



WESTERN WARDS ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

Registered Charity Number 1205562

www.wvaa.org.uk

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024

held on Tuesday 12 November 2024 at 7 pm
At The Malt Room, Titchfield Community Centre, Mill Street,
Titchfield, Fareham, PO14 4AB

Present during the meeting: -

WWAA Trustees

Richard Bastow, Chair of WWAA Trustees (RB)
David Doran (DD)
Meg Thorpe (MT)

WWAA Management Committee Members

Paul Rann, (Hon Acting Chair) Site Manager, Warsash; (PR)
Chris Davison (Hon Acting Treasurer), Tenant Warsash (CD)
Julie Prescott (Hon Secretary), Tenant Sarisbury Green (JP)
Keith Johnson, Site Manager, Hunts Pond Road; (KJ)
Alistair Barnett, Site Manager, Hunts Pond Road (AB)
Martin Burnet, Site Manager, Hunts Pond Road (MB)
Neil Jackson, Acting Site Manager, Lodge Road (SM)
Gill Rock, Site Manager, Warsash (GR)
Robin Green, Site Manager, Sarisbury Green (RG)

The meeting was called and held in accordance with Section 11 of the WWAA Constitution, which states that there must be a annual general meeting of the CIO.

The first meeting must be held within 18 months of the registration of the CIO (WWAA CIO Registration took place in November 2023). Subsequent meetings must be held at intervals of no more than 15 months.

1. Persons Present

The following WWAA Tenants/plot holders attended the meeting as follows:

Hunts Pond Road, 19 members, Walter Metcalf, Jennifer Symes, Paddy Grayell, Keith Johnson, Sue Johnson, Norman Hatch, Duncan Hall, Meg Thorpe, Deanne Coombs, David Doran, Janet Selby, Margaret Barrett, Phyl Jewkes, Martin Barnett, Cliff Bannister, Karen Bannister, Alastair Burnett, Ken Simmonds, Dee Lanne.

Lodge Road, 1 member, Neil Jackson

Posbrook Lane, 3 members, John Parson, Jen O'Toole, Sally O'Toole

Sarisbury Green, 8 members, Diane Palmer, Pam Barber, Robin Green, Alison Bradshaw, Paul Bennett, Martin Bennett, Janet Duncan

Warsash, 8 members, Christopher Davison, Paul Rann, Gill Rock, Richard Bastow, Denise Bastow, Rona Neilson, Gordon Neilson, Bob Hughes, David Small, Julie Prescott

2. **Quorum**

The number of members present totalled 40 (29 in 2022 & 37 in 2023) and, therefore, met the requirements of a 'quorum of 10' in accordance with paragraph 5.b of the WWAA Constitution.

3. **Apologies for non-attendance**

Received from:

Sarisbury Green - John Barber, Plot 34B, Martin Wheler, Clive Prescott and Kate Tucker

WWAA Trustees - Ted Weager and Dick Lamperd

Warsash – Wendy Wood (Plot 33)

4. **Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 14 November 2023**

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 14/11/23 were agreed as an accurate reflection of the meeting as proposed by Alastair Barnett, Hunts Pond Road and seconded by Robin Green, Sarisbury Green.

5. **Matters Arising**

5.1 **VAT Registration (Item 9.1 from previous minutes)**

In response to the question made by a Tenant, now we are a CIO would we register the WWAA on the VAT Register? PR explained that as we do not supply goods or services (the rent we charge is not classed as selling), accordingly the WWAA is not entitled to register for VAT.

5.2 **Flooding at Hunts Pond Road (Item 9.2 from previous minutes)**

Following the concerns that some Tenants raised about flooding issues, PR updated the Committee on the work/project that had been undertaken by the Site Managers, as follows:

- The team have spent time arranging and clearing the outside ditch in order to allow the water to flow into it and drain out, noting that here is a limit as to how much the ditch can be cleared and take any excess water
- A further French Drain was installed, which has helped French drains are used to prevent water logging and an excess of surface water. (*Noting that such drains consist of a trench dug, at a gradient, into the ground, lined with membrane, filled with aggregate and, usually these days, a perforated drainage pipe*).

