

West Mains Allotment Association
Annual General Meeting, 2nd October 2021
2pm Reid Memorial Hall

Minutes of meeting

Present: Penny Barron, Alasdair Friend, Anna Gessesse, Alan Gordon (convenor), Bill Harris, Maggie Hyne (committee), Mick Kadlubowski (committee), Katie Kerr, Anne Sofie Laegan, Anne MacArthur, Colin Mackenzie (treasurer), Alex MacLeod, Pauline Platt, Lyndsey Rowlands, Jennifer Tomes, Nils Tomes (committee), Kathleen Waitt, Willie Waitt, John Ward

Apologies: Jane Aldous, Rosa Boyko, Mary Clarkson, Phil Denning (committee), Karen Esslemont, Nicholas Esslemont, Andy Hollis, Howard Pigeonhouse, Katie Pigeonhouse, Jane Robinson, Cynthia Shuken, Jan Urquhart (secretary), Beverley Somerville, David Turner, Rosina Turner, Len Wright

1. The Convenor's annual report

Alan Gordon spoke to the Convenor's Report:

- bringing forward the timing of the AGM to coincide with the FEDAGA committee elections;
- the impact of COVID, which cancelled both the 2020 and 2021 Open Days, reducing our income;
- committee roles during 2020-21;
- site matters, including first aid, intermittent flooding, portacabin painting, improving the swap and share area, restrictions on bonfires, and acquiring £10m public liability insurance through a FEDAGA scheme;
- development and maintenance of the wildlife areas and changes to how this is done; the introduction of bee hives to the site to improve pollination;
- the Council's new regulations for allotments, which have been approved but not yet implemented; the Council has voted a one-off sum of £10,000 across all sites;
- the plans to develop the St Crispin's school site into housing and the possible impact on West Mains allotments in terms of increased flooding. Alan Gordon will continue to liase with Cala on this for the next few weeks, for continuity.

Dr Gordon gave thanks to a number of people who have made special contributions to the allotment site throughout this year, including Drew Heatlie, Joyce Nichol, Peter Stapleton, David Turner, and thanked the many people across the site who have taken on extra roles on behalf of us all.

2. Treasurer's report

Colin Mackenzie spoke to the The Treasurer's report and financial statement 2020-21. This period's income was affected by the cancellation of our Open Day but the out-turn at the end of the year was still positive. Income was £1723.16 and expenditure was £1683.30, giving a small surplus of £39.86. The WMAA account balance stood at £1966.71 at 5th April 2021, with £1926.85 of that being brought forward as the balance from the previous year. The annual accounts had been reviewed by Peter Stapleton.

3. Committee membership

Both Alan Gordon and Colin Mackenzie stand down after three years on the committee, in line with the Association's rules. The following people were confirmed or elected to the committee for 2021-22:

Role	Name	Proposed	Seconded
Convenor	Nils Tomes (elected 2019)	Alan Gordon	Anna Gessesse
Secretary	Jan Urquhart (elected 2020)		
Treasurer	Lyndsey Rowlands	Nils Tomes	Maggie Hyne
Members	Phil Denning (elected 2019)		
	Alasdair Friend	Maggie Hyne	Nils Tomes
	Maggie Hyne (elected 2020)		
	Mick Kadlubowski (elected 2020)		
	Pauline Platt	Katie Kerr	Alasdair Friend

Peter Stapleton has kindly offered to audit the 2021-22 accounts, once again.

4. **Other matters**

Bees: Alasdair Friend described how the three bee hives are being introduced to the allotment. Mr Friend is a qualified beekeeper, a member of the Edinburgh and Midlothian Beekeepers Association, and is insured for liability. He follows ethical guidelines on the management of the bees. He is happy to introduce ploholders to the bees once they become active in the Springtime and will be on site once a week from April 2022. Pauline Platt asked that a notice be put up alerting people to the presence of bees on site. Alasdair will put up a red flag, or similar, when he is actively working with the bees.

The development of the St Crispin's School site: For continuity, Alan Gordon will be meeting with Iam Woollard the Allotment Officer and the developers, Cala, in October 2021 to outline the issues of potential flooding on the West Mains site. Nils Tomes agreed to join that meeting on behalf of the new committee.

Wildlife area development and maintenance: Nils Tomes noted that the committee was taking on responsibility for the development and maintenance of the wildlife areas on behalf of the Council and intended to form special interest groups.

Centenary: Next year marks the one hundredth anniversary of the West Mains allotment site, which was established after the First World War. Nils Tomes suggested that some kind of celebration might be built around the 2022 Open Day.

Possible funding from the Council: The Council has allocated a one-off sum of £10,000 additional funding across all allotment sites. Suggestions on developments which would benefit our West Mains site included: an apple juicer to process autumn crops (Penny Barron); a shredder to deal with difficult-to-compost waste (Katie Kerr); an electricity supply to the site, possibly sponsored; a petrol trimmer and grass-maintenance tools for general use around the site (Anna Gessesse); a community orchard (Maggie Hyne).

Rats: John Ward suggested a more vigorous campaign was needed to discourage rats on the site, to suggest techniques which avoid the use of poison, which can damage other wildlife in the area. People should be discouraged from inadvertently feeding the rats or creating places for them to nest.

Group ordering: There was enthusiasm for continuing to group-order compost in bulk and to participate in the FEDAGA bulk-ordering schemes for seed potatoes, onions and leeks, this year.

Keeping in touch: Penny Baron noted that not everyone on site had access to an email address and that the committee should continue to distribute information by other means as well as through email. Printed copies are currently posted on both site noticeboards. Lyndsey Rowlands suggested updating email addresses and through the same process asking whether people wished to be contacted by other means or not at all.

Thanks to retiring committee members: The AGM gave thanks to Alan Gordon and Colin Maxkenzie for their three years of service to the committee and to the life of the allotment site, as they stand down as convenor and treasurer.

Minutes: NT 2/10/2021

Papers circulated in advance of the meeting:

- The Convenor's annual report 2020-21, Alan Gordon
- The Treasurer's report and financial statement 2020-21, Colin Mackenzie
- AGM report in lieu of Minutes 2020, Jan Urquhart