

EGM of the Ashford Allotment Committee

Tuesday 6th May 2025

Tesco Crooksfoot

Present Christine Harrison- Vice Chair
 Jo Perkin- Bulk Buying Manager Lisa Harrison- Press and Publicity
 Jonathan Goodwin- Web Manager Heather Ahern- Musgrove Farm
 Jill Fuggle- Treasurer and Repton Manor
 Annette Woodhouse- William Road
 Mark Cole- Henwood Carol Ridings- Secretary

Also present:- David Woodhouse, Alan Sandom, Marina Kuzina, Joanne Willes and 11 allotment holders.

1. Apologies- None
2. Welcome remarks by Acting ChairChristine introduced herself and welcomed members of the public. In all 11 members were present together with the full committee. Christine explained that there was a need for a new chair and vice chair since the very sad death of Brenda earlier this year and the fact that she, Christine, was giving up her allotment. The committee are aware that there are problems with the allotment rental increase, the issue that concessions have been removed and the continuity of staff at the council as Kevin is now leaving, and the attitude of the council to allotments.What we want from allotment holders are ideas of what they want from the society. She explained that there had been 2 candidates for the chair but there had been a late withdrawal from 1 candidate, so Annette was now the only candidate. Annette has volunteered to lead the committee.
3. Annette introduced herself and gave an idea of what she had done for the William Road allotmenters such as the resurfacing of the car park and the newsletter. She had perused the Council over the lack of notification / discussion over the loss of the discount for retired people and that there had been no notification over the rent increase. However there was a need to work with the Council staff and councillors. There is also a need to promote the trading store, advertising it more widely.
4. Annette was proposed by Jonathan and seconded. There was a unanimous vote in favour.
5. Allotmenters from William Road who were present were in praise of Annette's achievements since she had become the rep.

7. New Site reps

Alan Sandom Was proposed for Westrees by Lisa and seconded by Heather. Unanimously agreed

Joanne Willes was proposed for the site rep for Beaver Fields by Annette and seconded by Jill. Unanimously agreed.

We also heard from Mr Rooker that his wife may be interested as being the site rep for Cryol Road taking over from Tony Fagg.

David Woodhouse was proposed as site rep for Jemmett Road/ Christchurch by David Botting and seconded. Unanimously agreed.

Christine thanked everyone for their support since she had taken over from Brenda.

Marina had put herself forward as vice chair. She felt that Annette had more experience but she would like to use her energy to help the society.

She was proposed by Heather and seconded by Christine. Unanimously agreed.

The meeting was then thrown open for ideas for what members wanted from the society. These were:-

Flower show/Harvest show
Social hub with tea/coffee/ chat
Evening meeting/invited guests
Ways to communicate/ideas on line
Best Allotment competition
Plots neglect
Specialist talk/ show

1- Flower show- perhaps end of the year show.

Apparently the Council have said that we cannot have a pumpkin show any more. It was felt that the Council's default position is no to all suggestions. Marina will take this idea forward to come up with some suggestions.

2- Best Allotments- This is an incentive for people to cultivate their plots. A prize could be a voucher from the seed shed. It could be based on most productive plot and could be assessed by site with perhaps more winners on the larger sites. Alan will take this idea forward. Whilst best allotment competition used to happen, the Council more recently did not want to provide email addresses/ names of the winner. The Council do not appear to be sharing e mail addresses with the society.

3-Neglected plots- The allotment officer has now left and there is now no named officer. This is one of the items that need to be taken to the council.

4- Specialist talk/ show/ evening meeting- Jill said that some guest speakers would be quite expensive and therefore there may be a charge. Possibility of joining other groups/societies for talks. Jo will take this idea forward.

5-Ways to communicate- There is a facebook page. Jonathan had previously thought that people should be able to log issues/ problems for sites. Again this has caused problems with the Council. He could set this up and could have help to run it. David said that he could help producing a newsletter for each site.

Nearing the end of the meeting Councillor Steve Campkin- Deputy leader and council member for climate, environment and sustainability was able to drop by. He was apprised of the problems between the society and the Council re lack of consultation, rent increase and lack of resetting plots and sending non cultivation notices. Need to get Aspire to tidy up plots before they are relet. He said that he would have a meeting with Claire and proposed a joint meeting with Claire, Annette and Marina to iron out issues.

At the end of the meeting Annette gave thanks to Christine for her role as acting Chair.