- This latest work means that around 9 additional drains have been installed.

Keith Johnson added to this, stating that they have probably reached the limit of the water draining initiatives that can possibly be done at the site.

6. Annual Report of the Trustees – Richard Bastow

Welcome to the 2024 AGM of the WWAA.

I am opening the meeting as Chairman of the Trustees and will now hand over to Paul Rann who has been acting in the role of Chairman of the Committee since April.

Following Paul's transfer from Treasurer to Chairman the Committee have been successful in finding a replacement for the role of Treasurer, in Christopher Davison. Both Paul and Christopher are standing for election in their respective roles for the coming year and are supported in doing so by the Trustees.

As Chairman of the Trustees, I am grateful to the work of the Officers and Members of the Committee without which we would not have such a well-run Association. I am sure that you would agree on this and join with me in thanking them for their work.

Through their efforts further projects aimed at improving facilities across the sites have and are being progressed. Paul will give more details on these in his report which is to follow.

The Board of Trustees will continue to hold the responsibility of having an overview of the running of the Association's affairs to ensure that they comply with the rules relating to being a Charity. As such we have held three meetings this year as a group in January, May and September and at least one of us attends the regular bi-monthly meetings of the Committee.

Another duty is to review and propose the level of honoraria to be paid which will be dealt with under item 9.

The five Trustees who are continuing in the role are myself as Chairman, David Doran, Ted Weager, Meg Thorpe and Dick Lampherd.

7. Annual report of Acting Chair of Management Committee – Paul Rann

Following some changes to the management committee, which I will cover now, I was nominated to become the acting Chair in April this year and as you will have seen from the AGM notice I am also standing for this role next year subject to support from you, the association members.

So, before we look at what has happened in the past year at the individual sites I would like to cover the changes to the committee membership.

Chris Davison, who you will hear from in a minute has taken on the role of Treasurer from me. At Lodge Road, Sandra Milam has not been able to carry out the full role of site manager due to ill-health and Neil Jackson has been supporting us at Lodge Road as interim site manager this year. Sandra has now decided to step away from the site manager role to focus on her health and on behalf of all of us I wish her a speedy recovery and our thanks for everything she has done for the Lodge Road site over the years.

With Sandra stepping down Neil is standing for the permanent site manager role for Lodge Road.

At Hunts Pond Road we will be proposing tonight that we add a fourth site manager to our roster. This to help the workloads which have expanded as we have more smaller plots now and therefore more tenants. So same space, more people, more to manage across all our sites. Duncan Halls has stepped forward for this new role and will hopefully receive your support when we get to that section.

At an Association level we invested in a new website this year as the technology behind the old one had effectively expired. The new site means that we haven't needed the role of webmaster in the association, which Rona Neilson had carried out so effectively for us over the years and a big thank you to Rona for all the past work.

Across the sites we have had the normal mix of investment and planning for investment. Chris will cover what we have spent in his Treasurers update and I would like to have a quick look at what we are hoping to do in the coming year or two.

At Lodge Road there is a plan to expand the entrance and install new gates which will improve access and allow for delivery of manure into some planned manure bins. A compost toilet is also planned.

Moving on to Warsash we have the tree surgeons booked for January and they will be cutting back the trees and bushes on the main drive in and also around the lower end of the site.

Sarisbury Green will continue the work on installing some 1000 lite water tanks to collect rain water and help reduce our dependency on the water supply. In addition, a grant application has been made to the National Lottery for funding for a social hub building on the site and we are awaiting the decision on this.

Hunts Pond Road has seen a huge amount of work over the last few years meaning a lot of the "heavy lifting" on projects and investment has been completed so I anticipate the team here having a well-deserved "maintain and manage" period for a while now.

At Posbrook Lane the Hedge Cutting is underway which is one of the largest maintenance costs on this site. Posbrook is different to our other sites in that we lease it from the Portsmouth Diocese and pay an annual rent to them, whereas the other sites we lease from Fareham Borough Council but do not currently pay then an annual rent.

