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**Humber Avenue Community Allotments Community Interest Company  
Committee Meeting  
Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024 11am – 1pm  
Durrington Community Centre**

**Present:**

Stephen Garrett (SG) (Acting Chair)

Judy Kara (JK)

Peter Davey (PD)

Christine Busfield (BD)

Terry Smith (TS)

Malcolm Hedger (MH)

Linda Head (LH)

Ruth Allan (RA)

Ros Knight (RK)

Andrew Scoon (AS)

**MINUTES**

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

SG welcomed the committee to the meeting. It was noted that a WAGA representative had been invited but did not attend.

**2. Minutes from the last meeting**

Approved as an accurate reflection of the meeting, as proposed by TS and seconded by LH.

**3. Matters arising from the last meeting not covered by the agenda**

**4.4 Liability insurance**

TS confirmed this had now been increased from £5 million to £10 million.

**4.4 Clearance of Plot 42**



TS informed the committee that a donation of £50 had been given by the plothead, which had been donated to Ferring Country Centre, HACA's nominated charity.

### **13 Plotholders meeting**

Due to lack of response, this did not take place.

## **4. Reports**

### **4.1 Chair's Report**

SG informed the committee there was currently one complaint which was being looked into.

### **4.2 Treasurer's Report**

PD handed out the Income Expenditure Report for February 2024.

He highlighted the income of £19,026.67 and balance without CIL money of £5,354.21. He reported that the next CIL payment of £4,000 is due next week. Total expenditure for the month was £1,727.44. He reported that a £252 donation for manure had been paid to Ferring Country Centre. He proposed a skip is hired for March and the committee discussed the frequency of a skip on site and agreed to hire a skip three times a year, in March, July/early August and October. RK will publicise this in the next newsletter.

PD warned the committee that HACA would need to spend some money to avoid being in profit and thus being liable for tax. AS asked whether plot fees could come down if HACA could not identify appropriate expenditure and PD replied that this could be considered.

PD informed the committee that he had received a card from RHS which can be presented to a plothead as a thank you or well done. JK suggested an additional presentation to thank a plothead at the AGM.

The committee agreed to consider who they would like to nominate and discuss this further at the next meeting.

PD reminded the committee that HACA has a half price entrance card from the RHS, which is available to all plotheads to borrow. RK will publicise this in the next newsletter.

### **4.3 Membership Secretary's Report**

CB informed the committee she had found tenants for two vacant plots and that the current waiting list stood at 88. She confirmed she has highlighted those on the waiting list who are suitable for the new allotments. CB and MH will conduct plot inspections in March and RK will publish this in the next newsletter.

### **4.4 Company Secretary's Report**

TS updated the committee on the CIL project, reporting no concerns with any potential overspending. He informed the committee that some plotheads had worked voluntarily on this project, but paid help was also secured to ensure the project is finished on time.



TS informed the committee that the hedge had now been cut but a date was still awaited for work to start on the road.

Regarding Plot 92, TS updated the committee that two beds had been let to a plotholder from the new estate and MIND have also taken over a couple of beds, leaving just one double raised bed to let.

He updated that committee on the SAND project work experience, which has been delayed and will now restart after Easter.

He reported that at the Board meeting, it was proposed that there is no increase in plot fees this year. The committee voted unanimously to approve this.

## **5. Projects**

MH updated the committee on the following projects:

Plot 90 – five deep rooted planters purchased, ready for filling.

Plot 92 – beds are filled with soil; paths will be completed once the weather improves.

Plot 49 – oak sleepers have been purchased.

MH thanked the plotholders who had helped with the above.

Metal tools – these have been removed and replaced with plastic ones.

Four new wheelbarrows have been purchased.

New community room – MH passed around a design. Total cost including furniture, plumbing and solar panels is estimated to be in the region of £20,000. TS explained the new community room will be prebuilt and HACA will aim to raise the money to fund this and to employ people to erect the building. It is proposed that the current room to be used partly for storage and partly for a seed swap area.

TS informed the committee that a MIND employee was a professional bid writer and had offered to help HACA to bid for funding for the new building and both MIND and SAND have offered to back HACA's bid. The committee are considering applying for funding from the postcode lottery and also the next round of CIL funding, once the current project is complete.

SG queried the tax implications for a successful bid and CB explained that as the funding is for a specific project, it will not be liable for tax.

MH informed the committee that the proposed new community room is larger than the current one and has windows; it can be used for committee meetings instead of hiring Durrington community centre, it will allow for more activities (i.e. educational talks) and will provide plotholders with a more pleasant area to sit in.

TS informed the committee of the need to apply for planning permission to the council and JK was keen this was done prior to making a bid.



PD asked the committee to consider building up HACA funds to pay for the new community room if bids for funding were unsuccessful, accepting that tax would need to be paid with this approach.

AS queried how best to engage plottolders in giving ideas of what they would like on site and TS explained there is a suggestion box in the social room. RK will publicise this in the next newsletter.

