

MDAA
Draft Minutes

2025 AGM

22nd June 2025

Meopham and District Allotment Association (MDAA)

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Meopham and District Allotment Association held at Meopham Village Hall on 22nd June 2025 at 4 pm.

1. Apologies – Graham Elton, Lindy Webster, Paul Cullen

Present: 24 plot holders including six Committee members

Chair: Mark Hill

2. 2024 AGM Minutes.

Proposed by Dominic Sullivan and seconded by Lizze Brooker, the motion

‘The Minutes are accepted as a true record of last year’s AGM’

was approved by the quorate AGM.

3. Chair’s Annual Review. The main points in Mark Hill’s review were:

- David Aspinall, our Treasurer has decided to vacate his plot. This means that he can no longer manage our finances, which he has expertly done for the last eight years.
- Rodney Buckland, our Acting Secretary for the last five years, has decided that, with new professional and other responsibilities, he can no longer carry out the challenging range of duties of Secretary.
- Dominic Sullivan is retiring from the Committee.
- Lindy Webster is handing over the role of Maintenance Officer to Mark Hill.
- Other members of the Committee – Lizze Brooker, Rita Cook and Mitchell Whetstone are volunteering to continue their work in the Committee.
- Victoria Crone, our Lettings Manager, is planning to handover the role to a volunteer and to take up another role in the Committee.
- Andrew Webster (grass cutting and plot preparation) and David ... (plumbing) continue to support the Committee in maintaining our domain.
- Various proposals for the Southfield Shaw site are being considered by Meopham Parish Council, including a Community Orchard and a Sporting Facility.
- The first phase of a Tree Surgery campaign was carried out in January.
- A Social Day for plot holders is planned for Saturday 12th July.
- Plot holders with ponds should make sure that they are compliant with the requirements specified in the Tenancy Agreement rev 13.
- This year’s WeedWalk included assessment of the state of pathways between plots.
- A third collection of tyres, retrieved from our plots will be sent for recycling shortly.
- Plot holders are reminded that they should keep to the speed limit on the central roadway.
- Mark thanked all Committee members for their contributions to the running of our Association.

4. Secretary’s Report. Rodney Buckland reported on activities since July 2024.

Major activities have included: administering decisions made by the WeedWalk (annual review of plot conditions) sub-committee, liaising with Meopham Parish Council and other external organisations, arranging and recording Committee meetings, and handling a regular flow of deliveries, enquiries, complaints and occasionally thanks.

- The annual WeedWalk was carried out on Tuesday 17th June. In addition to reasonable levels of plot cultivation, pathways between plots were assessed.
- This year, 16 plot holders responsible for 20 plots have received a reminder about their responsibilities specified in the Tenancy Agreement rev 13. A further inspection of plots is planned for 18th July. Last year, 22 plots were identified as needing attention and nine tenancies were terminated in August .
- Over the last year, Meopham Parish Council has presented a dynamic interface for not getting things done. Outstanding tasks include:
 - appointing a contractor to resurface the concrete apron outside our front gate
 - arranging for a contractor to cut the grass between our array of plots and Wrotham Road twice per year, without disturbing Bumble Bee queens emerging from their winter quarters in March and April
 - contributing to resurfacing the central roadway
 - contributing to fencing between our array of plots and the farmer's fields.
- Whenever possible, deliveries of manure and wood chips are delivered to the 'Far End' as well as by the front gate.
- Although the Association's membership of the National Allotment Society was terminated in 2020, one of the services it provided could be attractive to plot holders. Bulk seed ordering from local horticultural suppliers is worth exploring as it could offer significant cost savings. A volunteer to assess the benefits and management of such a scheme would be a valuable first step.
- Reports of theft of both produce and equipment continue at a rate of about ten per year. Last autumn, a security camera on one of our plots caught plot holders from a neighbouring plot vigorously harvesting produce without permission. The evidence gathered was instrumental in the termination of the invaders' tenancy.
- Water supply continues to be our largest running cost. The cost of usage in April was £150 and that for May was £363, reflecting an average of eight cubic metres of water usage per day over the month.
- Currently, 25 of our plot holders have more than one plot and several have more than two. This is acceptable as long as there isn't a long queue of applicants, which has been the case in recent times.
- The distribution of our plot holders between the three post codes in the Gravesham Borough Council area shows that we reflect our name: Meopham and District Allotment Association. DA11 (Northfleet and West Gravesend) has 33 plot holders, DA12 (East Gravesend) has 42, Istead Rise has 23 and Meopham, Sole Street, Cobham, Culverstone and Vigo (DA11) have 84.

5. Treasurer's Report. David Aspinall presented and explained audited accounts for the year ending 31st January 2025.

Main points:

- A loss of £4,072.98 was recorded for the year, mainly due to investment in a composting toilet and tree surgery. On balance, our treasurer has decided to write off the cost of the composting toilet in one year leaving only the relatively minor cost of consumables in future years.
- The cost of removal of used tyres is likely to diminish as long as the only tyres being brought onto site are attached to cars.
- Considering the need to maintain a substantial 'sinking fund' for the water system and other unplanned maintenance work, it was proposed that the plot rental fee should be increased by £5.00 (£3.00 for a half plot) to £40.00 for 2026/27.

Proposed by Mark Hill and seconded by Ian Cook, the motion
'The plot rental fee be increased to £40.00'
was approved by the quorate AGM.

6. To receive and adopt the audited accounts

Proposed by Rita Cook and seconded by Phil Larkin, the motion
'The Association's audited accounts be received and adopted'
was approved by the quorate AGM.

7. Tenancy Agreement rev 13

- Discussion of rev 13, published in February 2025, centred on clauses 14 and 15.
It was proposed that Clause 14(b) be reworded to capture more of the reality of waste being brought on site and its removal when plots are vacated.
A specific addition was proposed for part of Clause 15, namely:
Unattended hosepipes, directly connected to the water supply and defined as hosepipes or sprinklers that are not being hand-held while watering crops are not allowed.

It was agreed that changes to rev 13 would be discussed by the next Committee.

8. Elections

Mark Hill announced that he was happy to continue as chairman and that four other members had signified their willingness to serve: Rita Cook, Lizze Brooker, Lindy Webster and Mitchell Whetstone.

Expressions of interest to serve on the Committee were received from:

Bridgett Widdison

Wendy Josh

Susan Andrews

Sue Twyman

Ian Cook

(Another plot holder, Fern Edwards, who did not attend the AGM, has since volunteered to join the Committee.)

9. Any other Business

10. Closing remarks

Mark Hill thanked everyone for supporting the AGM.

The meeting was closed at 5:50 pm

Draft prepared by Rodney Buckland