



## **AGENDA**

For the Annual General Meeting of the Tamworth Farm Allotment Society  
To be held on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2023

1. Welcome
2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2022
3. Chair's report for 2022/23
4. Accounts for 2022/2023 with explanatory note
5. Decision of whether to audit the accounts
6. Election of President
7. Election of Committee Members
8. Any other business



**TAMWORTH FARM ALLOTMENT SOCIETY.  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES**

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2022, 2pm**

**Tamworth Farm Allotments - Rose Avenue Community Shed**

**Attending:**

Steffi Backhouse, Bernie Brown, Florin Cochintu, Elisabetta Constantini, Angelo Costa, Becky Ewens, Ian Holloway, Tom Greatrex, Julie Mallett, Hazel Norman, Kim Pugh, Tony Redpath, Jo Rodgers, Robert Rudolf, Marina Simeon, Bev Stansfield, Kathleen Stevens, Katy Willison

**Apologies:** Agatha Akyigyina, Zenobia Cowen-Davies, Joan Henry, Maxine Rhodes, Waltraud Taylor, Peter Terry, Trina Thompson, Martin Tollett,

**1. Welcome**

Jo Rodgers thanked everyone for joining and advised we are quorate for the 8<sup>th</sup> AGM since self-management.

**2. Minutes from previous AGM**

Minutes had been circulated previously and were unanimously approved.

**3. Chair's Report**

A document entitled "TFAS PRIORITIES FOR 2021/2022: AN UPDATE ON OUR WORK AND ACHIEVEMENTS" was included in the AGM documents issued, highlighting the scope for the year 2021-22. Priorities were grouped into 5 areas:

1. Enhanced communications and accountability
2. Improved financial procedures
3. Better site security
4. Enhanced facilities for members
5. Updates and miscellaneous work

Of the items, 17/28 (just over 60%) have been successfully completed to date, 8/28 (just over 28%) are underway, pending completion and 3/28 (just over 10%) are still to be started.

The Community Toilet was most successful as it had been a long-standing requirement on site and the most popular item voted for on the project list in 2019.

Grant funding has enabled us to provide this facility without exhausting our own TFAS funds.

Questions on the report followed as noted:

Marina asked for further details on the community kitchen. This being a project to potentially build an outdoor kitchen facility for events including wash up, cooking area for gas hob and safe space for BBQ.

Bernie asked about water saving issues given the high cost to TFAS of the water bill and also about the green waste bay on the Farm. We touched on how both water harvesting and composting will be key areas of focus next year in terms of education and mini projects. (The Borehole Project was mentioned and discussed later in the meeting – see below). It was confirmed that the bay will be retained in its current location for the time being, and as plot holders begin to self-manage their green waste, we hope there is a time when this space can be developed into something else.

Elisabetta suggested partitioned waste bays for better waste management. It was agreed that education needs to be major part of this incentive and Julie invited anyone interested to set up a group to research good composting policy. Rob noted that our site is one of the better managed sites in Merton with this respect.

Kim asked if we could switch off the water and rely on the water tanks making plottolders more careful about how much they use but it was advised that we are not able to isolate tanks from the mains. Water is switched off at one place which closes supply across the site.

Kathleen asked about the date for the next skip. Katy explained it would be in the spring and that unfortunately the last skip delivery was full after we put the fly tipped rubbish plottolders had left on Rose Avenue so general plottolder waste wasn't able to be removed on that day.

The Borehole Project: Tony ran through the short document sent out with brief details about how this might work for the site, feasibility, costs and possible outcomes. `early days yet and quite a bit of initial research to be done. A discussion followed with Florin and Bernie bringing some interesting thoughts and experience to the conversation. They were invited to follow this up with Tony and Rob later in order to investigate this further. If the borehole is feasible it will free up considerable funds each year for other major projects and work on the site.

#### **4. Presentation of accounts**

Detailed accounts had been circulated previously. Jo noted that taking out the grant funding for the toilet the accounts are in a healthy place.

There were no questions or queries and so the accounts were approved unanimously.

