



Humber Avenue Community Allotments Community Interest Company

Annual General Meeting

Thursday 22nd May 2025 at 19.30

Durrington Community Centre

MINUTES

1. Welcome

The HACA Company Secretary introduced herself and welcomed plot holders to the fourth AGM of Humber Avenue Community Allotments Community Interest Company. She explained that the invitation for committee nominations and motions was issued on 9th April 2025 and closed on 10th May 2025. The notification of the date, time and place of the meeting was published on 10th May 2025.

The Company Secretary welcomed guest Vicki Wells, the Worthing Council Cabinet member for the environment.

The Company Secretary asked plot holders to ask any questions once each speaker had finished their presentation, explaining that there is also an opportunity to ask questions towards the end of the meeting, under item 12.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Judy Kara, Tony Knapp, Dom Ford, Helen Louise, Carol Haffenden, Leanne Maynard, Ian Hamilton.

3. Approval of Minutes from the last meeting

Approved as an accurate reflection of the meeting, as proposed by Keith Sivyver and seconded by Malcolm Hedger.

4. Matters arising from the last meeting not covered by the agenda

There were no matters arising.



5. Report from Chair

The Chair began by thanking the committee members individually for their dedication and loyalty over the past year. He explained that Ruth Allen, who currently manages the Facebook page and website would be standing down from the committee due to health reasons and thanked her for her hard work. He presented Ruth with a bouquet of flowers.

He went on to inform the meeting that HACA are still operating against the initial SLA and have performed excellently in the areas of:

- Complaints received regarding the management of HACA
- Turnaround of tenancies on vacant/relinquished plots
- Maintenance condition of the site
- Financial management of the allotments
- Health and Safety of the allotments

He explained there was one instance of a plot holder writing to the Council; however the complaints procedure was not followed and therefore this was not recognised as a legitimate complaint by HACA. He added that Steve McKenna on behalf of the council handled this situation in a very professional manner.

He commented that since the last AGM cultivation standards have improved, however one tenant was evicted for non-cultivation and clearing the plot cost approximately £350.

The cultivation standard has been updated to recognise that allotments are not just about growing fruit, vegetables and flowers, but also about providing a space for people's wellbeing.

He informed the meeting that the Southwest Road was resurfaced at no cost to HACA by WBC and expertly managed by Ben Saker.

In terms of partnerships, the Chair explained that HACA has continued to develop links with MIND West Sussex, Guild Care and SAND. The work experience students from SAND have provided invaluable support to numerous plot holders and their Job Coach Katie Jeswani is a star. Other students from SAND photography and Art Groups have been welcomed on site. The latest charity to enjoy our allotments is Home Start.

He commented that Party on the Plot last summer was a great social event with over 100 people attending.

He explained that funding from WBC CIL of £15k to provide a Social Hub had the added benefit of many plot holders coming forward and offering their services to paint and fit out the unit and thanked those who had helped. Funding had also been received from WCC to supply the kitchen units. He thanked the plot holder's husband who had purchased a 5kw generator for the Social Hub.

The hub has been open at weekends and has been used on 3 occasions by the SAND art group and WAGA held their committee meeting there last night.



One funding disappointment has been the failure to secure funding for Solar Power, with one funder Rampion stating that Allotments are not Communities they are public places where members of the public go! He thanked Kim Bowen Wood for help in preparing funding applications.

The Chair reported that, unfortunately, the unacceptable behaviour of a minority of plot holders has led to the closure of the swap facility due to the dumping of rubbish including car tyres and barbed wire. Likewise, there will be no further expenditure on skips until the person who dumped household rubbish including an electric kettle in the skip has the honesty and integrity to own up.

He explained there was no progress on the new allotments four years after the first meeting, which is a disappointment.

On a positive note, he explained that HACA has continued to develop its relationship with WAGA and we won most improved allotment in Worthing. Well done Claire-Louise. Men in Sheds have helped HACA considerably and he thanked Robin.

To end on a high note the National Allotment Society have just published a two-page feature article on HACA and Accessibility, which he showed the meeting and is hopeful to obtain further copies.

The Chair invited questions and Keith Sivyer asked if HACA had considered crowdfunding and the Chair replied that HACA will certainly look into this as an option. Kim Bowen-Wood added that she would look into the possibility of some funding via the Movement Fund, part of Sport England.

There were no further questions on the Chair's report.

