

THE MARLOW ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION



Minutes of the thirty-sixth Annual General Meeting, held in Liston Hall, 7th November 2018 at 7.30pm

Attendance- Members and Guests: Officers: Chair: Fred Tillier, Treasurer: Maren Talbot, Secretary: Sylvia Miller
Committee Members: Denise Bagge, Pete Cooper, John Stilliard

New Committee Members to be voted in at this AGM: Loredana Cornea, Juliette Chanoir

Special & Honoured Guests: Mayor- Councillor Richard Scott, Town- Clerk Hilary Towns & Officer- Debbie Abbott
Tenants, members & guests: Richard Bailey, Janet Berger, Denis Bird, Martin Blunkell, Mary Bunker, Liz Bunt, Florin Cornea & guest, Ruxandra Crow, Bernard Carter, Caron Davison, Peter Edmonds, Diane Elliott, Peter England, Alison Ford, Robert Frost, Ana Galan, Neil & Brenda Garside, Mr & Mrs Mark Hill, Richard Hockly, Yvonne & John Holland, Jeff Hyatt, Sue Keen, Trish & Bill Kilner-Smith, Jess, Sharon & Kevin Kirby, Charles Knocker, Becky & Jemima Littorin, Geoff Lomas, Richard Maidment, Bill Masser, Mr & Mrs Yoshi Masumoto, Jenny & Graham Miles, Scott Pickard, Daphne Roberts, Peter Rowland, Michael Stonier, Lesley Wellington, Monica Vann

Chair's Welcome - (FT) Welcomed everyone and reminded them that there was a raffle at the end of the meeting.

Emergency Exits – (SM) Advised those present of emergency exits should the need arise during the evening.

Address by Marlow Town Mayor Richard Scott - Good evening and thank you for inviting me to your AGM. Firstly, let me apologise that you have had to amend your usual meeting agenda so that I am on first, but I have another engagement to attend later in the evening.

It is very good to see so many members here which says something about the strength of your association and the esteem in which it is held. I attend a number of other organisations' AGMs and this is certainly one of the best attended.

I have seen your secretary's report and this really sums up how active and vibrant your association is. There is and has been a lot going on. I am advised that, in total at both allotment sites, the town council has 327 plots with currently 10 vacancies; so perhaps some of the residents currently on the waiting list (about 11, I understand) will soon be able to sign up and start digging.

The town council is pleased to have regular meetings with representatives of your association, which gives both of us the opportunity to exchange views and update on current matters. At the last meeting, I understand you were updated on proposals amongst other things for the old playground area adjacent to Foxes Piece, guidance on sale of produce, the water levy and rent increases for 2020.

Last week, the council's resources committee confirmed the cessation of the levy and the increase of 20p per pole, with effect from 1st November 2020. This is after no increase last year.

I have visited the allotments a number of times since becoming mayor and it is very interesting to see what is being grown. The range of fruit, vegetables and flowers is quite amazing, with the standard being excellent.

I may have missed them, but I haven't seen any vines on either sites. If there are, I apologise, but having seen the vines growing at Harrow and hop in Pump Lane, it appears to me that there might be an opportunity on the South facing slopes of Hanging Hill.

The town council is pleased with your stewardship of the allotments and I hope that is reciprocated. I do get reports back from Diane, who is your contact, and I know she is very pleased to work with you and to deal with any issues. I was going to finish by talking about Brexit, but I had second thoughts. I then thought I might talk about the forthcoming general election but also decided against that as well.

What I will do is update you with a couple of topical matters from the local councils, starting with Marlow Town Council. Some of you will be aware that we have formed a small sub-committee to address environmental and sustainability issues. This group consists of 4 councillors and three external appointees, two of who are professionals in these subjects. The town council website lists some of the current ideas we are working on, including:-

- Promoting an air quality management zone, which covers the High street, West Street, Spittal Street and Chapel Street. These are some of the worst polluted streets in the town. To date, the action has been to encourage drivers to turn off their engines if stopped in traffic. A lot of modern vehicles have this facility, as part of their engine management systems, but it does not seem to apply to buses, vans and heavy vehicles. You may have seen a banner across Spittal Street and notices at the entrances to the town reminding drivers to do this. Early days yet, but we have to start somewhere.
- We are looking to install water stations at three locations in the town for people to fill their own bottles.
- We are supporting a re-leaf campaign to plant many more trees in the town; and finally
- We are working with Transition Town Marlow who are very active in the town, including their team of Womble litter pickers.

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The second item that might be of interest to you is the establishment of the new Buckinghamshire Unitary Council, which will come into effect on 1st April next year. This Council will last for 5 years, not the usual 4 year term. This is a new council that will assume responsibility for the work of the five existing councils in the county, namely the County Council, Wycombe District and the three other District Councils. All services currently carried out by these Councils will transfer to the new Council. The purpose is to eliminate duplication and reduce costs whilst maintaining and hopefully improving services.

