



The National Allotment Society

South West Branch

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 4th October 2023 at 19:00 using the zoom video conferencing facility.

Attendees: Lynda Clarke (Chair), Christina Ballard, Allan Cavill (SW Mentor), Peter Clarke, Clare Eggle, Helen Gillingham (Speaker), Mark Joynes (SW Regional Representative), Marcus Knight (Treasurer Designate), Deborah Maddock, Judith Steele and Jacky Wilkinson.

1. Welcome to AGM – Chaired by Lynda Clarke

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting at 19:05, having waited to see if there were any latecomers. She noted that in the absence of a Secretary, Deirdre Griffiths having resigned during this year, Peter Clarke would be taking the minutes.

2. Apologies – The Chair reported apologies received from Neil Birrell and Dawn Rogers.

3. Minutes of the AGM meeting held on 10th October 2022.

The minutes, having been previously circulated, were approved unanimously, proposed by Mark Joynes & seconded by Marcus Knight.

4. Matters arising from the minutes.

The Chair noted that the only item outstanding was the building of a relationship with Dorset Wildlife Trust, similar to that formed with the trust in Devon. They were in the process of updating their “garden” scheme to include allotments, community gardens and other open spaces. Tenants could apply for a plaque for their plot if they met sufficient of the criteria. Meanwhile, SW NAS & Dorset Wildlife Trust were working on a rewilding scheme that whole allotment sites could enter. It was anticipated that this would be launched in the spring. It was noted that other counties had similar schemes and members were encouraged to contact their own local Wildlife Trust. The Chair commented on a visit from the Rewilding Officer at Dorset Wildlife Trust to her society’s Open Morning, stating that there had been high interest in her stand and wildlife garden in a wheelbarrow.

5. Annual report.

The Chair commented on the committee’s report, previously circulated, which was a summary of activity during the past year and agreed to send it again with the minutes. (Attached as App A). There were no comments or questions.

6. Financial report.

Mark Joynes (outgoing Treasurer) commented on the report, explaining that the current accounting year was from July to the end of June, meaning that some of this year’s financial activity (e.g. show attendance, expenses etc) would be reported in the next year’s accounts. He reported that the branch had received a rebate payment from NAS Head Office, based on the estimated budget for the calendar year, but little had been spent. Payments were predominantly expenses claimed by the Mentor & Representative for activity supporting, assisting and advising societies.

The Chair noted that there had been some attendance at shows this year after the closedown caused by Covid. She appealed for all members in SW Region to consider supporting the

committee at shows held locally to them. (Anyone interested can contact any member of the committee to offer their services.)

Mark, referring to his earlier comments about the accounting period being based on the date the current SW Region committee started, proposed changing this to match the NAS Head Office accounting period of January to December. The Chair asked about the Region's reporting to Head Office and Mark responded that the Region has to report by mid-February. The proposal was seconded by Alan Cavill and accepted by all present.

Acceptance of the accounts presented was proposed by Peter Clarke, seconded by Marcus Knight and agreed unanimously.

7. Election of Officers and Committee for 2023-2024.

In the absence of a Secretary, the outgoing Chair asked the Representative, to chair the election of the new Chair.

a) Chairman – Lynda Clarke reported that there was only one nomination, herself, proposed by Bournemouth East Allotment Society and seconded by Allan Cavill. She was elected unanimously.

b) Secretary – The Chair reported that there had been no nominations, despite her approaching a number of potential candidates. She stated that Peter Clarke was prepared to cover this role in the interim, but asked for everyone to continue seeking for someone willing and able to fulfil this role. Mark Joynes proposed that Peter Clarke be elected as Interim Secretary. This was seconded by Marcus Knight and agreed by all present.

c) Treasurer – The Chair said that Marcus Knight had been nominated by his society and was prepared to continue in the role. This was agreed by all present.

d) Committee members – Neil Birrell and Mark Joynes (currently co-opted to the Management Committee as Representative), together with Alan Cavill (Mentor/Deputy Representative, had been nominated. These were all approved unanimously. Rowan Pym had decided not to stand again.

e) Regional Representative. The Chair reminded members that regions elected their representatives for a three-year period and that the new period for SW region started at the AGM 2024. Nominations needed to be submitted by 2nd January. Mark Joynes, currently co-opted as SW Representative to the National Allotment Society Management Committee had been the only nomination submitted and the Regional Panel were supporting this. It was unanimously agreed that his nomination would be forwarded to Head Office.

f) Committee Meeting Date - Lynda reported that she would negotiate the date for the first committee meeting of the year and distribute it soon. *{Post meeting note: proposed committee meeting dates are appended to these minutes}*

8. Members Items

a) Christina Ballard (Individual Member from South Petherton) asked whether we could do anything through the region to encourage allotment societies to support wildlife. The Chair noted that, despite being a national organisation, each county has its own Wildlife Trust and we therefore have to negotiate with each one separately, as happened with Devon and is happening with Dorset currently. Mark reported that he had just spent a couple of days with other Regional Representatives discussing what could be done for biodiversity on allotments.

b) Jackie Wilkinson (Individual Member from Bath) stated that she was working on her society's committee with Avon Wildlife Trust. She spoke about work to map all local allotments in the area. The Regional Representative spoke about the work currently underway by the NAS, working with the Ordnance Survey to create a digital map of all allotments in England and Wales. He expects to receive details of a trial in the next few weeks.

c) Marcus Knight reported on the Region's Facebook page (National Allotment Society SW Branch - <https://www.facebook.com/nsalgSW>) which he manages and on which he reposts items from Wildlife Trusts, National Trust etc having worked with Natural England for some 25 years.

d) Jackie Wilkinson asked if all societies are aware of their legal status. One of the local issues in Avon has been that some allotments were handed over to developers for use by people moving into new development housing and appear to have "disappeared".

e) The Chair suggested that the items discussed should be put back on the Region's agenda for future follow-up and that the committee would keep in touch with Christina & Jacky.

9. **Talk** by Helen Gillingham, Chair of The Sustainable Food Sub-Group of Transition Town Wellington (www.ttw.org.uk).

The Chair introduced Helen who gave an excellent and inspiring presentation. This has been recorded and is available on application to the Chair. The Chair thanked the speaker for her informative talk that demonstrated her commitment, passion and understanding.

The meeting closed at 20:55.

Dates of committee meetings for 2024:

Monday 8th January at 7.00pm

Monday 8th April at 7.00pm

Monday 8th July at 7.00pm

Wednesday 9th October at 7.00pm