6. Report from Treasurer

The Treasurer circulated copies of HACA's income expenditure report to the meeting. He started by highlighting the following expenditure from his financial report of 1st September 2023 – 31st August 2024:

- Water bill of £2178.03
- Skip Hire £744.00
- WAGA Membership £300.00
- New Wheelbarrows and Leaf Blower
- New Raised Beds funded by a grant from the CIL fund
- End of year balance of £682.38



The Treasurer highlighted the following from his financial report of 1st September 2024 – 22nd June 2025:

- Income from plot fees was £5984.16
- Income from manure donations was £200, passed to West Sussex MIND
- £15,000 had been received for the CIL project
- £1700 in donations received including £400 from WAGA
- Balance of £2102.50 in current account and £2308.84 in deposit account

The Treasurer explained that unclaimed and defaulted deposit money together with interest earned had been used on the new social hub. He echoed the Chair's disappointment in the dumping of household rubbish in the skips and requested that plot holders do not overfill the skips during the day as those who work do not then get a chance to use them.

He added his thanks to those who had helped with the painting and fitting out of the social hub and to those who made donations of equipment.

The Treasurer explained that the big shock of the last year had been the water bill, with an increase of 41% due this year. He explained that in April 2025 202 units of water had already been used, which equated to a cost in the region of £420 and if the dry weather continues the bill could potentially be around £3500 next year.

He explained that the committee had discussed ways of using less water, encouraging the use of water butts, considering turning the water off at certain times and he will be closely monitoring water usage.

The Treasurer invited questions from the floor and Graham asked what the Lawson refund of £753.12 on the income for 2023-24 related to and the Treasurer explained this was an overcharge on some of the sleepers purchased the year before.

Kim thanked the Treasurer for the donation to West Sussex MIND.

Andrew Scoon asked whether HACA could generate income from the community using the social hub and the Treasurer explained that HACA would ask for a donation towards the running of the generator. He explained this had only been used once so the generator running costs are yet to be established.

Keith asked whether there were insurance issues with people from the community coming on site to use the social hub and the Treasurer explained this would not be the case if the social hub is let out on a donation basis.

Hilary asked if there could be a money box in the social hub to cover the cost of tea and coffee. Graham added that he currently charged 20p and this covers costs.

The Chair added that no committee member had claimed any expenses in the last year. He informed the meeting that committee members did not get free plots or ex gratia payments.

There were no further questions on the Treasurer's report.



7. Report from Membership Secretary

The Membership Secretary highlighted the following from her report:

- 3 plots relinquished since last April and 1 eviction for non-cultivation
- The site is currently running at 100% capacity
- 18 new applicants this year
- The current waiting list is 85, 17 of which will be eligible for plots on the new development
- Average waiting time for a plot is over four years

She added that she and the Project Co-ordinator had carried out two plot inspections this year and she was pleased to report that work has now started on the majority of plots, with a few a little way behind and two who have recently received a non-cultivation letter.

There were no questions on the Membership Secretary's report.

8. Plot fees (Addendum A)

The Treasurer explained that over the last four years the committee had worked hard to minimise increases in plot fees; however, the increase in the water bill and the increase in other operating costs such as insurance has given rise to a proposal that plot fees are increased to £14.50 a rod. This represents an increase of 10% and would bring HACA's plot fees in line with Adur allotments.

The Treasurer invited comments from the floor on the proposed increase in plot fees. There were no concerns raised and therefore the proposal was put to a vote.

Vote: unanimous (19 in favour) to increase plot fees to £14.50 a rod.

9. Amendment to Constitution (Addendum B)

The Chair proposed that committee members stand down after two years in office rather than one. He explained that committee members could stand down in the two-year period, or at an AGM. The Chair explained that any vacancy resulting from a committee member resigning would be advertised.

The proposal was put to a vote, 18 in favour and 1 against. The plot holder who voted against the proposal felt this should have been publicised more widely. The Chair explained the addendum had been included in the papers circulated prior to the meeting as well as on Facebook, the website and noticeboard on site.

10. Amendment to Terms and Conditions (Addendum C)

The Chair proposed the following amendments to the Terms and Conditions and the votes were as follows:



10.1 All references to half plots removed. The Chair explained that there are many different size plots on site now so the term half plot was no longer relevant.

Vote: unanimous in favour (19).

10.2 All references to co-owners to be removed and replaced with joint tenancy which provides plot holder with more security of tenure.

