

Old Marston Mill Lane Allotment Association
Annual General Meeting 2023

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 23 November 2023 at the Victoria Arms Pub, Mill Lane, Marston, from 7.00 pm

1. **Apologies:** Paola Biscchia
2. **Present:** Angela Brown (Chair), Chaka Artwell, Stephen Bond, Celia Boyce, Pat Brown, Rob Bryant, Tim Cann (Parish Council Clerk), Dave Fisher, Duncan Hatfield (Parish Council Chair), Jim Head, Alex Hodgkins, Felix Hodgkins, Chris Mitchell (Secretary), Hazel Rugg, Walter Towner, Corrina Turner, Dana Vlad (Treasurer),
3. **Minutes of last AGM, held on 14 November 2022:** Noted that the dates given in the minutes of 2022 for the expiry of the lease agreement was incorrect. The current lease agreement expires in 2028, not 2026. The minutes were approved.

4. Matters arising from last AGM

- a. ***The new lease agreement between the Marston Parish Council and Old Marston Mill Lane Allotment Association***, for 25 years coming into effect in 2028, and expiring in 2053, was duly signed and a copy returned to the Parish Council. The Committee thanked the PC for their continued support of the OMMLAA.
- b. ***Update on work in the Community Orchard:*** Trees were pruned and grass cleared around the trees.
- c. ***Update on privately-owned equipment in the lock-up:*** Some owners have labelled their equipment, but not all. The Community-owned equipment still needs labelling. **ACTION:** Rob Bryant agreed to purchase tape. Yellow tape for community-owned, all private equipment to be labelled by 1 June. Any unlabelled equipment after that will be claimed by OMMLAA. The Secretary to put up a poster and email plot holders in May.
- d. ***Proposal to purchase a shredder*** for community use to reduce burning of shrub up to a value of £700: Corrina Turner looked at auctions throughout the year, nothing found. **ACTION:** If anyone sees a good-quality shredder, contact the secretary or Chair. A small electric shredder is in the lock-up for home use.

5. Chair's report

- a. ***Increased theft of produce from the site:*** There have been many reports of theft of produce and break-ins into sheds by plot holders. The Chair and Secretary received one email with video evidence and is investigating. Access to the site is either via the two gates on Mill Lane or the broken wall on the Wards Caravan site. There is no access from the bypass. The Committee suggested increasing the height of the two gates on Mill Lane. The Parish Council agreed that they are responsible for the security of the site and requested that the Committee submit three quotes for gates and three for fencing. The Committee also agreed to plant a prickly hedge along the side of the damaged wall by Wards Park. Additionally, the Committee will send a further reminder to all plot holders that they should not trespass onto other plots. **ACTION:** CM agreed to purchase native hedging plants and plant a hedge along the wall to the Wards Caravan Park (enquire from National Hedgerow Association) Agreed to purchase a lock with sufficient keys for plot holders who have permission to walk through Wards Park. Get three quotes for fences and three quotes for gates and submit these to the Parish Council.
- b. ***Plot statistics:*** AB carried out two plot inspections this year and sent emails with reminders to plot holders who are either not working their plots or who have

encroached onto the shared boundary areas. To date she received responses from all but two plot holders (25b and 11a). Agreed that these two plots will be made available if subs aren't paid for the coming year. Plot 21 has been divided into two halves, Plot 4 needs clearing around the boundary lines and rubbish removing.

A working party marked out plots and erected stakes along all the boundary lines.

There is a small, but persistent problem with rats on plots with chickens. **ACTION:** The Chair agreed to email plot holders with chickens reminding them that they need to keep chicken feed in rat-proof feeders and food kept in metal containers. **ACTION:** update the lease agreement to enforce rat-proof feeders and metal containers for feed. Space between 31 and 20 needs clearing, CB to email plot holders on 20 and ask them to move their compost containers to within their boundary. The boundary between 22 and 33 is also causing a problem. Plot 22 has raised beds, which will be difficult to move. Agreed that this is work in progress and no further action will be taken to change the boundary between 22 and 33 at present.

Plot 5b is used by someone in a wheelchair – AB to contact the plot holder and offer him 11a, which has easier access.

In total, 5 half plots and one full plot are available to lease.

