



**Humber Avenue Community Allotments Community Interest Company
Committee Meeting**

**Saturday 29th March 2025 10.30am – 12noon
Durrington Community Centre**

Present:

Terry Smith (TS) Chair
Peter Davey (PD)
Christine Busfield (CB)
Malcolm Hedger (MH)
Linda Head (LH)
Ian Hamilton (IH)
Ros Knight (RK)

Guests:

Emma Attwood (EA) and Leanne Duval (LD) (plot holders)

Apologies:

Ruth Allen (RA)
Andrew Scoon (AS)

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Apologies

TS welcomed the committee to the meeting and extended a warm welcome to guests plot holders Emma and Leanne. Apologies noted as above.

2. Minutes from the last meeting

The minutes from 15th February 2025 were approved as an accurate reflection of the meeting, proposed by MH and seconded by PD.



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

There were no matters arising.

4. Reports

4.1 Chair's Report

TS informed the committee that he had been advised by a councillor from Worthing Borough Council that work is due to start on the new plots on 1st April 2025.

TS explained that he had recently been involved with the Kitchen Table project as one of the grant makers, using a fast track approach to allocating funds. As well as a good learning opportunity for how grants are allocated, TS acquired £300 for HACA. TS informed the committee that he had been to a recent infrastructure meeting at the council and discovered an infrastructure exists to support organisations such as HACA and this could be useful in the future.

TS also commented that he had established a link with Dad La Soul, a mental health organisation supporting men, especially single fathers.

TS updated the committee on the bids for funding for the fixtures and fittings for social hub:

- Bid put forward to postcode lottery by TS and Kim Bowen-Wood of £7,440
- Bid being put forward to Rampion for solar panels of £8,500
- Bid put forward for to Worthing Community chest for just under £1500 for kitchen units

TS informed the committee that local councillors Vicki Wells and Dom Peters had visited site and were very supportive.

TS proposed a booking system for the social hub, as SAND, Men in Sheds and WAGA had already expressed interested in using the space.

CB felt it was important that the social hub was available to plot holders and TS replied that some meetings would be in the evening. PD suggested that the social hub should not be booked out at weekends, when more plot holders are on site, and the committee agreed. The committee are considering the positioning of the kitchen in the social hub, to allow access for plot holders if the room is in use. The current kitchen will remain in use until the kitchen is established in the new social hub.

TS extended his thanks to Men In Sheds who built a step to the side door and are due to build one to the front as well. He added that a mobility ramp had been donated and that an engineer from the council is visiting the site on Monday morning to advise on the ramp.

TS also extended his thanks to Emma, Brian, Paul, Graham, Malcolm and Peter for painting the new building and the committee agreed a small gratuity for the painters.



TS asked the committee to consider security of the social hub. After discussion on padlocks and key safes, it was decided to leave the door unlocked initially and to monitor this.

TS informed the committee that, following a conversation with the council, the council were keen that HACA create more accessible plots with a target of 12 plots by 2030. As this would also include the new plots, the committee felt there was no need to currently create any additional accessible plots to those already in progress on site.

LH asked what percentage of HACA's plots are accessible and TS replied 6% and the committee felt this was in line with the council's target.

4.2 Treasurer's Report

PD handed out the current financial statements, including a breakdown of income and expenditure on the social hub.

He highlighted the forthcoming expenses in March, of £823.49 which is made up of labour, screws/postcrete, rubbish clearance and skip hire. He also highlighted the expected upcoming costs of legal fees, AGM, cleaning and estimated water bill of £1,800, totalling £2,255. He confirmed that the water bill is due in June, to be paid in July.

Due in part to plot holders volunteering to paint the social room, there was still £1366.69 available to spend.

Upcoming expenditure for the social hub includes installing water, fitting out the kitchen, key safe, emergency signs and installing the mobility ramp.

TS reiterated that to date no money had come from plot holders' rents to pay for the social hub.

TS thanked PD for managing the finances so efficiently.

4.3 Membership Secretary's Report

CB reported there had been five new applications since the last meeting, making a total of 85 people on the waiting list.

4.4 Company Secretary's Report

RK commented that the first plot inspections took place on 14th March. Emails had been sent out to plot holders whose plots did not meet the HACA cultivation standards requesting the issues are rectified by the time of the next plot inspections around the middle of April, and help offered in maintaining plots where applicable.



5. Projects

MH thanked the volunteer plot holders that helped paint the social hub. He reported that the SAND project workers had almost finished plot 15 and extended his thanks to Katie and her SAND team. He thanked Stephen Head for making the wooden surround around the small pond.

MH reported that the hedge on the west side of the site had now been cut.

TS thanked MH for all his work with the SAND project and added that since they had been on site, they had helped work on 30 plots.

6. Website and Facebook

RA was not present at the meeting so there was no update on the website and Facebook.

TS informed the committee that the Facebook page now had 73 members. He added that the home page of the website may need changing for funding purposes, as this will be the introduction to HACA that potential grant givers will see and therefore may need a revamp.

7. Newsletter

RK informed the committee that she is aiming to get a newsletter out in April. EA produces the WAGA newsletter and commented that it is difficult to get people to contribute to this.