The lease with the Portsmouth Diocese expires next year and we are waiting for the new lease to come through to see how much the annual rent will be, which will enable John to set the cost per rod for this site.

So, lots planned and as ever the delivery of the maintenance and the majority of the projects is undertaken by volunteers, typically our site managers, supported by some other tenants. So, my thanks to each and every one who has stepped up and volunteered their time and efforts for us.

The last, but most important element for me is you, our allotment holders. If you and your fellow plot holders didn't have the desire to work your plots and deal with the levels of delight and disappointment at what grows and what doesn't then it is irrelevant what projects we deliver.

This year we have seen good take up of plots across all the sites and as you will see in the accounts this is reflected in the income. However, what we have seen across the last two or possibly three years is bigger turnover of tenants, for lots of reasons and less people joining our waiting lists. We have attended a number of local events each to promote the allotments but this year we have started to market the availability more overtly with the big roadside banner at Hunts Pond and some Facebook promotion. Both have been successful, and we will look to build on this marketing next year.

Finally, from me, it is great to welcome the new people to the committee and I also invite who feels they can help the association in any way to come and talk to us. You don't have to hold a "role" as such, but individuals' expertise can help us develop further and bring in new ideas.

Thank you, I will hand over to Chris for the Treasurers Update including the annual accounts.

Before I do whilst the accounts are drawn up and agreed by the committee, we do need to have an annual inspection of the accounts completed. For this we are looking for a volunteer to review these and add a line to say they have been inspected.

So, if you, or if you know anyone who can spare an hour to sit with us and review the accounts, please let Chris or myself know. You do not need to be a qualified accountant but do need to have some basic bookkeeping knowledge.

8. Annual Report of Acting Treasurer – Chris Davison

I have taken on the role of Treasurer from Paul and we have jointly produced the accounts for the year.

Across the year we made a small overall trading loss of £809.40, compared to a surplus last year of £194.74. This loss is in line with our expectations as we have continued to invest in our sites and deal with higher bills.

Our income for the year was increased which reflects the rental increase for the current financial year and as you will have seen we have not had to increase the rental rates in our main sites again this year.

With the change in the Interest rates in the last year we have seen our credit interest generated increase by circa £300.

Our water costs increased this year as for Commercial Customers of Southern Water there was an 18% increase in our tariff rates. We do not have an option to switch to an alternative supplier and we are finding that commercial rates do not seem to be capped in the same way as retail rates for water.

Our investment in the Association and our sites has continued and a few of the projects during the year have been:

- A new website for the Association
- Hedge Cutting at Hunts Pond and Lodge Road sites
- Considerable drainage work and ditch clearance at Hunts Pond Road
- Purchase and construction of a second compost toilet at Sarisbury Green
- Completion of a community hub at Warsash
- Purchase of replacement mowers and strimmer's at a number of sites

As we have noted in previous years the majority of costs that we pay are for materials and with volunteers, typically our site managers providing the labour. Without this voluntary commitment these projects would not be viable or our rental rates would be considerably higher. So, a huge thank you to everyone who has contributed to maintaining and developing our sites through the year.

Our Trading Hut increased its turnover in the year, albeit with a small trading loss of £255, compared to a surplus of £939 and over a 3-year period a small surplus.

Looking at the Balance Sheet at 30th September 2024 we have maintained a healthy position with net assets of just under £48k.

Within this we hold working capital for the trading hut and also ensure that we have adequate reserves for the unforeseen events in the future and at the same time retain the ability to maintain and invest in our sites.

9. Honorariums – Richard Bastow

The Chair of Trustees chaired this part of the meeting whilst the other committee members left the meeting to allow discussion at 7.30 pm. Following the discussions, the committee were invited back to the meeting at 7.34 pm.

The decision and recorded minutes confirm/detail that the honoraria that was set for 2023/2024 was agreed to continue/be paid for 2024/2025 with an increase of 10% on the rates for 2023/24, leading to payments of £352 or £176 depending on role.