## **6. Website and Facebook**

RA informed the committee that she had a few issues with pictures on the website. She also reported the most common question via the website is how to apply for a plot.

The committee discussed updating the front page of the website after the AGM, still keeping the website geared at plottolders and including a noticeboard/what's on page but to consider producing flyers for specific audiences i.e. potential plottolders, attracting funding, etc. RK will create a link in the newsletter to the website and to the Facebook page and RA will assist with this if required.

SG suggested website traffic is monitored.

## **7. Newsletter**

RK informed the committee that she had positive feedback on the newsletter and there was plenty of material from today's meeting for the March edition.

## **8. Health and Safety**

LH informed the committee that the next Health and Safety walkaround is due in March. At the last walkaround, she found broken glass on a plot, which she brought to the plottolder's attention & has now been cleared.

## **9. New allotments and Plot 31**

PD updated the committee on the planning for the new allotments, which is still not complete due to some outstanding issues, the main one being drainage and also the paths on the new site. Therefore, it is not likely that work will start on the new allotments till next year. The committee discussed the best use of Plot 31 in light of this delay. MH suggested creating some small bays for manure, chippings and grass for use by plottolders at that end of the site and the committee agreed. The committee also discussed fruiting trees, utilising the area for attracting wildlife and agreed to peg out the footpath and potential new bays. RA felt that fruiting trees would benefit everyone and suggested the committee ask plottolders for their ideas. TS suggested this is added to the AGM agenda and JK added that suggestions could be written on a white board for consideration.



AS asked the committee whether shared areas such as sheds, greenhouses and tools would be appropriate, but JK pointed out that this was difficult in terms of liability when sharing tools for example.

#### **10. Amendment to HACA Constitution regarding Co-workers**

Prior to the meeting, TS had circulated a proposal to the committee to amend the HACA constitution. The amendment proposed is as follows: *Where an existing tenant has more than one plot, they will not be entitled to register a Co-worker and from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024 all existing coworking arrangements for tenants with more than one plot will be cancelled. No plot holder can be registered as a coworker on another plot and from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024 all such existing arrangements will be cancelled.*

After discussion, the committee agreed to pass the amendment and TS will write to ploholders.

#### **11. Signage**

The committee discussed signage and wording for the front gates. SG recommended using a professional sign writing company to ensure longevity and weather resistance. TS added that SAND have a screen-printing service and may be able to help. PD suggested a "welcome to Humber Avenue allotments" is added. RA felt it was important to keep the wording asking ploholders to open both gates when entering and leaving the site. JK suggested a notice about the defibrillator is added to the signage.

The committee agreed to work on this outside of the meeting. SG added that internal signage can be reviewed following completion of the front gate signage.

#### **12. One-way system**

SG asked the committee their opinions on introducing a one-way system around the site to cut down on the likelihood of accidents. AS commented that on enforcing a one-way system, ploholders may have to drive past several parked cars to get to their plot, which they currently do not have to do, and this may increase the likelihood of accidents.

The committee agreed to discuss this further after the AGM.

#### **13. Service Level Agreement (SLA)**

TS informed the committee that he and PD are attending a meeting in March with the council and are hopeful that an SLA will be in place before the AGM.

#### **14. WAGA**

As the guest WAGA representative was not present, TS updated the committee on the WAGA membership fee agreement – from 1<sup>st</sup> April WAGA membership fees will be included



in HACA ploholders fees. The agreement has been drafted and is awaiting sign off from HACA and WAGA representatives.

## **15. AGM**

TS circulated draft of the letter calling for resolutions and nominations for election to the HACA committee, along with a description of the roles and responsibilities, which is due to go out on 1<sup>st</sup> March. He stressed that committee members must apply for their position if they wish to continue on the committee. This will go out on email as well as being publicised on the HACA website and Facebook, Allotment Notice Board and mentioned in the March newsletter for Ploholders to also apply.

RA commented that the role of website and Facebook administrator had been split into two and TS will amend this to one role.

RA also queried why the role of AS was not on the list and TS explained that AS is co-opted onto the committee, and he can be co-opted again after the AGM.

The committee discussed the need for further reminders to ploholders and agreed to issue a reminder around 13<sup>th</sup> March (*Post meeting note: on further discussion outside the meeting, TS highlighted to SG that such reminders were not a requirement as per the HACA Constitution, that such reminders have caused confusion & irregularities at the past two AGM's. As Chairperson, SG has agreed reminders will not be issued*).

## **16. Any Other Business**

JK informed the committee that she will chair the next meeting but was considering giving up the position of Chair and suggested taking on a role of a disability representative.

CB asked whether any progress had been made on an agreement to share information with WAM, in order to manage the HACA waiting list more effectively. There was no update and TS will raise this again with the council.

There was no further business raised.

## **17 Date of next meeting**

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March at 11am. PD will book the room.

**The meeting closed at 13.05.**