

ROSEDALE ROAD & BULL MEADOW ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION (est.1995) AGM MINUTES - Friday 11th October 2024	
1	Present: C Robertson, L Dartnell, A Osborn, B Childs, J Alabaster, B Alabaster, C Cheeseman, S Cheeseman, C Davison, A Davison, T Whiberley, L Brede, S Simmonds, J Stephens, A Collins, C Collins, K Walsh, S Walsh, A Klecha, S Klecha, J Fielder, D Smith, M Barnes, M Kennedy, S Carter (25 total)
2	Apologies: T Gudge, J Bishop, M Watts, A Felton
3	Minutes AGM 13th October 2023 agreed
4 <i>Constitution para. 18</i>	Election of Committee One vacancy for committee – one person nominated. Julian Stephens nominated by Alan Collins, seconded by Clive Cheeseman and was unanimously voted on by members present at meeting. JS accepted the post and was welcomed by AK. Your committee for October 2024 to October 2025 is Andrew Klecha (Chair), Sharon Walsh (Secretary), Jane Fielder (Treasurer), Sheila Cheeseman (Membership Secretary), Clive Cheeseman, Julian Stephens.
5 <i>Constitution para. 36</i>	In 2022 HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) rolled out new anti-money laundering legislation. As RRBMAA has a bank account that holds money from its members, we are acting as a trust that must be registered with HMRC. The committee/signatories to the account are effectively trustees as they manage the bank funds on behalf of the plot holders. If we do not register a fine of £5000 could be payable. As discussed at the September meeting SW has completed the express trust registration process, which has resulted in amendments/additions needed to our Constitution. These amendments were circulated by email prior to the AGM. Members present were offered reading time at the meeting. The current registered trustees are Andrew Klecha, Jane Fielder, and Sharon Walsh. When changes are needed SW is the named HMRC account holder and can update in a straightforward process. This information can be transferred to a new account holder when required. The members present at the meeting voted unanimously to accept the proposed changes. SW will complete process and revised Constitution will be emailed to all, and posted onto the RRBM website in due course.
6 <i>Constitution para. 5&6</i>	Membership/Subscription Rates (Andrew Klecha) AK reported that the committee agreed at their pre-AGM meeting to propose an increase in plot fees of 30p per rod with effect from 1 st October 2025. The meeting noted that the last increase was in October 2022. The members present at the meeting voted unanimously to accept the proposed fee increase.
7 <i>Constitution para. 26</i>	Treasurer's Annual Report (Jane Fielder) JF presented her finance report - the bank balance at beginning September 2024 was £5197.57, compared with same time in 2023 £4296.83; £900.74 more in the bank this year. Petty cash in hand totals £149.72. Geoff Webb has audited the accounts. Water bills for April to October are Rosedale Road £465.09 c/w £354.47 in 2023, and Bull Meadow £69 c/w £47.44 in 2023. The readings for RR will be checked by CR and he will pass onto JF. Two members have not paid their fees, they will be chased and have to pay the late fee of £10 in addition to fees outstanding. 97% of members have paid on time. TW asked what the plans are for the £5000+ plus in the bank. Meeting discussed the need for contingency funds. Historically the bank balance is slow to grow, rising costs such as water, insurance need to be paid, plus repair costs and major projects that may be needed in the future. For example if any of the entrance gates needed repair or replacement that would be a significant expense. TW raised her previous idea of rejuvenating the memorial garden, making a more social space for ploholders to enjoy and use. AK invited TW to look at options, put in a costed plan/proposal, or see if there is an interest in a volunteer group working on that idea with her.
8	Membership Secretary's Annual Report (Sheila Cheeseman) 4 ploholders have left, or reduced the size of their holding. There are 2 half-plots on RR and 2 half-plots on BM to be let 23 on waiting list c/w 16 this time last year 2 new members/ploholders have joined us this year

Chairman's Report 2024 (Andrew Klecha)

I would like to thank you all for attending our 20th self-managed AGM. It's quite a significant milestone for us all. Especially for all the members who have freely volunteered their time over the last two decades.

Spring once again was very late. Germination proved very sporadic for many seeds, so once again a slow start for growing. There was a blight scare in early June, but I believe this was unfounded and was probably more to do with Fluctuating weather conditions. Summer duly arrived in July with some high temperatures, and if my memory serves me well there was rain, but never enough to halt the watering, a now constant task of summer gardening.

Also part of summer, is our annual BBQ. Originally scheduled for late June, it eventually took place on a sunny August Day. Thank you, to all that attended a very enjoyable event. I can also report the men finally won the Boules competition which has brought some respectability to the overall score.

