

Little Moor Allotments Ltd

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 18 February 2025

- 1 **Chair's Opening Remarks:** The Chair welcomed 43 members to the meeting and thanked them for attending. He stated that we are an association of 186 members with plots of different sizes on both the north and south side of the site. Our longest serving member remains John Bell who began in 1976 and new members join us each month. The waiting list is smaller than last year, probably due to the issue of the Council's application process not working.
- 2 **Apologies for absence:** 11 members had sent their apologies.
- 3 **Minutes of the previous meeting:** AGM 2024 minutes previously circulated by email and available on the website, no comments were raised, and the minutes were therefore agreed. Proposer Richard Young, seconded by Jim Lowry.
- 4 **Matters Arising:** At the AGM 2024 a question was raised about buying a sit down lawn mower. This has been considered and is still under review – however there are 2 issues with it. The first is we would need a Storage Unit and have no obvious place for that. Secondly, the mower would have to move between both North and South sides which means going onto the road and, for that, we'd need a license.
- 5 **Chair's report:** The Chair introduced the Committee. Ken Fawcett – Chair, Chris Hodgson - Secretary, Lesley Greenwood – Membership Secretary, Dorothy Robson – Treasurer, Tony Robson – Site Manager, Peter Calver - Buildings & Structures, Liz Bennett – Website & Minutes, Sara Goodman - Newsletter. He thanked all for their efforts and acknowledged the hard work and commitment shown by those members who ran the Trading Hut and carried out maintenance to site. If it were not for them, and the time they put in, the Allotment costs would be significantly higher. The Chair reminded everyone of his intention to stand down as Chair and that a new Chair would be needed, as specified in our Lease.

A copy of the Chair's report and the Annual Accounts had previously been sent by email and were also available on the website. In the expectation that members would have read them, he planned to highlight / summarise rather than read out the full report.

Issues arising from that Report –

Lease issues - To date we still have not signed the lease with the council and still expect to be invoiced for 30 months' rent. When this will happen will depend on when our landlord, the Council, makes its decision known about the management of parks gardens and allotments. It is also unclear what our relationship will be with the Freemen. This issue means that we cannot execute some of our intended capital expenditure plans relating to fencing and gates (given the chance that this responsibility may return to the

landlord). We now know that the lease has been approved by the Freeman and is back for council approval and is materially no different to the latest lease we had intended to sign. We are hopeful that this will finally be resolved soon.

There followed some questions from the floor –

- 1 Re The Association's exposure through not having a signed Lease. The Secretary explained that, until we have a new Lease, we still are governed by the Terms of the old Lease. So, whilst not exposed, it's far from ideal.
- 2 Re why the Council have been apparently so reluctant to agree a Lease with us. The Secretary explained that there were several factors. One, it has taken time partly because all 7 wartime allotments wanted a common Lease and we all had to agree each clause. Also, maybe because the Council had issues with Urban Green and they had to be sorted. Finally, the Council have to decide whether they want the Allotments under their direct control or under the stewardship of the Freeman – and this takes time too.

Site issues – Thanks to the many plot holders who volunteer their services we have been able to keep the site in good order and to maintain a healthy income at the Trading Hut and from Poly tunnel sales.

It was particularly pleasing to have had our first open day in a long while. It was an exceptional event to showcase our efforts to the wider community and gained us much welcomed revenue from sales on the day. So, for the record a huge thank you to those involved on the day. We hope to do it again this year.

A vote was then held to approve the Chair's Report.

Vote for – All attendees / Against 0 / Abstentions 0

- 6 Finance:** Finances are healthy after 30 months of no rent being paid. Our reserves are over £45k. Trading hut and poly tunnel sales are also healthy with both increasing from last year (up £1576)

In terms of costs, there is a larger stock in hand figure which reflects the increase in prices and, therefore, value of stock and our decision to buy early in bulk before prices increase further. The other unusual figure is the large reduction in water rates, which resulted from previous overpayments – they will be higher in the next financial year.

In other recent financial news we have received a generous bequest from the estate of Anne Tavroges. Many plot holders will remember Anne who was a previous LMAA treasurer. Her sad passing will be remembered in our plans to create a pond on site which has met with the approval of her family.

Whilst speaking of sad news many will know of the passing of Gordon Paterson who was our treasurer for many years and ever present at the Trading hut - a really nice guy and a great miss, not least to Ann.

There was a question from the floor re how much money we owed in outstanding rent. The Secretary replied that, for the last 2.5 years, it was in the region of £8,400 (not including 2025 rent not yet due)

A vote was then held to approve the Finance Report.

