

MINUTES – Meopham and District Allotment Association (MDAA)	
Date	19 th March 2024 19:30 – 21:30
Venue	Small Committee Room, Meopham Village Hall
Attendees	Mark Hill, David Aspinall, Rodney Buckland, Lindy Webster, Victoria Crone, Lizze Brooker, Dom Sullivan, Natalie Aldridge, Lukas Rains

Item No.		Action
1	Welcome and Apologies MH opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending our first committee meeting in 2024. A dictionary of Committee members' initials is provided as a footnote.	
2	Draft Minutes of the 14th November 2023 meeting No corrections to the Minutes of the meeting were proposed.	
3	Matters arising, not covered elsewhere None	
4	Chair's Report MH reported that he and RB attended a meeting on 13th February with Cheryl Price, chair of Meopham Parish Council, Parish Clerk Shaun Fishenden and Deputy Parish Clerk George Duffort A wide range of subjects were covered: - We were asked about reports of plots being let to plot holders who live outside the boundary of Gravesend Borough Council (GBC). RB provided a breakdown of plot holder addresses by postcode – DA11 30, DA12 41 and DA13 83. This accounted for 154 plots with ten vacant. - It was agreed that a better measure of compliance with the requirement for all plot holders to be GBC residents was to list plot holder addresses by 'post town'. Such a list, showing full compliance, was provided by RB by email the following day.	RB

	- RB explained that several plots were taken by 'community groups' and it was possible that one or more members could be living outside the GBC area. It was agreed that this was not a problem so long as the registered plot holder was a GBC resident. - We were also asked about our insurance cover as the Association was no longer a member of the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG). RB informed MPC that the Association ended its annual subscription to NSALG in 2020 for several reasons and informed Sarah Egglesdon, then Parish Clerk. - RB explained that up until this time the Association had two insurance policies providing duplicate cover, and that, apart from being unnecessary, there was a risk that insurers would not pay any claims if duplicate cover was in place. RB was able to describe the Association's policy as providing better value for money. - A visit by MPC to consider a list of tree surgery requests from plot holders was arranged for 19th March. - Cheryl Price requested that the Association attend the Parish Council Annual Meeting on Wednesday 10th April, starting at 19:00. Cheryl also informed us of the date for the Meopham Village Fete – 20th July. We agreed that the Association would seek to have a presence. - In return, MH invited Cheryl Price to be a judge at our planned 'Allotment Show' later in the year. - RB introduced the continuing problem of our central roadway, which deteriorates quickly after our occasional remediation efforts with Type 1 roadstone. - Approval was given by MPC to install a Woo Woo composting toilet in the agreed location. - RB informed MPC that the Meopham U3A BeeWatch Group had recorded many Bumble bee Queens nesting in the long grass between the allotment domain and the Wrotham Road in March and early April last year. It was agreed that MPC would not arrange grass cutting until May each year with a second cut in early September. - RB enquired about any progress with a Men's Shed on the Southfield Shaw site. There was nothing to report from MPC.	
5	Secretary's Report RB noted that John Chalk (19B) has extensive maintenance experience and proposed that he be approached to take over at least some tasks carried out by Dave Brown.	LW

	RB noted that the tyre mountain near the front gate has not yet been removed. RB reported that approval was given by MPC to take out the 'dogwood' on plots 16C and 16D, the Scots Pine on 11C and to reshape a tree on plot 12E as well as to attend to several other minor tasks such as obstructed pathways and excessive shading in a first phase of work. RB reported that he had received a complaint about the concrete apron outside the front gate. The underside of a plot holder's car (albeit with a long wheelbase) had visibly scraped against the apron when leaving the site. This was reported to MPC during their visit earlier in the day. (MPC has responsibility for maintaining the gate and the apron.) RB reported that MH had invited Cheryl Price to be the judge at our proposed 'Allotment Show'. Agreed: our Show will be held on Sunday 15th September.	NA RB RB
6	Lettings Manager's Report VC reported that there were seven plot vacancies and that viewing by potential plot holders was underway.	
7	Treasurer's Report DA outlined his annual accounts, which were being audited, and noted that rental income was in excess of that for previous years due to a high percentage of renewals being received before the end of our financial year – 31st January. Agreed: given that the accounts were being audited, the AGM will be held at the Village Hall on Sunday 2nd June at 16:00	DA RB
8	Maintenance LW reported that her indefatigable brother would again be mowing the grass in the immediate vicinity of the allotment domain from time to time.	
9	Health and Safety MH noted that there was occasional speeding n the central roadway. A question was raised about an agreement to order 10mph signs and posts – not minuted at the time. Agreed: RB to contact Dave Brown	RB

	AOB LR showed several prototype pages for a renewed Meopham Allotments website. No specific next steps were discussed. RB reported that the Association has a block booking for Committee meeting in the Village Hall. The expected cadence is two months, although dates can be varied by agreement with VH management. Agreed: the next Committee meeting will be on Tuesday 7th May, starting at 19:30.	

Key:

NA Natalie Aldridge
DA David Aspinall
EB Lizze Brooker
RB Rodney Buckland
VC Victoria Crone

MH Mark Hill
LR Lukas Rains
DS Dom Sullivan
LW Lindy Webster