Our waiting list is still growing, so it is a reminder to us all, how privileged we are to rent and keep our plots cultivated, to provide fresh fruit & vegetables for our families and friends. Very few actions will help our and the environment's health more than growing your own produce in our local gardens and Allotments. 'What we do to the soil, we do to ourselves'...**Matthew Evans** writes in his book simply called '**SOIL**'. May I suggest an essential read for any true gardener?

Saturday 17th August was this year's NALSG Open Day, once again held at the Rosedale Road site. On a beautiful sunny morning the locals came along to sample homemade cakes, sparkling elderflower drink, tea and coffee, then fill their bags with freshly picked fruit, vegetables & preserves. Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time, produce and cooking skills. A grand total of £423.85 was raised for the Association's funds, a new record.

All the Committee members and site managers once again should be shown our appreciation for the amount of unpaid work they put in over the past year.

Alan Collins, Clive Robertson & Stuart Simmonds at the Rosedale Road site, Les Dartnell and Alan Gorringer at our Bull Meadow site.

Also Mark Kennedy for his work on our website.

Sheila (the membership secretary) & Clive Cheeseman, Jane Fielder our treasurer and last but not least Sharon Walsh our secretary, who has spent an inordinate amount of her personal time, updating the tool hire/inventory and our constitution to bring it line with the HMRC guidelines for the money laundering Trust status, which should protect the committee and our financial status. This along with the thankless task of emailing members with the reports from the plot inspection team.

Due to work commitments Dean Smith is stepping down as committee member and I would like thank him, along with all above, who have given their time freely.

This year's Most Improved Plot of the Year Award goes to Tina Whiberley's plot at Rosedale Road. Tina & Len will receive a sack of Grow Organic along with this certificate for their excellent effort.

I hope you have brought some of your growing efforts here for this year's fruit and vegetable competition, along with the new section for preserves and pickles. Good luck to you all.

As a final note, I would like to paraphrase John F Kennedy;

'Don't ask what your Association can do for you, but what can you do for your Association'

Happy Gardening
Andrew Klecha

10	<p>Items from Members</p> <p>a) 2024 Plot Inspections – Mark Kennedy MK expressed his opinion that the plot inspection process undertaken this year was heavy handed, likening the experience to an Ofsted school inspection, he was offended by the tone of the email sent and that it wasn't an accurate representation of his plot, it hadn't taken into account the slow start due to the poor weather.</p> <p>Committee members explained that RRBMAA are required by the Thurrock Council contract to maintain a well-run and well used site. This process helps towards managing that contract. At least three people are on each inspection team visit, and that group agree together any action needed to be taken, which is then carried out by the secretary, this ensures it is a fair and consistent process. The full process was shared, by email, to all members before the summer inspection process began. At that time several members emailed the secretary and gave explanations as to why they may not be able to keep their plot up to standard this year; those explanations were taken into account when inspection visits took place. It is the same process as used in 2023, and builds on the pre-existing system and is modelled on the NSALG good practice advice. In 2024 the inspection team have visited on 4 occasions following up on progress on specific plots that have been asked to take action. The first round on 13th June 2024 resulted in 10 emails and 12 stage 1 letters being sent; there are 70 individual plotholders across both sites; 61% met the inspection criteria.</p> <p>A general discussion amongst the members present is summarised below: several present mentioned that all the plot holders had experienced the same weather conditions; people with knowledge of other sites commented our process was fair e.g. another Thurrock site operates one strike and you are evicted; one member complained he had been written to, wasting a stamp rather than having an email sent and that he had told a member of the committee/inspection team that he had some plot upkeep concerns this year that hadn't been taken into account; there was a general agreement that nobody liked receiving emails or letters from the “weed police”</p> <p>Committee members invited suggestions for improvement – MK asked that emails were written in a more considerate way, this was noted. No other suggestions given, but are welcomed if you want to email them to SW.</p> <p>AK drew discussion to an end by stating that the process is not personal and no member of the inspection team takes pleasure in the process and negative outcomes.</p>	
11	<p>Annual Competition</p> <p>a) Best up to three grown above ground 6 entries with the top three – 3rd place Les Dartnell's Apples 2nd place Andy Klecha's Kohlrabi 1st place Julian Stephen's Savoy Cabbage</p> <p>b) Best up to three grown below ground 4 entries with the top three – 3rd place Kevin Walsh's Mooli Radish 2nd place Alan Collin's Carrots 1st place Bob Child's Parsnips</p>	<p>c) Best conserve, jam, chutney, relish, pickle made from home-grown or plot-grown produce 11 entries with the top three – Joint 2nd place Tina Whiberley's Pickled Onions and Sue Klecha's Kimchi 1st place Sharon Walsh's Raspberry & Lime Jam This was a new category this year, as suggested by TW at a previous meeting, and all agreed it was a successful addition.</p>
12	<p>Next meeting 7.30 pm on Friday 8th November 2024 at Tyrells Hall WM Club</p>	