#### **5. Election of Officers**

A paper had been sent out noting that Hazel Norman was happy to stand as our President again and the following committee members are willing to stand again:

- Jo Rodgers
- Steffi Backhouse
- Rob Rudfelt

- Julie Mallet
- Tony Redpath
- Beverley Stansfield
- Waltraud Taylor

Tony Redpath advised that those present would be invited to approve nominations to the Committee. At its first meeting (which would be chaired by the President) the Committee would appoint the Chair and Secretary and allocate roles to other Committee members.

Julie Mallett added that the committee is a volunteer role with expected attendance of 75% of meetings however the workload is shared amongst the team. Members were invited to let the Committee know if they were interested in joining.

Elisabetta Constantini proposed to stand, and Tom Greatrex expressed an interest but is currently unable to join for a couple of months due to work pressures.

Jo Rodgers, Robert Rudolf, Julie Mallett, Tony Redpath, Bev Stansfield, Waltraud Taylor, Steffi Backhouse and Elisabetta Constantini all confirmed as committee members and will meet 14<sup>th</sup> November for first meeting.

## **6. President's Remarks**

Hazel thanked those present for voting for her again this year to continue as President. She remarked how fortunate and privileged we are to have the plots at a time when things can feel overwhelming. We must strive for sustainability and biodiversity.

## **7. Chair's Remarks**

Jo thanked the committee, saying it had been a pleasure to be Chair, despite a tough few years we achieved so much. Jo advised that she is stepping down from the role to allow others to take a turn.

Steffi thanked Jo for her commitment to the society as Chair, bringing her long experience of the site, knowledge of our ploholders and the self-management transition, from which we have all benefitted. We look forward to continuing to move forward together on new and exciting projects in the next year.

Jo ended the meeting at 3pm inviting everyone to have refreshments.



## A NOTE ON TFAS PRIORITIES AND WORK OVER THE LAST YEAR

Welcome to our 2023 AGM.

2023 has been a busy year for us with key issues at the forefront of our minds, for example, the three main priorities this year: site security, seeking to manage and reduce water costs and composting.

We continue to do all we can to improve the perimeter security with planting of spikey shrubs on regular community days. Thanks to those helpers who have given their time. We have asked the Council (which owns the fences surrounding the three sites) whether it would approve a scheme to increase the height of the fence in areas where it is easy to climb, and we hope to make progress with this over the next few months. We have improved our processes for reporting thefts and other problems to the Police. Site security will continue to be a top priority for the coming months.

As you will recall 'Water' was a major issue in the spring when we had substantial leaks to deal with. Rob Rudolf of the TFAS team worked closely with the contractor to install new pipework and stop cocks enabling us to isolate each site more easily. We know this caused some inconvenience during the first weeks when the water should have been switched back on and we thank you for your patience. We believe this has paid off and we are now more in control of the water distribution going forward. Maintaining our watering system across the site is an on-going job.

We continue to give thought to future water capture projects which are noted below in our schedule for next year and actively encourage everyone to consider collecting water in any way possible to help keep our bills down.

Another of the TFAS Team, Walli Taylor, took the lead on ensuring regular fresh manure deliveries were arriving. We know from speaking to our members that this manure is preferred, allowing ploholders to use it how they choose whether that be adding to compost bays or digging into the soil to breakdown over winter. Compost Building workshops were run by Rob Rudolf and Elisabetta Constantini earlier in the summer with one lucky attendee having one built on their plot.

We have had a healthy turnover of plots this year. Several large plots have been given up this year and cleared, enabling us to split them up and rent out more manageable size plots. Julie Mallett, our Lettings Officer, has let 19 new plots so far, with another couple due to handover by the end of the year. This has also allowed us to open our waiting list and we have had a healthy level of interest from people putting their names down for plots. We welcome new ploholders to their first AGM if they are able to attend.

We continue to carry out active plot management. With so many people on the waiting list, it is important that we don't allow plots to be under used through non cultivation or neglect. This year, we issued 13 formal Improvement Notices asking people to make specific improvements to their plots. Most people responded by carrying out the requested

improvements, while two people voluntarily gave up their plots. We had to issue three “last chance” Non-Cultivation Notices and regrettably these led to two plot-holders being evicted.

