Glasgow Allotments Forum

Minutes of New Plotholders Awards and

Annual General Meeting 2023, 18 March 2024

At Garnethill Multi-cultural Centre at 7pm

UNCONFIRMED UNTIL AGM 2024

In attendance:

From the current committee: Jenny Reeves (Springburn) (GAF Chair), Judy Wilkinson (Kelvinside), Christine Kuhn (Hamiltonhill), Scott Ramsay (Sir John Stirling Maxwell), Maureen McKendrick (Budhill and Springboig), Gordon Lowe (Budhill and Springboig) Sarah-Jane Sharp (Victoria Park)

Plus 16 plotholders from various sites around Glasgow

Ex-officio (for awards ceremony only): Deacon Janet Pierotti (Incorporation of Gardeners)

1. **New Plotholder Awards 2023:** vouchers and award certificates were presented by Deacon Janet Pierotti to the following plotholders:

First place: Hazel Wilson (Springburn Gardens Association)
Second place: Charles McManus (Budhill and Springboig Allotments)
Second place: Andrea Pearson (Sir John Stirling Maxwell Allotments)

2. Discussion was raised about why the AGM was being held now rather than usual November 2023, which is date mentioned in the rules and regulations, as explained by Jenny Reeves because of Covid and returning to normal this year, so next AGM will be held in November.

3. **Apologies:** Dorothea Brunton

4. The **minutes of the AGM of 3 November 2022** were approved once numbering issues resolved.

5. **Annual Report:** On behalf of the committee Jenny circulated a paper outlining the various activities of GAF.

   5.1 Potato Day: This included moving from Potato Day 2023 which was online and bulk orders to in-person Potato Day 2024 which was more popular than envisaged and the space rented was a little too small for the numbers. She thanked the volunteers who helped in 2024.

   Iain Sutherland, the previous Treasurer, mentioned that Glasgow City Council (GCC) has in the past offered a rent-free city centre site and it was agreed we should revisit this for future years.

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5.2 Rent Rises Actions: We were effective in raising the concerns about the rises and had a partial success in that the council moved to gradated increases rather than moving to the new highest fee levels. One of the suggestions was to check the size of plots on sites, and although GCC has changed goalposts slightly you may find that your plots qualify as half plots, like Kirklees, and may be able to get reductions in future years.

5.3 Awards: There was a limited response from nominees for the New Plotholder Awards, but the Incorporation of Gardens has continued to provide support, which is good news. We now have funds to reinstitute Allotment Development Awards which offers £500 grants very soon, to develop projects and we hope to get a better response.

5.4 Communications: We recognise that we need to communicate more effectively. We are looking at better ways to reach to plotholders. Gordon Lowe and Jenny suggested that we need to get our newsletter and notices on allotment noticeboards and more widely circulated beyond the Secretaries.

5.5 Democracy Matters: This was an externally funded activity and its outcomes will be circulated later on in 2024.

5.6 Allotment Rules and Regulations: There were a lot of poorly communicated mechanisms from GCC, a consultation did take place and 296 people did write in. Following workshops which were not widely circulated and very poorly attended, GAF were represented at the 2nd and 3rd workshops which were followed by one-on-one interviews only rather than via a general meeting to allow more people to come forward with their concerns. GCC have now produced slightly revised rules and regulations, but they are yet to be approved by GCC 's Admin Committee and we will try to influence the outcome by getting a GAF representative to attend this meeting. There is a major problem with GCC's rewording as the allotment associations have not been defined, and all authority will rest with Glasgow City Council with associations potentially acting as "agents", who effectively do the work under direction. It is clear that some associations need some support as they are not operating in a democratic and open way. It is not clear that this regulation change will provide this.

It was agreed that we would talk to the National Allotment Society (NSALG) about professional legal and technical support, which some allotments have membership of, but as based in England they may need a little training in Scottish Law.

It was noted that following their review, and where the Council has had waiting lists, they have written to those on the lists informing them that unless they can prove what date they went on the list by 10 April 2024, it will be assumed that their wait will be reset to 10 April 2024, however long they have waited. There is a query as to whether the Council has the right to use the waiting list data under GDPR as details were only given to the associations to use, not the Council.

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6. **Treasurer's Report:** This was presented by Scott Ramsay.

   The statement does not reflect all the activity from the end last statement which ended 31st October 2022. Therefore, a revised statement will be issued including all missing earlier transactions. It is clear, however, we are in a much better financial position than we were in previous years, especially because of the success of Potato Day income. We have only one outstanding invoice to be paid for Democracy Matters. It was commented that Scott has done a wonderful job in getting a paper to the meeting given the difficulties we are experiencing with our bankers and changing access. We could only accept funds and not pay charges until recently.

   It was agreed we would continue with our Zoom subscription and may look to hold more meetings via Zoom, especially general meetings, to encourage participation.

7. Election of Officers

The following officers were elected:

Chair: Maureen McKendrick (Budhill and Springboid) (first proposed by Judy Wilkinson, seconded by Sarah-Jane Sharp)
Deputy Chair: Margaret Greer (first proposed by Jenny Reeve, seconded by Christine Kuhn)
Treasurer: Jenny Reeves (first proposed by Scott Ramsay, seconded by Gordon Lowe)
Secretary: Sarah-Jane Sharp (first proposed by Scott Ramsay, seconded by Gordon Lowe)

Other people who agreed to be members of the executive committee are:

Judy Wilkinson (Kelvinside)
Christine Kuhn (Hamiltonhill)
Scott Ramsay (Sir John Stirling Maxwell)
Gordon Lowe (Budhill and Springboid)
Kate McKillop (Trinley Brae)
Iain Sutherland (Mansewood)
Delia Henry (Springburn)

We all agreed to give a vote of thanks to Jenny for all her hard work as Chair.

It was agreed that we would like the committee to meet once a month and a general meeting should be incorporated in some way so that specialist groups could be held separately.

6 AOB: None.

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