- c. **Water pipes:** The water pipes burst every winter. Agreed to get quotes from a couple of plumbers to replace the burst pipes with plastic pipes. During the winter plot holders will be reminded to turn the water off at the stop taps. **ACTION:** Dave Fisher to put up a notice by the taps and CB to email plot holders with livestock. Corrina to ask Dell for a quote to fit new pipes.
- d. **upkeep of paths around plots:** The fence at Bradlands is falling down and people (either Bradlands residents or council staff) are throwing cut shrub and ivy across the fence onto the allotments. The Parish Council will investigate who is responsible for fencing on all the boundary lines of the allotment. CB emailed plot holders who are encroaching onto their boundary paths, Dave Fisher has put stakes in the rows to indicate the true plot boundaries, and plot holders who are covering the paths with foil are asked to remove this.

6. Maintenance Report:

- a. **Allotment maintenance carried out in the past year :** Walk-about, staking, all boundaries measured, five deliveries of 8 tons of compost received, free to plot holders to take. Some of the compost is fresh and will need maturing for 12 months. Hedge on the Mill Lane side strimmed, vacant plots mowed.
- b. **Plans for 2024:** plant hedgerow at Wards Park, increase fencing by bypass and Bradlands, plant pollinating plants around and over the lock-up, plumbing, and new gates.
- c. **For future discussion:** There was keen interest to investigate keeping, or borrowing, pigs to clear plots. This would require stringent safety measures, including electric fencing, registering the pigs and a rota of volunteers to ensure the pigs are well kept and secure.

7. Treasurer's report:

- a. **Presentation of audited accounts:** money received from Oxford City Council and the Parish Council last year was partly spent on the purchase of stakes and on pollinating plants. More pollinating plants to be planted in front of the container, including fruit trees, climbers, kiwi. There is approximately £600 left to spend from the grants. The remaining money will go towards the purchase of a shredder.
- b. **Recommendations of subs for 2024:** The committee recommended £35 for a full plot and £20 for a half plot, **with a £5.00 reduction if paid by 31 December. Anyone paying their subs before 31 December will therefore only pay £30.00 or £15.00.**

plot holders not present at the meeting are reminded to pay via electronic transfer to

Lloyd's Bank, Headington Branch
Sort code: 30-94-04
Account number: 01563342

Or by cheque made payable to OMMLAA and posted to Dana Vlad,
74 the Paddocks, Yarnton OX5 1TE.

- c. **honorarium for grounds maintenance person:** The committee recommended that the honorarium for Dave Fisher be increase to £200 per annum. Proposed by Rob Bryant, seconded by Chris Mitchell and carried anonymously by those present. The committee expressed its thanks to Dave Fisher for the work he's carrying out.

8. Election of committee:

The following committee members were up for re-election and were approved for a further year:

		Proposed	Seconded
Chair	Angela Brown	Hazel Rugg	Pat Brown
Treasurer	Dana Vlad	Hazel Rugg	Pat Brown
Secretary	Chris Mitchell	Hazel Rugg	Chris Mitchell
Co-opted members:	Rob Bryant	Hazel Rugg	Chris Mitchell
	Hazel Rugg	Chris Mitchell	Jim Head
	James Head	Chris Mitchell	Hazel Rugg
New member:	Chaka Artwell, 12 Cranley Road, Barton OX3 8BW, 01865 701864 artwellworldwide@gmail.com	Rob Bryant	Hazel Rugg

9. Any other business:

- a. CA suggested that we hold a pumpkin competition. Agreed to do so, posters will go up in Spring to give plot holders the opportunity to grow pumpkins. The winner will be the person with the largest pumpkin.

b. **the winner of the plot number competition** was declared to be Adem and Evrim on plot 2a. **ACTION:** The secretary will write to them.

Actions required from this meeting

Item 4c	Rob Bryant Chris Mitchell	Purchase yellow electrical tape and mark committee-owned equipment in the lock-up. Write to plot holders and ask them to label privately-owned equipment by 1 June.
Item 4d	Everyone	Look out for a petrol shredder and alert committee members
Item 5a	Chris Mitchell	Purchase hedging plants and plant alongside wall to Wards Park
Item 5b	Chris Mitchell Angie Brown	Update lease agreement with information on rat-proof feeders and food storage Email plot holders with chickens with information on rat-proof feeders

Item 5c	Dave Fisher Corrina Turner	Put up notices by water butts to remind plot holders to turn off taps at the stop cock. Ask Dave for a quote for equipment plus labour to replace water pipes above ground.
AOB	Chris Mitchell	Send out information on pumpkin competition in May
AOB	Chris Mitchell	Write to Adem and Evrim with the result of the plot number competition.