigh

Gráinne Darnton
Nick Jackson

Lucy Smith
Philip Sampson

Twenty Pound Meadow:

Adam Scott
Bob Adams
Fiona Ravenscroft
Jocelyn Wogan-Browne
Lizz Wilden
Paul Robinson
Robin Rogers
Sophie Ruggiero
Vanessa Fell

Anne James
Cathy Stewart
Gus Fagan
Jude Carroll
Lynne Rushton
Peter Feenan
Sarah M
Sue Spencer-Longhurst
Verity Wilson

Benjamin & Anna
Felicity Wenden
Helen
Juliette Sargeant
Mark Gower
Rebecca Huxley
Simon Collings
Tobias Sturmer
Unknown observer

Apologies: none recorded

The 2020 AGM was cancelled due to COVID restrictions.

1. The Association Secretary's report

Whilst 2019 was a good year, with social events and new initiatives, the years 2020 and 2021 have proved challenging. Due to the efforts of several committee members, especially on TPM, both sites have remained open. Many new members joined, and current members often took the 'opportunities' of lockdown and home working to spend time cultivating. Flooding was a familiar, if unwelcome, additional intrusion – the WhatsApp groups helped in reuniting wandering items with owners. The website has been a useful resource, with thanks to Ally Stott for her regular blog updates.

2. The Treasurer's report

A full report was submitted. Highlights include:

- Steady rental income. Both sites remain popular and have waiting lists.
- Shop profits. These rose from £687 in 2019/20 to £1311
- Bank deposits are 'healthy' at £19,000, including £10,000 from grants.

Accounts have not been reviewed but were accepted unanimously by members, with Cathy Stewart thanked for her efforts.

3. Rents and rent levels

It was agreed unanimously to leave rents at current levels. The cost of TPM water is likely to go down by c. £2,500 per year as the water project comes on stream.

4. Permission to incorporate as a co-operative

A background paper on the issue was sent to all members before the AGM. In brief, the lease expires in 2021, giving Associations the opportunity to consider whether they wish to remain as currently structured, or to move to becoming a co-operative. A key advantage of the latter is that Trustees are no longer personally liable, placing liability instead on the Association. The group working towards a new 21-year lease agreement expect to sign at the end of 2021 or early in 2022. The members present were unanimous in approving the move to co-operative status

5. A Motion to ban the use of glyphosate

The discussion began with timed presentations for and against banning glyphosate. Arguments in favour of a ban focussed on its effect on bees, citing studies that showed use contributed to reduction in pollinators, impacts on bee navigation, and 'weakening' leading to bees being more susceptible to other harm. Detrimental effects on humans are contested but there is enough evidence to support adopting the precautionary principle, which assumes probable harm, rather than a 'wait and hope' approach. Further, other ways of dealing with weeds do not harm biodiversity, pose [potential] threats to children, and/or risk dispersal during flooding,

Arguments against the ban on glyphosate noted a lack of evidence that low-level use is dangerous, given its break-down rate. Several returned to problems of enforcement, noting the effect on compliance with other rules if "blind eyes" were turned.

In the general discussion that followed presentations for and against a ban, 15 of the 33 present spoke. Those in favour acknowledged that enforcement was difficult. Several pointed out an education-based approach has worked on other issues - for example, use of peat and slug pellets – so a collective, 'nudge' approach could work with regard to glyphosates, but only if there was a ban in place to make discussions happen. Those against a ban thought the small number of people attending undermined any decision (though all had been informed of the motion). They also returned to questions as to the science against use. The vote was 66% in favour of a ban and 34% against.

6. Election of officers.

The Association Secretary and Treasurer are standing again – in both cases, for their last year. Both were re-elected unanimously. The present Committee stood again as a block and were re-elected, with 97% in favour and 3% against. The Secretary asked additional volunteers to stand but none were forthcoming.

7. AOB

None

The meeting closed at 8:30 PM with general thanks to the Committee, and whilst the Zoom went well, all regretted the lack of a pub afterwards.