



## **COTTONMILL AND NUNNERY ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION**

Minutes of the **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** held on Sunday 11th May 2025 at 14.30 at the Cottonmill Community and Cycling Centre, 12 Old Oak, St Albans, AL1 2EF

### **Apologies**

Claire & Gary Alderson, Helen and Paul Littlewood, Ercia Weindorf & Scott Bailey, Mark Jones, Clare Dale, Brian Gilson.

Twenty one members attended

### **Minutes of the AGM held on 14th April 2024**

The minutes were agreed by the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

### **Welcome and Chairman's Report**

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming out to support the AGM and for all the support members and volunteers provide to CNA A and who help bring about improvements to the allotment sites.

There has been a major push on creating the wetland area at Cottonmill and after volunteers worked hard to dig out the initial layer it was clear that a digger would be needed and Margaret Harris managed to secure support from a company, Neilcott's, which provided three employees to operate the digger that was provided free of charge by the Gap Group. This was followed by another work group where volunteers planted a living hedge and also constructed dead hedges to make the area safe. Aquatic plants are being introduced.

CNA A members are also involved in a project that is monitoring bat activity across St Albans sites and Hilary and Jeff Heine are training to use the detection equipment and interpret the results. There are some exciting initial results from Cottonmill indicating a number of species are using the area, in particular where the wetland is being developed.

The Chairman also acknowledged the long-term support CNAA receives from Aylett's Nursery and praised the perseverance of the staff who managed to deliver compost this year under very difficult conditions.

He thanked those who made the Summer Show in September 2024 a great success and thanked the Committee members who stepped in to organize this show when the Project Officer position remained unfilled. He also thanked Clare Norman for stepping forward to organize the 2025 show.

The Chairman thanked two people who had decided to stand down from the Committee for their work and support, Jane Ridge who covered both Nunnery 1 and 2 as Plot officer for a number of years and Paul Littlewood in his role as Assistant Plot officer at Cottonmill.

The Chairman presented his personal views on the current situation with rising and fluctuating water levels on Cottonmill since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 when Affinity Water started abstracting water under a new license from the Environment Agency. Many plots were flooded and crops lost. The uncertainty about how regularly the plots will flood causes planning blight for not just plot holders but also the Council as some plots may become unlettable. Whilst AW has remained in communication with him he expressed his frustration at the information provided and also in the lack of action from the Council. The CNAA response going forward will be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

The Chairman announced the death in the week prior to the meeting of John Boden at the age of 98. He spoke warmly of John who had been an allotmentee on Cottonmill for over 30 years, won the Ryder cup three times and was the Chair of CNAA for ten years.

### **Financial Report and Membership Update.**

CNAA had 115 members during 2024/2025. The accounts had been circulated to members by email before the meeting and no queries had been received and the accounts were accepted by the meeting. The Treasurer gave a summary of income and expenditure. The total income was £6568 and with an expenditure of £5862 and assets at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 of £4763. The Treasurer gave thanks to Alison Shipperlee and Scott Bailey for acting as scrutineers for the accounts.

### **Election of Management Committee Members for 2025**

The CNAA constitution requires Committee Members to stand down after three years on the Committee, although they can stand for re-election.

Keith Reynolds was required to stand down and was willing to stand for re-election and no other nomination was received.

Jane Ridge, who has been the Plot Officer for both Nunnery 1 and 2, decided not to stand again and a nomination for the Plot Officer role on Nunnery 2 was received for Mark Jones. The Nunnery 1 position remains vacant although Brian Gilson has confirmed he will continue to assist with the running of this site.

Terry Beckett announced that he intended to stand down at the last AGM and two people who stepped forward were co-opted for the role of Treasurer, Ed Howarth and Membership Secretary, Clare Dale. They have been working with Terry for a handover and have been nominated formally for these roles.

Paul Littlewood, the Assistant Plot Officer on Cottonmill, decided to stand down and Helen Miller was nominated for this Committee position.

There were no nominations for the Project Officer role and the position remains vacant.

The other Committee members were willing to continue in their current roles.

As there were several vacant posts which had received a formal nomination, the Secretary asked for a proposer and seconder for each of them and then asked members to vote for each proposal, non-members however could not vote.

Nominations for the vacant positions were:

Keith Reynolds, Chairman

- Proposer: Alison Shipperlee
- Seconder: Lousie Wiseman

The proposal was put to the vote and approved by members.

Ed Haworth, Treasurer

- Proposer: Clare Norman
- Seconder: Michelle Macenzie

The proposal was put to the vote and approved by members.

Clare Dale, Membership Secretary

- Proposer: Margaret Harris
- Seconder: Ed Haworth

The proposal was put to the vote and approved by members.

Nunnery 2 Plot Officer- Mark Jones

- Proposer: Di Martin
- Secunder: Dave Bushnell

The proposal was put to the vote and approved by members.

Cottonmill Assistant Plot Officer- Helen Miller

- Proposer: Margaret Harris
- Secunder: Louise Wiseman

The proposal was put to the vote and approved by members.

The remaining positions, where current Committee members are not required to stand down are-

- Janet Wyatt, Secretary
- Louise Wiseman, Newsletter Editor
- Cottonmill Plot Officer-Margaret Harris
- Sopwell Mill Plot Officer-Clare Norman
- Facebook Administrator-Michelle Mackenzie

The CNAA Committee for 2025 was confirmed as-

- Chairman- Keith Reynolds
- Treasurer- Ed Haworth
- Membership Secretary- Clare Dale
- Secretary- Janet Wyatt
- Cottonmill Plot Officer-Margaret Harris
- Cottonmill Assistant Plot Officer- Helen Miller
- Nunnery 2 Plot Officer- Mark Jones
- Sopwell Mill Plot Officer-Clare Norman
- Facebook Administrator-Michelle Mackenzie
- Newsletter Editor-Louise Wiseman
- Project Officer-vacant
- Nunnery 1 Plot Officer -vacant]

### **AOB and Closing remarks from the Chairman**

- Compost delivery will continue to be managed by Terry Beckett and he asked that he is informed after discussions with Aylett's on the timing.
- A member raised the issue of bee hives on the sites – this was not discussed at this meeting but will be on the agenda for the next Committee meeting to formulate CNAA's response if an approach is made, acknowledging that this would ultimately be a decision for the Council.

- A member asked for an update on progress with an environmental project on Nunnery 2 to plant a hedge. JW agreed to send this enquiry to Mark Jones, who is now the Plot Officer.
- A question was asked about the schedule for site inspections by the Council and the reply was that there are two each year in April and July. If a non-cultivation order is sent then there is a return inspection after 1 month, if this is unsatisfactory and letter 2 is sent and the next inspection after a month is not satisfactory then a notice to quit is issued.

The Chairman closed the formal stage of the meeting at 15.25 and introduced the speaker, John Prichard.

**Presentation by John Pritchard, Chairman of the Ver Valley Society.**  
John gave a very interesting talk entitled 'The Challenge of Chalk Streams'.