Vote: unanimous in favour (19).

10.3 The three and twelve monthly reviews of new plot holders are effective. It is considered that a trial period of one year would be appropriate for new plot holders. New plot holder inspections to be incorporated into the monthly plot inspections and a review held only if it seemed the plot holder was struggling to maintain their plot. The Chair clarified this would mean that new tenants would go straight into the general plot inspections.

Vote: unanimous in favour (19).

10.4 Social media to be included as a means of communication on page 4.

Vote: unanimous in favour (19).

10.5 No tyres to be brought onto site and all existing tyres removed by April 2026.

The Chair explained that tyres are not good for the environment and these are incurring a cost to be removed and taken to the tip. Vicki Wells suggested HACA consider a fly tipping policy and the Chair explained that HACA does have some guidelines on this.

Vote: unanimous in favour (19).

10.6 Removal of sending by first class post as a means of communication.

Vote: unanimous in favour (19).

10.7 The current practice of asking for a £50 deposit from plot holders on taking over their plot and then returning this if the plot is left in good order is no longer working as £50 does not cover the costs of clearing a plot that has been left in a bad state. Therefore we propose an £80 joining fee instead, which would be refundable in the first year if the plot holder relinquished the plot and only if the plot was left in a good condition. After the first year, the joining fee would go into HACA general funds, to be used on occasions where plots are not



left in good order and incur substantial costs to clear. Concerns over the affordability for new plot holders on lower incomes would be dealt with by instalment plans.

The proposal was put to the floor for comments. Andrew was concerned the proposal removes the incentive for a plot holder to leave their plot in a good state if, after a year, they did not want to continue and therefore the committee may find they are having to clear plots more frequently. There were concerns raised regarding the affordability for people on low incomes and Kim suggested that perhaps the manure money could be held as a bursary to help those who may struggle to find the fee. The Treasurer added that instalment plans could also be considered.

As there were concerns raised, the committee decided not to vote on this proposal and for further discussions to take place. The Chair informed the meeting that it is likely that the council will insist on joining fees going forward and HACA needed to be prepared for this.

11. Election of Directors and Committee Members

The Company Secretary informed the meeting that there had been no nominations received by the deadline of 10th May, bar the committee members below standing for re-election, therefore the following were all elected unopposed:

President	Ian Hamilton	Plot 42
Chair & Director	Terry Smith	Plots 57 & 58
Company Secretary & Director	Ros Knight	Plot 100b
Treasurer & Director	Peter Davey	Plot 10
Membership Secretary & Director	Christine Busfield	Plot 75
Health & Safety Advisor	Linda Head	Plot 63
Project Co-Ordinator	Malcolm Hedger	Plot 60 & 61
Newsletter	Ros Knight	Plot 100b
Website & Facebook		

12. Questions from Tenants

There were no questions from tenants.

13. Closing Remarks from Vicki Wells and The Chair

Prior to the closing remarks, The Treasurer summarised HACA's achievements since its inception in September 2021 including its links with charities, creation of accessible plots and



now a new social hub. He acknowledged this had been a team effort but that without the Chair's drive, none of this will have happened. He complimented the Chair on spending time getting to know plot holders, encouraging them to contribute to the site, his achievements securing funds for HACA. He thanked the Chair for everything the has done for HACA and presented him with a bottle of whiskey to applause from the room. The Chair thanked the Treasurer for his kind words.

The Company Secretary then invited Vicki Wells to say a few words.

Vicki congratulated HACA on their new partnership with Home Start. She thanked the committee members for their work, the inspirational newsletter and added that she was looking forward to working with Andrew on biodiversity and environmental issues. She added that she was proud to be a friend of the group and felt that HACA was the gold standard of community allotments.

The Chair thanked Vicki Wells for her continued support. He thanked those in the room for their input, good ideas and concerns raised and asked them to encourage other tenants to attend future AGMs to give their input.

Going forward, he explained there will be more emphasis on the Environment and Biodiversity, and HACA will continue to develop partnerships with Charities.

He explained we are on schedule to have the hub completed by the Party on the Plot and Vicki Wells has kindly agreed to perform the opening ceremony.

He concluded his report with a quote from Maya Angelou, an American civil rights activist:

"I've learned that people will forget what you said

People will forget what you did,

But people will never forget how you made them feel."

The Chair ended by saying this is how we will develop and change our culture by making people feel good when they walk into HACA.

The meeting closed at 21.10