Our Harvest celebration brought new friends and families together for a social in the autumn sunshine. Community Days have also found groups from all parts of the site helping to plant shrubs around the perimeter, tidy up Rose Avenue pathways and help to maintain our Horseshoe shed area. Thank you to everyone who was able to give their time to support our communal spaces.

Set out below are some notes on what we achieved this year and what we are still working on. Many items from last year are already closed with others a little trickier and still pending but forming part of the works for the year ahead in to 2024:

Progress is colour coded: Green (completed), Amber (underway/pending).

<b>PRIORITY</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Digitise historic papers.	These have now been migrated to the Dropbox for future reference.
Adopt new TFAS rules	A new, simpler set of rules were adopted at a Special General Meeting in March.
Establish document retention policy	This has been completed.
Data check exercise to ensure plot holder info	This has been completed for Rose Avenue; we will now move on to the Farm and Horseshoe
Water conservation & Supply	This year we undertook major works to repair leaks and maintain our water system. A sub-committee has formed to look into water harvesting on the site and ploholders are being encouraged to purchase water gauges to check if soil needs watering and to consider any water harvesting opportunities they can put in place on their plot. We are already seeing a reduction in our water usage so thank you to everyone for being vigilant and watering sensibly.
Composting	Free compost now provided regularly at key times of year. Introducing workshops to encourage and educate about building cost effective bay and how to manage composting successfully. We aim to do more of these as requested.
Finish the community area.	Rob has continued to lead regular Community Days to improve the HS communal area. Thanks to all volunteers! We now have a wonderful lawn where we celebrated Harvest 2023. Small tweaks continue.

Establish external audit arrangements.	Our new Model rules require us to ask members at the AGM to vote on our audit arrangements. We will put in place arrangements once we know the outcome of the vote.
Trees around the site	We continue to ensure that the trees on site are well managed. If you have any concerns about a tree and/ or would like advice and help with tree management, please let us know. We also liaise with London Borough of Merton about trees external to the site.
Provide opportunities for members to use shed and communal lawn.	The Community Shed & Communal Area is available for use however the raised terrace in front needs emergency repairs to make that part safe. The code for the padlock has been circulated for use of the First Aid Kit. Sadly, we do still find some anti-social use by persons unknown, so we ask that anyone using it ensures the doors are securely locked once they leave.
Improve perimeter security.	We continue to do all we can to improve the perimeter security with planting of spikey shrubs on regular community days. Thanks to those helpers how have given their time. Site security will continue to be a top priority for the coming months.
Establish community kitchen.	On the back burner until a working team is in place.
Come and Meet the Committee Day	This had been discussed but as many of the committee are already at the Community Days other specific days have not been planned.

We had a fascinating walk and talk around the site by Roy Vickery from South London Botanical Society during the summer and he told us some of the folklore attached to the plants we saw around the paths and perimeter. A document has been consolidated with notes on the plants if anyone is interested. He visited again recently with South London Botanic Society members to undertake a survey of the site which he has sent to us. Sadly, nothing rare but all valuable plants in the ecological cycle on our allotment.

You are probably seeing around you new ploholders joining the TFAS family as we continue to monitor and manage the plots with our inspections. We thank you for your continual support to keep your spaces tidy and weed free ensuring a pleasant outdoor experience for everyone visiting the site and your neighbours. Paths are especially important to keep clear for those of us who are less mobile.

As the days shorten and the colder air creeps in, we may be starting to think about how our plots grew this year and what we might try next year. Each new season is a new journey and if anyone has any thoughts about taking a step towards committee membership do let us know.

Thank you.

**Steffi Backhouse**  
**TFAS Chair 2022/23**



## **DECISION ON WHETHER TO AUDIT THE TFAS ACCOUNTS 2022/23**

Members will recall that under the new rules adopted in April TFAS members must vote at each AGM on whether to have:

- an audit carried out by a qualified auditor
- an audit carried out by two or more lay auditors
- a report by a qualified auditor or
- unaudited accounts.

Accordingly, a vote on this matter will be held at the 2023 AGM.

If, in advance of the AGM, any member wishes to receive information on the way in which the Committee manages and monitors the Society's income and expenditure, please contact a Committee member or email [tamworthfarm@gmail.com](mailto:tamworthfarm@gmail.com).

**TONY REDPATH**  
**TFAS Committee**