Currently, there is a huge amount of work going on behind the scenes to ensure a smooth and timely transfer and all the key personnel to run the new council have now been appointed.

Will you notice any difference after April 1? Initially these will be small, such as a name change, a new logo and new contact information. Thereafter, the new Council will start to combine similar services, agree the location of offices and, I guess, this will take a few years to fully complete.

The new Council will initially have 147 councillors, which is reduced from the current 240, but it is likely that during the council term, that there will be a proposal to reduce this further to possibly 98 i.e. 2 per council ward.

Very happy to finish there and either the Council Officers or I would be very happy to take any questions.

Allotment Prize Winners Awards presented by Mayor Cllr Richard Scott

Prize Winners :-

Master Gardener:	Andy Ross	Plot 17 HH
1st prize Foxes Piece:	Peter Rowland	Plot 46
2nd prize Foxes Piece:	Denise Bagge & Bernard Carter	Plot 66
3rd prize Foxes Piece:	Mark Hill	Plot 54
Highly commended Foxes Piece:	Mrs Jane Picard	Plot 14
Highly commended Foxes Piece:	The Herby Kirbys	Plot 32
Highly commended Foxes Piece:	Miss Sue Ayres	Plot 67
Highly commended Foxes Piece:	Chris Oxley	Plot 97
Commended Foxes Piece:	Mrs Diane Elliott	Plot 33
Commended Foxes Piece:	Mel Deri	Plot 52
Commended Foxes Piece:	Fred & Dave Tillier	Plot 53
Commended Foxes Piece	Mathew Finch	Plot 24
Commended Foxes Piece	Eleanor Mustoe	Plot 24a
Best Newcomer Foxes Piece:	Ms Janet Berger	Plot 85
Runner up Newcomer Foxes Piece:	Mr Jeffrey Hyatt	Plot 84
Special Novice Award:	Miss Jemima Littorin	Plot 69 HH
1st prize Hanging Hill:	Richard Hockly	Plot 89
2nd prize Hanging Hill:	John Holland	Plot 66
3rd prize Hanging Hill (joint):	Richard Maidment & Liz Bunt	Plots 39/39a
3rd prize hanging Hill (joint):	Denis Bird	Plot 99
Highly Commended Hanging Hill:	Mrs Nicole Hockly	Plot 24a
Highly Commended Hanging Hill:	Mrs Yvonne Holland	Plot 67
Commended Hanging Hill:	Dr Yoichi Masumoto	Plot 64a
Commended Hanging Hill:	Mrs Sue Keen	Plot 60
Commended Hanging Hill:	David Howell	Plot 62b
Best Newcomer Hanging Hill:	Paul Littorin	Plot 69
Runner up Newcomer Hanging Hill:	Mrs Becky Littorin	Plot 69b
Commended Newcomer Hanging Hill:	Ms Juliette Channoir	Plot 127
Mayors Special Award:	David Howell	Plot 62 HH

Questions and answers addressed to Marlow Town Council and Mayor Councillor Richard Scott.

Bernard Carter asked for information as to the mentioned building plans on the old playground area by FP which consultants were being paid up to £25,000 to develop. The mayor replied with the statement that the council had a duty to use its assets in the best possible way and had instructed architects to see what could be done to put some housing on the area. He gave a repeated categorical assurance that no part of the FP allotments would be used, but that the Horticultural hut and the gates may be impacted, this is in the detailed plan that is not available yet

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Richard Bailey brought up the matter of the overhanging Leylandii branches. MTC said that the owner had been contacted and had cut them back and that the trees were safe. Mr Bailey said that he had had no written response from MTC, The Mayor apologised and as a general point asked people not to wait before contacting them.

FT mentioned locks and asked those present to show hands for & against. The vast majority supported the new locks Ms Kirby mentioned concerns re security - MTC advised that this is a trial, there will be a review at the beginning of February 2020 and requested that all keys be kept so that a refund could be given if it is decided not to use the old padlocks.

Peter Edmunds – advised that someone can still get through one of the gates at FP despite the chain being locked. FT & Ms Kirby went on to state that there is too much slack in the chains for the FP locks, which could allow people entry, MTC said that smaller chains would be issued that would mean the gates will be more secure.

The Mayor and Marlow Town Council Officers left the meeting and FT thanked them for attending.

Introduction for AGM – FT began the AGM mentioning that it is a sad year end with the loss of some long standing plot holders.

Apologies for Absence – SM mentioned: Ann & Colin Bowles, Annie & Justin Bradley, Sally Brooks, Helen & Ian Brown, Mel Deri, Joselyn Finch, Liz & John Fisher, Roger Flavel, Andi & Ray Gallagher, Stephanie Galloway, Sarah & Guy Greenhouse, Richard Harker, Nicole Hockly, Mark Howe, Paul Littorin, Michaela Misakova, Bill Murphy, Lyn Nicol, Chris O Connell, Diane Rogers, Andy Ross, Gill Snowden, Shan Stephens.