10. Election of Officers – Richard Bastow

It was agreed that RB will chair this part of the meeting in view that a Nomination had been received from Paul Rann for the role of Chair of Management Committee

RB advised that Nominations had been received for the following roles:

Honorary Chair – Paul Rann, Proposed by Robin Green and seconded by Julie Prescott

Honorary Treasurer – Chris Davison, Proposed by Paul Rann and seconded by Robin Green

Site Manager, Hunts Pond Road – Duncan Halls, Proposed by Keith Johnson and seconded by Norman Hatch

Site Manager, Lodge Road – Neil Jackson, Proposed by Paul Rann and seconded by Martin Wheeler

All other committee members stood for re-election and no new names were put forward or opposed. No objections were received from those members present.

For the purposes of the minutes, Keith Johnson, Site Manager at Hunts Pond Road, advised that members present at the meeting could not vote for Neil Jackson as Site Manager at Lodge Road. He advised that only Tenants at Lodge Road could vote him in/object.

As a result, Julie Prescott as Hon Secretary checked the Constitution, as follows:

No 10, Members Decisions, Section 2 - Taking ordinary decisions by vote, which states, any decision of the members of the CIO may be taken by members of the CIO may be passed by a simple majority of votes cast at the meeting;

No 11, point 6 a , Voting at general meetings – Every member has one vote.

11. AOB

PR invited comments and concerns from those members present and asked if members are happy?. In response the following discussions took place:

- 11.1 A Tenant at Hunts Pond Road advised that new tenants are coming onto site and disposing of their waste on vacant plots. In response KJ advised that he is aware of a female tenant who is on her own with no access to transport, she asked him for help disposing of her rubbish and as a temporary measure he advised her to dispose of it on a vacant plot.

KJ said that he put in a request to plot holders for help but so far, he has not received any response.

In response to another Tenants query, PR confirmed that every Tenants receives a copy of their Tenancy Agreement which clearly sets out what the rules, regulations and expectations are.

PR, also advised that as an organisation we do as much as we can to remind people of the rules and expectations and not to abuse them. PR, added that if Tenants do abuse our rules that there is not much we can do, unless we are directly aware, i.e. unless it is witnessed firsthand or they are not working their plot in accordance with the Tenancy Agreement. In which case, we will issue rectification notices and eventual notice to quit.

PR, also said, that he share everyone's concerns and frustrations from his own perspective of being a Tenant.

A general discussion took place in relation to Mowers, Strimmer's and other rubbish in particular at Hunts Pond Road.

- 11.2** A discussion regarding the mower was in particular lack of fuel left in the mower after use and break down issues with the mower.

It was noted that storage of fuel on the site is a Health and Safety concern, noting that H &S is not a barrier but it is a realism, noting that WWAA as a CIO could be sued for any breach of H & S rules.

PR invited everyone to keep their suggestions coming in and welcomed everyone to come forward.

- 11.3** Communication was also cited as an issue from a Tenant at Hunts Pond Road, stating that it is poor and that a lot of communication is carried out on Facebook for which they do not have access to. They added, for instance there was a free Greenhouse being advertised that was on Facebook, in response KJ advised that he also emailed tenants to inform them and that 95% of their communication is via email.

It was confirmed that HPR have had evening talks in the summer on Site, SG have Social events and receive Newsletters and WA have a hub where they regularly meet and hold Bar B Q's.

Another HPR tenant said that they had looked on the WWAA website for the notice of the AGM to find the time of the meeting, they added that they checked everywhere and they could not see any mention. In response PR advised that we had made a conscious decision when we updated the Website not to hold such documents as it 'slows down' traffic/the speed of the site and would have added significant development costs.

JP reminded those present that the Notice of the AGM was sent out with the Annual Rent Renewal letters.

PR acknowledged that we all could improve communication and added that this is no different to when he was working in industry and advised that it may be possible to add the notice of the AGM to the website.

PR welcomed Tenants to come forward to help with communication by producing newsletters etc.

Inspecting the WWAA Accounts, PR reminded and invited those present to come forward to nominate themselves or to inform him of anyone that is able to view/verify the accuracy of our accounts.

Meeting ended at 20:05