

MINUTES OF CAAGA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7.30 PM ON WEDNESDAY 11th DECEMBER 2024 in The Hutch

Present: Karen Sayer, John Duffy, Martin Copeland, Lucy Smickersgill, Phil Steele, Graham Jacob, Dennis Noble, Sue Johnson, Evelyn Hazzard, Nadine Davies, Jenny Dixon, Alan Wheeldon, Maria Spellacy, Alyssa Young, Barry Back, Mark Harland, Sam Alderson. Gary Watt. Rachel and Aidan Armitage, Claire Welling.

Apologies: Matthew Hoskins

Minutes of the 2023 AGM were circulated, and agreed as an accurate record.

Proposed: Graham Jacob. Seconded: Barry Back.

Matters Arising from the minutes. No matters arising

Secretary's Report.

A review of some of the highlights of the CAAGA year. Starting with a sad event, with the loss of Maggi in January. Very shocking, she will be much missed, and will be commemorated on the allotments with a bench, and with a rose trophy. Thank you so much Maggi for what you did, and what you meant to CAAGA allotments.

Some achievements of the year – all the usual events, Open Day, Shows, Bonfire, went well. To pick out two events - the stall at the Gledhow Valley Green Fair, in pouring rain, when we sold so much rhubarb we had to strip several plots. And the inaugural summer Barbecue. Those who attended loved it, and we hope to repeat it this year. Our most successful visit was the trip to Harlow Carr in Spring, when over 70 CAAGA members turned up.

We've had several changes on the site this year: We now have a weather station, and we've seen off the problem of woodchips being dumped on Gledhow Valley Road. And we've spent a lot of time at committee meetings discussing paths and steps. The Groundwork Trust are currently finishing off some work on the steps.

The biggest achievement of the year, however, is the toilet. This time last year we were still discussing it, now it's a reality. Thank you to Gary for finding the supplier, Graham for chasing funding, but mostly thank you to Phil for doing the work and making it happen.

Treasurer's Report

Graham Jacob presented the annual accounts, which have been audited by Paul Riley of Leeds Building Society.

We're in a healthy financial position. Despite spending £12k on the new toilet, we got £10k back in grants. At the end of the year we have c£21k in available income. Graham stressed the importance of fundraising activities, such as the shop/tea and coffee/shows. 80% of our income comes from fundraising, thank you to everyone involved – Martin for the teas and coffees, Lisa for the cakes, Phil/Dennis/Mark in the shop and everyone who's helped out, attended shows, and supported us through the year. Thank you also to Evelyn for the introduction to The Brotherton Trust, who gave a grant towards the toilet building.

Questions – what does other income refer to? Lots of random stuff, Graham can share details.

What does “Shows Income” include –Open Days/Green Fair/Chapel Allerton Festival. The actual shows make a small profit, but are important to the health of the organisation. Even without profit they would be worth doing.

The accounts were accepted unanimously: Proposed: Evelyn Hazzard, Seconded: Sue Johnson

Membership fees for 25/26.

Current fees are £5 non plot holders, £7 plot holders. Discussion. We’re in a good financial position, so no need to raise fees.

Questions: Why the difference in fees between ploholders and CAAGA? Ploholders pay £1 to Leeds Allotment Federation. Also, historical difference, at some point the difference will be cancelled out.

Given that we have healthy reserves and a surplus, are there any more anticipated large expenditures in the air? One big possible expenditure is replacing fencing and gate down Northbrook Street. Martin has consulted Leeds City Council about this. Waiting for their go-ahead. Recently, for capital projects, the council has gone 50/50 with allotment societies.

Proposal: keep membership fees at the same level. Proposed: Phil Steele. Seconded: Karen Sayer. All in favour.

Amendment to Constitution.

A small change. The Lettings Secretary has so much work, he needs an Assistant Lettings Secretary. Because this would be an officer role, it needs to be added to the constitution.

Also, we would like to change the name of Store MAN to Store PERSON.

The changes were agreed unanimously. Proposed: Graham Jacob, Seconded: Alan Wheeldon

Honoraria.

We need to make a change to the honoraria system, to include the assistant lettings sec. Trustees Jenny and Barry have suggested a new honoraria system.