8. Health and Safety

LH informed the committee there was some glass on a plot which is a bit close to the road but otherwise the site was in good order. As the defibrillator will require a new battery next year she will look into the cost of this.

9. Environment and Biodiversity

AS was not present today, however the results of the survey (see item 15) revealed that 41% of plot holders did not feel enough is being done to support wildlife on site. EA asked about bird feeders on site and whilst these are permitted, it was acknowledged these can encourage rats and many plot holders do not use bird feeders for this reason. The committee will discuss the best way forward to address supporting wildlife in future meetings.



10. Plot deposits/joining fee

PD informed the committee that 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 he proposed 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 funds, to be used on occasions where plots are not left in good order and incur substantial costs to clear. A vote revealed the majority of the committee were in favour of this but CB, RK and IH voiced concerns over the affordability for new plot holders on lower incomes and PD suggested instalment plans could be considered. TS and PD will put this proposal to the council.

11. Plot rent and water charges

11.1 Plot rent

PD proposed an increase of 10% to £14.50 per rod. This would bring HACA into line with Adur council, who charge £14.60 on average. The committee voted on the proposal and unanimously agreed to the increase. PD and TS will put this to the council.

11.2 Water charges

PD informed the committee that HACA had used less water than it was billed for last year so a credit is expected. However with a 41% increase and taking over the new plots means the water will be rise steeply this year. PD will monitor this and the committee agreed to review the situation in the autumn, with a view to turning off the water on site (with the exception of the kitchen and toilet) in the winter months. Currently it is not known how the water will be brought into the new plots and PD and TS are trying to find this out.

12. Mandatory water butts

To help with the rise in water charges, PD proposed that all new sheds and greenhouses must have a water butt. IH enquired whether water butts could be provided. TS replied that he had made enquiries with Southern Water but hadn't had a response yet.

13. Review of Terms and Conditions

TS informed the committee that the last review was in May 2023 and felt it was appropriate to review these prior to the AGM. PD pointed out that point 15.2 regarding HACA's responsibilities was a bit unclear and TS will review this. TS proposed all references to half plots are removed and the committee agreed. TS proposed that all references to co-workers are removed and replaced with joint tenants instead, which gave plot holders more security. The committee agreed. TS pointed out that three and twelve monthly reviews of new plots were not being



carried out. IH felt that a trial period of one year would be appropriate for new plot holders. CB felt this could be incorporated into the plot inspections and a review held only if it seemed the plot holder was struggling to maintain their plot. RK commented that social media needed to be included as a means of communication on page 4 and TS had already highlighted this for amending. TS proposed no new tyres are brought onto site and the committee agreed. TS suggested removal of sending by first class post as a means of communication and the committee agreed. TS commented that plot numbers must be clearly marked and this had not been enforced.

TS will make the amendments and the revised Terms and Conditions will be ready for the AGM.

14. AGM 2025

PD confirmed the hall had been booked for 22nd May 2025 in the evening. RK will send out communications regarding nominations for the committee prior to this. TS reminded committee members they must apply for their position if they wish to continue on the committee. To reduce workload, TS proposed holding elections bi-annually instead of annually, with the proviso that a committee member can still stand down in a year. The committee voted in favour of bi-annual elections and as this will be a change to HACA's constitution, this will go to the AGM.

MH asked whether it would be appropriate for plot holders interested in joining the committee in the future to come to committee meetings to find out what happens and TS agreed, adding that this can be implemented after the AGM.

15. Plot holder satisfaction survey

Guests felt there is a friendly environment on site and CB added that the allotments were attracting a lot of younger people. Regarding joining a working group to help on projects on site (question 10), MH commented that there was not much help needed currently. He noted that all the respondents who were willing to help were female. EA commented there were some projects she may not be able to commit to. CB commented that HACA should publicise upcoming projects so plot holders knew what sort of help was required.

16. Video

TS asked the committee to consider a video for the website to showcase HACA, for which he will donate £300 towards the cost and this will be discussed further at the next meeting.



17. Social Activities 2025

LD explained that she and another plot holder were organising a sunflower event for children on site on 9th April, where children would be encouraged to grow a sunflower and a colouring competition was also planned. Communications will be sent shortly. LD explained that she is planning an event every quarter. TS noted that WAGA donated the sunflower seeds and soil.

TS commented that the 8th Worthing Sea Scouts would be visiting the site on three evenings. A couple of plots would be available for the scouts to look around. Activities planned are recognising tools, food tasting and a barbecue. TS encouraged committee members and plot holders to attend if they were able. The dates are 30th June, 1st July and 3rd July 6-8 pm. EA explained that she was away at this time but was happy for her plot to be available for the scouts to look around. MH asked about insurance for these visits and TS replied that HACA has public liability insurance and the Sea Scouts would also have insurance.

CB asked about notice boards to go in the new social hub and TS explained that these should be going up soon, subject to funding.

TS confirmed that councillor Vicki Wells had agreed to open the new social hub on 13th July at Party on the Plot. He added that WAGA are loaning tables for the social hub.

18. Any Other Business

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 12.43

19. Date of next meeting

Saturday 3rd May 2025.