Vote for -All attendees / Against 0 / Abstentions 0

- **Little Moor Allotments RENT 2025**

There are no planned changes to the annual rent levels. Therefore, they are

Full plot	£90
Half plot	£45
Third Plot	£30
Quarter Plot	£22.50

NOTE – THE PREFERRED METHOD OF PAYMENT IS BACS.

WE HAVE A NEW BANK ACCOUNT AND THIS MUST BE USED FOR PAYMENTS.

THE DEADLINE FOR PAYMENTS IS 18 MARCH 2025

Bank Details are -

- Account: Little Moor Allotments Ltd
- Sort Code: 30 99 50
- Account No: 14339563
- For your reference use the first 4 letters of the plot holder's surname followed by the plot number (eg John Smith on plot 7 would be SMIT7)

Payment can also be made by

- Cheque payable to "Little Moor Allotments Ltd" and handed into the Trading Hut any Sunday in February between 10.00 and 11.00. Please write the Plot holder's surname and plot number on the back.
- Cash – must be in an envelope, marked with the plot holder's name and plot number and handed into the Trading Hut any Sunday in February between 10.00 and 11.00.

7 Change of status to CIC company: A CIC is a Community Interest Company, a type of limited company that aims to benefit the community rather than private shareholders. CICs are "not for profit" companies that use any profits to grow the business or benefit the community.

The Chair reminded the meeting that LMAA previously held an Extraordinary AGM in 2023 to become a "limited by guarantee" company. This was seen as the only reasonable alternative at the time because (a) we had a deadline to change

our legal status and the process to become a CIC was time consuming and (b) it avoided the risk of Committee members named on the Lease being individually liable. We have now been advised that a change to CIC status is now both financially sensible and less of an administrative burden.

There was a question from the floor re what a move to CIC meant in terms of reporting requirements to Companies House. It was explained that reporting wasn't hugely different. The main advantages were the financial benefit, the social description of "community", which better represented what LMAA was about and the fact that it gave us opportunities to apply for grants.

A vote was then held to approve the change to CIC

Vote for -All attendees / Against 0 / Abstentions 0

- 8** **Election of Committee:** With the exception of the Chair, the current Committee are willing to continue within their roles. However, our Lease requires us to have 3 positions – Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and we cannot continue unless we have all 3.

Ken outlined the role and asked if anyone in the room was willing to step forward. There was a question from the floor re could the Chairperson be "in name" only and not an active member of the Committee. However, it was felt that this was not an acceptable solution and unfair to the rest of the Committee who would have to take on more work.

Thankfully, Phil Bradley from Plot 76 offered to step into the role.

Acceptance of this was proposed by Lesley Greenwood and seconded by several people including Christine Hodgson..... Carried unanimously. Thank you, Phil!

- 9** **Appointment of Auditor:** There was a vote to accept Connected Voice as our Accountant and Examiner. Carried unanimously.

- 10** **Trophies/ Awards:** The Chair thanked the Secretary and Membership Secretary for reviewing individual Allotment Plots and was delighted to announce the following recipients –

- Peter Horrocks Trophy for Best newcomer – Ben Norman, Plot number 42A
- LMAA Challenge Cup for Best Allotment – Alistair Hood, Plot number 101
- LMAA Trophy for Most improved Allotment – Nick Moore, Plot number 79

Thanks were also given to Jen Stephenson for managing the Trading Hut Rota and to all the volunteers who worked on Tidy Up days, Trading Hut, Poly Tunnel. A small token of our appreciation was presented to Frank Snowden as recognition of all his efforts.

- 11** **AOB:** No items had been received.

Final Comments -

- A member proposed a vote of thanks for the Committee, which was agreed by others (and gratefully accepted by the Committee!)
- There was a proposal from the floor that The Trading Hut sells Peat Free compost only, even though the Government 2024 deadline had not been imposed. This was in the best interest of the environment and the local community. Whilst this has been discussed on several occasions and there is much support, the Committee's view is that it's up to each individual member to decide for themselves. However, the Committee totally agreed with the sentiment behind the proposal and had already ensured there were fewer bonfires, introduced a wild-life and dead hedge area, and were planning to build a pond so that, as an allotment, we would offset our carbon footprint.
- There was also a question re, given our healthy cash balance, could lawn mowers be rented out at no cost. That would increase the chances of the pathways being better maintained. It was explained that, whilst a good idea, the rent from lawn mowers goes toward the Trading Hut income and, if this reduced, it may have a knock-on effect elsewhere and, possibly, lead to an increase in overall rents.
- The Chair thanked everyone for attending and for their contribution.
- The meeting closed at 20.26pm.