Minutes of 2018 AGM - FT asked if there were any problems with the minutes, at no response from those present they were accepted. Proposer: David Howell, Seconder: John Holland.

Matters arising: Red Kite has requested that allotment tenants do not park in resident parking bays near FP flats.

Secretary's Report

SM Apologised for the Tomato blight warning which fortunately did not happen, with hindsight she should have inspected the alleged damaged plants, before sending out the warning.

New Tenants. The numbers at the site were FP 17 and HH 33, unfortunately, some have not lasted the whole year, but that is a tiny minority. Some new tenants have proved to be excellent allotment gardeners.

Waiting lists & vacant plots The waiting list total is currently 9 people, of which some have a preference for certain plots or are unavailable, which leaves 3 all with a preference for FP. Vacant plots are 6x HH & 3x FP.

Cameras. Last year MTC gave permission for tenants to use cameras on their plots if they wish. However, this was hampered with the idea that each tenant should have a notice on their plot broadcasting this fact. Earlier this year MTC agreed that we could have signs erected at each entrance to both sites notifying all that entered that cameras are in operation on the site. This means that any tenant can have a camera to film wild life or other things if they wish; should the span of the camera happen to include a communal path or trackway it is not an issue because of the notices at each entrance. This appears to have deterred outsiders from trying to gain access & hopefully will do the same with vandalism & theft on site.

Ground Clearance. The council organised ground clearance @ HH by Berwick Road and some fencing was installed where there was none, this has made 5x more plots available on the site. Furthermore, there has since been additional ground clearance in that area which is due to be marked out into more plots.

Allotment Working Party Meeting. During that last AWP meeting with Marlow Town Council there were some new matters covered:

FP playground area. MTC announced their intent to apply for planning permission to build residential accommodation on the land adjoining the Foxes Piece Allotments. They have assured us that this would not encroach on the allotment site, with the exception that the gate there may no longer be accessible and the Horticultural Society's sheds will need to be accommodated elsewhere in Marlow. MAA will endeavour to be in contact with MTC at each stage of the progress to ensure the integrity of the allotments site.

Locks. As we are all aware there have been numerous issues & problems with the new padlocks installed recently, as a result MTC have now replaced these with combination locks for a trial period. Once these have proved successful over the next few months MTC will organise a refund of key deposits paid. The main feed-back has been positive with

the exception of the gap that is required at one FP gate to enable access to the lock from either side of the entrance. SM felt that she needed to remind those present that MTC have no obligation to install locks on the Allotment Sites, in fact those that had plots years ago have told me that back then there were no locks on either site. Therefore, we need to try to work with the council to find a satisfactory solution in order to have security on the allotment sites – the alternative may mean no locks on the gates.

Water levy & rent increase. As advised in the renewal notices, this is the last year that the water levy will be charged to tenants, the remaining balance (approx. £750) after this year has been paid will be covered by MTC, however, they have also mentioned the rent will be increased by 20p per pole in 2020 renewals.

Sale of produce. This is a major concern that MTC has regarding reports they have received that tenants are taking their produce from the site and selling this to the general public. At the AWP meeting they asked the Committee for any advice or comments in this matter. MAA advised that photos would be undeniable evidence which could be supplied anonymously. Hilary, Town Clerk, confirmed at the meeting that if anyone comes forward with photographic evidence of this, it will be handled anonymously and with no repercussions to that person, she reiterated that it is against the allotment rules and regulations for produce from the allotments to be sold in a trade or business capacity under any circumstances.

Water shut off date. This will be on 15th Nov.

Marker Posts. When a plot is let MAA have endeavoured to ensure there are nice clear marker posts at each corner of the plot with at least one stating the plot number. These are supplied by MTC and MAA organises them to be painted (by a volunteer & SM thanks them) and installed after measuring out the plots. Unfortunately, some tenants then remove these posts, perhaps they feel them to be unsightly? Please note these are the property of MTC and should not be removed or relocated without permission from MTC. It is important to mark the boundary of each allotment plot and to ensure the plot number is clear and visible. Over the years some may have rotted & need replacing. Please would any tenant who has missing corner posts on their plot let SM, as over the next year or so she is hoping to be able to ensure that where possible all plots on both sites are clearly marked out.

HH Winter Work party. Last year we met most Saturdays, the most impressive work was clearing some spare ground extending the small car park area to accommodate 2 or 3 additional cars, thanks to the volunteers that made this possible. The work party will start again this, Saturday 9th November & we will be meeting for an hour or 2 each Saturday (weather permitting) until the end of February, the first projects will be creating a fourth wood chip bay @ HH and renovations on the Triangle. Anyone that would like to help with this please contact SM.