% allocations as of Oct 2024			Adding in extra role of asst. lettings sec.		
Example with available for honoraria		2200	Example with available for honoraria		2500
Role			Role	Amount	
Secretary	396	18.00%	Secretary	360	16.00% 400
Show Secretary	264	12.00%	Show Secretary	240	11.00% 275
Lettings Secretary	396	18.00%	Lettings Secretary	360	16.00% 400
			Assistant Lettings Secretary		9.00% 225
Treasurer	396	18.00%	Treasurer	240	16.00% 400
Store manager	264	12.00%	Store manager	240	11.00% 275
Storekeeper	264	12.00%	Storekeeper	240	11.00% 275
Chair's allowance	220	10.00%	Chair's allowance	80	10.00% 250
	2200	100.00%		1760	100.00% 2500
Auditor fees			Auditor fees	60	
Revised following 2024 AGM					

They suggest we alter the percentages of how the honoraria is divided, to incorporate the extra role, but still add up to 100%. We then increase the honoraria pot, so that officers currently in receipt get a smaller percentage, but the money they receive remains the same point. This to be introduced from next year.

Agreed unanimously. Proposed: Alyssa Young. Seconded: John Duffy.

Discussion; Why is the chair's allowance low, when Martin does so much? This is a historic thing, Martin is far more active than any previous chairperson.

Proposal that the amounts allocated to the new assistant lettings secretary and the chairperson are swapped, so the chairperson gets a slightly higher honoraria payment.

Agreed unanimously. Proposed: Alyssa Young. Seconded: John Duffy.

Election of officers and committee:

Another moment to remember Maggi, on the committee for so long. Weird that she's no longer here. Thank you also to Phil, who's standing down. He's done lots of good work, and he'll still help in some capacity. Thank you on behalf of CAAGA. Thank you also to Claire Standage, who's standing down from the committee for family reasons.

Officers who are happy to continue in their post this year:-

Martin Copeland – Chairperson

Lucy Smickersgill – Secretary

Graham Jacob – Treasurer

Nadine Davies – Show Secretary

Gary Watt – Letting Secretary

Alyssa Young – Assistant Letting Secretary

Dennis Noble - Storeperson

Elected unanimously.

Mark Harland elected as Store Manager, replacing Phil. All in favour

Proposed: John Duffy, Seconded: Karen Sayer.

General committee members:

Charles Egarr, Evelyn Hazzard, John Duffy, Maria Spellacy and Sue Johnson are all happy to continue as general committee members.

Elected unanimously.

John Ryder to join the committee. All in favour. Proposed: Gary Watt, Seconded: Alan Wheeldon.

Letting Secretary report.

It's been a very busy year. We let 66 plots (29 more than previous year) after 72 viewings. There were 4 site inspections, which prompted 93 Uncultivated plot letters, 6 of them led to terminations, and 4 resignations before termination. We've been splitting plots, due to the great demand. This has reduced the waiting list to 32, which is 72 less than last year.

However, 5 people have applied in the last 4 days, so by April we may be back to big numbers. We will continue to split plots, but now can offer half plots if people want. Most new plottolders opt for a quarter plot. On current estimate, there's a 12/18 month wait for a plot. This time last year we estimate 3 yrs.

So we currently have 294 plot holders, of which 119 are quarters, 5 are thirds, 149 halves, and 20 full plots, down by 4.

The digital plot list is working well. As is using a table to do the paperwork involved in lettings, and signing up the plottolder on site.

The committee has taken over quarter plot at bottom of track. This is to be a memorial garden, which we'll begin by installing a bench for Maggi.

Finally, welcome Alyssa to lettings team. Gary and Alyssa will share the lettings/inspection between them, and Gary will continue to maintain the plot list.

Questions - LCC specify only a certain no of buildings are allowed per plot. How does that work with quarter plots? With quarter plot lettings, the 60/40% rule still applies, the shed has to come in that 40%, so they know they can't put up a massive shed. Also, most quarter plots don't have a shed.

What about the problem of people going outside their plots and leaving manure heaps on pathways? One for the next committee meeting.

Comment from treasurer Graham. There's a noticeable difference in turnover of plots and number of bond returns we did. Hardly anyone gets their bond back. But a lot of that money is taken up by the cost of strimming plots that have got out of hand.

Congratulations to Gary for getting non-plottolders who help on plots to join as CAAGA members, doing this at the time of signing on. We currently have 121 non-plottolder CAAGA members.

Thank you to Gary and Alyssa for hard work and organisation.

Programme of events for 2025.

We'll do usual the usual events. Open to suggestions re a Garden visit somewhere, separate from Harlow Carr. Suggestions: Scampston Hall, The Arium. Any other ideas, let committee know. Nearer places work best. Harlow Carr - Spring was popular this year, so let's do it again. If fewer people come, we'll move on to a summer visit.

Cookery Demo – can we have suggestions for a cook to do a demo? Could Lisa do a baking demo? Other talks – Leeds based mushroom kit growers – Maria to get contact details. George and Joseph – local cheese shop. Herb talk was well attended. Could get him again.

Green Fair – was really successful last year. If it goes ahead again, we'll do it, but we'd have to pay for a stall.

No items of written notice.

