

Settle Street Allotments Association

Minutes of the AGM

Date of Meeting 13th April 2024
Location: Meeting room at Settle Street Allotments

Members Present:

Ann Craven	Joe Aldred	Sandra Hill
Carole Aldred	John Nelson	Shabbir Manjra
Chris Berry	Margaret Norris	Steven McHaddan
Dave Adamson	Mel Adamson	Yasmin Manjra
Derrick Shaw	Peter Chapman	Zivile Sakalauskaite

Members Apologies:

Mark James	Kieron Hulmes	

Agenda

1. Secretary's Report.
2. Treasurer's Report.
3. Election of Committee.
4. Collection of Subs (£10).
5. Any other business.

Agenda Item 1 Secretary's Report April 2024

In line with the Operational Management Agreement adopted with the Bolton Council, the Committee has met monthly on the second Sunday of each month and the minutes recorded by the Secretary and published on the Website from March 2023 to March 2024. Excluding the months between November 2023 and February 2023.

During the 12 months since the last AGM the committee has been in constant communication with each other, if not on the site, then electronically via email and our designated WhatsApp group which has allowed us to successfully manage the site. In April 2023 as per agreement we started to manage the site as usual which comes with its usual challenges and hard work.

The year 2023 for us particularly was a busy year and along with our usual volunteers we found ourselves again tidying and clearing vacant plots organising meetings and we have seen as usual, tenants come and go, tenants not bothering to come at all, tenants coming maybe twice then nothing.

We have had new tenants sign up this winter and if any of our new tenants are here today then welcome to the AGM and we hope you enjoy your plots and enjoy growing your very own home grown produce.

Some of our new tenants have made good use of the winter months to get their plots in good condition for the growing season with sheds being built and greenhouses erected along with a lot of digging.

There are seven 7 new tenants and we have now only 2 vacant plots which we will be aiming to let out before the end of April.

Insurance was taken out for the site to cover for public liability, which has seen another increase in Annual Payment although we did change our Insurer this year to get a better deal. Subscriptions of £10.00 now need to be paid by tenants to continue to pay for our Insurance, Memberships of Associations and to fulfil any further objectives by tenants and the Committee, this is rule 4 of the Constitution.

In April 2023 Ann contacted United Utilities with view to finding out about water tanks as we had seen another Allotment Site doing an experiment on water collection and having tanks fitted around the site, but the Water Company wasn't that forthcoming, but we will monitor what happens this year.

We have had ongoing issues with the Council regarding the waiting lists and getting jobs done around the site and we highlighted that the Shop door being too dangerous to use. Ann had a struggle when attending the shop and eventually we had the shutter replaced albeit it was in July.

In May Steve and I attended The Bolton Green Umbrella Group meeting with a view to holding an Open Day (for all of Bolton) so anybody can come and look at our sites and see what we do etc. plus this organisation also lets us apply for funding.

Best plot judging was changed this year, so we now judge everybody's plots monthly along with our reports to the council, we did this, so it became fairer to judge plots over the full season and not just one day on Show Day. Everybody's plot gets judged, and the criteria is in the minutes. A Plant swap area was introduced for people which was initially well received although the area needs a tidy up and a reorganisation.

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We sent off a Formal Complaint to the Council regarding our ongoing issues, waiting lists, jobs outstanding, fencing at the bottom that was damaged and BOTs (Breach of Tenancy Agreements) as it takes a long process to remove people from plots.

In June we updated and issued the Associations Handbook as we discovered there were some issues that needed updating

In July we opened our site over two days for the BGU festival. The weather that weekend was terrible and nobody across Bolton did that well, however we did the weekend.

September saw our Show Day return for another year, the weather this time was great, and we did have more competitors from the site entering the Veg and Flower show and we hope we can have a bit more again this year. We did advertise in the Bolton News and BGU put it on their website as well. We still need more this year. It's a bit of fun and a great way of getting people together for one day and it should be encouraged. We hope it will be better this year.

In October our Pumpkin competition was held again this year and was better attended. It's a bit of Fun with prizes and congratulations to all who entered and won Prizes.

These competitions and Fun Days are a much-needed social event and lets people get together and raises much needed funds for the Allotment Society.