Events. There have been several BBQ events this year with a good attendance at each event. We also organised an orchid talk which was fascinating and informative, thanks to Maren. Richard was keen to repeat the marvellous Dahlia talk that he carried out last year, but due to poor health was unable to this year, best wishes to him. We had an interesting and very well attended talk from Clive a local Bee expert, and he plans to carry out another talk in the new year.

Manure – hopefully this will be set up in the next few months, SM will contact all those who have lodged an interest and will re-circulate the email to give others the opportunity to benefit from this. This will also be posted on the website.

Facebook. Our newest Committee member, Juliette, has offered to manage a Facebook page for MAA. Details and links will be on the website, along with her contact details should you have problem accessing this.

Wood chippings. These are available free of charge to all tenants. There are several wood chip bays at Hanging Hill, soon to be fourth, please would FP tenants contact SM to arrange entering the site to collect any quantity you wish of these. MTC have provisionally given permission for one to be set up at FP site, depending on the level of demand, therefore, please would FP tenants let SM know if they would like this arrangement at Foxes Piece site.

Committee meetings. The committee met 6x times over the year, the minutes of each meeting are available on the website and notice boards on both sites. If any tenants would like to attend a Committee meeting next year, they are welcome to come along, please get in touch with SM.

In closing, SM thank Committee members – FT as Chair, MT as treasurer, DB & JS for minutes, PC for running the raffle this year, PC & JS for help with work parties, LC for work on website & PE for his continued advice & support. SM went on to thank volunteers for help around both sites and for the newsletter deliveries and for help this evening, with a special thanks to Peter England for support & advice.

Then finished by thanking MTC, especially Barry & Debbie for their time & energy in running both sites, especially for their research & efforts with locks. Finally thank Mayor as our honoured guest & MTC Officers for their support & time. Proposer: Richard Maidment; Seconder Ana Galan

Treasurers Report.

MT went through the financial report and said that the overall status was good, she thanked SM for her work in requesting donations. She also explained that the Kings Seed catalogue was now available on line specifically for allotment holders and that this would still provide the allotment society with funds. Anyone interested should send her an email and would get back the website address (**which is different from the standard King's site**) and a password. The treasurers report was accepted – Proposer: Richard Bailey, Seconder: Dennis Bird.

Elections with Proposers & Seconders

Chair – Fred Tillier	Proposer: Mike Hopper Seconder: Ms Christine Evans
Treasurer – Maren Talbot	Proposer: Bill Masser Seconder: Martin Blunkell
Secretary – Sylvia Miller	Proposer: John Price Seconder: Denis Bird
Member – Denise Bagge	Proposer: Robert Frost Seconder: John Nixon
Member – Pete Cooper	Proposer: Fiona Rabson Seconder: Geraldine Rowe
Member – John Stilliard	Proposer: Sylvia Miller Seconder: John Price
New member -Loredana Cornea	Proposer: Maren Talbot Seconder: Sylvia Miller
New member – Juliette Channoir	Proposer: Pete Cooper Seconder: Fred Tillier

All Committee Members were voted in by a majority show of hands from those present.

AOB

FT thanked Peter England & Daphne Roberts for dealing with the seed deliveries & collections via their home over the past year.

Graham Miles asked about the rules against allowing bee hives on the allotments. He was told that the reason for the rule against them was the risk of allergy and injury to children.

Martin Blunkell enquired regarding keeping bees on the allotment site.

Maren Talbot advised that she had walked a local beekeeper round the HH site and was told that there was no suitable place for them as they need at least 3 meters clear space around each hive.

Jeff Hyatt asked about the noise from the gates and their locks, he was told that some of the gates at HH had tape wrapped round them to cut the noise down. **SM will take an action** to talk to MTC about this.

Jeff Hyatt asked about CCTV Cameras and do we know who has any in operation. It was explained that as permission is not required for them, that there is no knowledge of where or how many there are.

Geoff Lomas asked how wide spread the Allium leaf miner pest was, SM responded it had been widespread across both sites.

Bill Masser proposed a vote of thanks from the floor for the Committee and all the helpers – those present applauded.

Monica Vann asked if there was anything being done about unkept allotments - SM responded that MTC were being more rigorous about this and that some tenants had not been offered renewals. In addition the offer of extra time was being reduced, SM offered to send the relevant part of the minutes from the last MTC meeting to her.

Richard Bailey said that a friend had obtained some straw from a local farmer & mulched his dahlias with it but that they had all died as the straw had been treated with herbicide. He asked all tenants to be careful and recommended an internet site 'Landcrop.com' who will test soil for both deficiencies and harmful chemicals.

FT closed the meeting at 8.50 and announced the raffle.

SM thanked those present for attending.