We eventually got an updated list from the Council for new perspective tenants, and we organised show rounds and let out vacant plots. We also finally got a response from the Council this month after we sent a Formal complaint in July. It wasn't the outcome we expected, and we will not give up our arguments to maintain this site and its members interests. We did meet up with two local councillors to try and get more of a response from the Council, but this didn't make any difference.

We had news that one of our tenants Margaret was poorly and had to go into hospital. We were in touch with Margaret throughout her illness and we are delighted to see she has recovered from her operation and treatment and is doing well.

The committee wishes her well and we know that Margaret is now back on her plot as usual.

A big thank you goes to Ann (Committee Member) who tirelessly keeps the site as tidy as she can and runs the shop, orders goods, reports to the secretary etc. Organises the show day tombola and teas etc.

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Thanks again to our super volunteers Pat and Paul who are on site all year-round tidying, mending, clearing etc. Thanks to Russell as well for his contribution. Also, to John and Derek who also volunteer on the site, they mow the paths and help where they can. The volunteers do a great job, and this site would not be what is without you.

Also, at the end of the 2023 our committee colleague Peter Chapman decided to retire from the site and hang his gardening boots up. Peter has had his ups and downs with his health and so he decided to vacate his plot. Peter has been on Settle Street for many, many years and he been on the Committee for many, years as well, and he has contributed a lot of his time to Settle Street and we shall miss him. So, thank you Peter and to show our appreciation Ann will present him with a little something from us to show our appreciation.

We hope that people continue to enjoy coming to their plots on the site, joining in the events, socialising, and most of all having Fun.

We would encourage people to get involved on the site and importantly to volunteer to join the committee and help. The site is only as good as its members and its always better in numbers so please feel free to contact us and join us if you can.

We endeavour as a proactive Committee to run the site as best as we can and we are looking at ways we can improve the site by way of funding and making it an enjoyable place to come, grow and share.

Here's to a successful 2024 season!

Agenda Item 2 - Treasurer's Report April 2024.

Steve reported that we had £1276.53 of available funds in the bank account. A one-off grant from Bolton Green Umbrella of £200 will be used to fund a skip for the tidy up weekend.

Finances for 2023 – 2024:

	Amount	Date
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Opening Balance	1358.62	Apr-23
Total Incomings	1274.05	
Total Outgoings	869.04	
Balance	1726.53	
Key Deposits	450	
Cash in hand	0	
Total available Funds / Closing Balance	1276.53	Mar-24
Bolton Green Umbrella Grant	200	

Agenda Item 3 - Election of Committee

Nominations were requested for the positions of Chairperson and Secretary. Sandra Hill was nominated and seconded for Chairperson and voted in. The rest of the committee were nominated and voted in: Raman Patel committee member (community involvement), Steven McHaddan Secretary and Treasurer, Ann Craven committee member and shop manager.

After the meeting had ended Melanie Adamson spoke with the committee and volunteered to be a committee member. This was accepted and seconded by the committee.

Agenda Item 4 – Payment & Price of Subs

It is a condition of our Constitution that all tenants pay a subscription fee, which is currently set at £10 per plot, which pays for insurance and membership of NAS (the National Allotments Society). Fees can be paid at the AGM, to a member of the Committee or by Bank Transfer.

Agenda Item 5 - Any other business

The following points were raised by attendees at the meeting:

Vacant Plots – can these be covered over: It was raised by a member that when plots become vacant could they be covered over to prevent them becoming overgrown with weeds. The committee advised that we had already looked at the feasibility of doing this but the cost of the material and difficulty in storing it stopped the committee from doing this.

Vacant Plots – removal of items: It was raised by a member that when plots become vacant what happens to items left on the plot. When you terminate your allotment tenancy, you must remove any structure, building or debris from the allotment. If you do not remove these items, Bolton Council may remove these items and then charge you for doing so. Once you hand in your keys the committee become owners of the plot and will decide what happens to items left on the plot before re-letting it.

Buddy System: It was raised by a member that the buddy system needed explaining. A buddy is someone who helps an existing plot holder work the plot. They can be friends of the plot holder or someone they don't know. At the moment a buddy is added to the waiting list when they start to be a buddy and after 2 years of being a buddy, they can request to be a joint tenant on the plot they have been working.