



**Minutes of the AGM 9th November 2013
Held at the Hart Leisure Centre at 2pm**

1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

Sally Martin welcomed the 52 attendees, Cllr Wheale, Cllr Oliver, the Pilcot farmers (Phil and Ian) to the meeting and introduced Dave Bell (Treasurer) and Sylvia Cresswell (Secretary). (There were 8 apologies.) All attendees were asked to sign in to confirm attendance. Sally also thanked Carl Westby for the free use of the room at the Leisure Centre.

2. Previous minutes and action points

The previous minutes were approved and all actions carried out or covered in the agenda. Matters arising: the management committee considered what name to use for the IPS. It was agreed to use Hart Allotments Ltd.

3. Chairman's report

Sally Martin gave an overview of the activities that the Association had been undertaking since the last meeting. We have:

- ✗ Had **meetings with the Council** to continue pushing for the **Edenbrook** allotments. (Current situation is that the developer has still not put in planning permission for phase 2 because there are problems with sewerage. Planning have agreed that the allotments will be one of the first things to be developed when they become available. Although the application for planning permission is due 'soon' we (us and council) have no control over when this might be.
- ✗ Become an **Industrial & Provident Society** (IPS) to apply for grants and be ready for signing leases (with farmers or with council) and are dealing with the implications of this – investigating audit requirements, Company Seals, Issuing share certificates etc.)
- ✗ Researched and produced all of our **policies and procedure** that are necessary for us to run the IPS
- ✗ Had a number of **discussions with the Pilcot farmers** to investigate the provision of private allotments (Introduced to us by Deb Baker from Fleet Future)
- ✗ **Applied for a grant** from the Comic Relief Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Foundation. (Although initially rejected this has been resurrected for a smaller amount and is still ongoing.)
- ✗ Had discussions with the Council/Highways/Cllr Wheale regarding **planning permission** for the Pilcot site and the use of the nearby lay-by for **car parking**.
- ✗ Prepared **documentation** to gauge interest in the Pilcot site
- ✗ Prepared **financial forecasts** to establish membership fees
- ✗ **Liaised with other Councils** regarding proposed allotment sites around the area to report on status of local provision

Industrial and Provident Society

Sally explained that the committee had deemed the time was right to apply to become an IPS. She explained that by being sponsored by the National Allotment Society and using their model rules we had achieved IPS status on 10th September 2013. Sylvia explained that upon researching the auditing requirements, one of our rules would need changing. Sylvia explained the 4 options open to us when filing the annual returns to the Financial Conduct Authority. However only 2 options were suitable for our organisation viz ii) using an Accountant's report instead of a full professional audit or iii) using unaudited accounts (signed off by the Secretary and 2 committee members). She explained that both of these would be possible if our rules allowed this. On closer inspection of our rules they currently do not permit these two options (only i) and iv) and so it was proposed that we apply to the FCA to change our rules. Sylvia explained that the rules regarding accounts had been 'relaxed' in recent years and that the 'model rules' appeared not to have caught up with this relaxation yet. She explained that in the IPS documentation (for changing the audit requirements) sample wording was given as follows: (new text in blue)

- + *An Audit where necessary in law, or where the membership require will be carried out by a **registered auditor or two or more lay auditors** where the conditions for appointing lay auditors prevail **or a report carried out by a registered auditor, or unaudited accounts, where the conditions for such exist.***
- + **If the membership vote for unaudited accounts, the society's income/expenditure ledger shall be scrutinised by the secretary and committee members only and signed, as a true record, by the secretary and two committee members or such other number as may be required by legislation. An income**



/expenditure report will be prepared to present to the society's members at each Annual General Meeting."

Alan Oliver proposed that we alter our rules using the sample wording given, Noel Kendall seconded the proposal. A vote was taken and this was carried unanimously. (This covers the ¾ majority requirement)

Sylvia also explained that in order to apply for a change of rules when submitted they need to be made in front of a commissioner for oaths, notary public, justice of the peace or solicitor. The question was then put to the group as to whether we knew of any folk who might be able to help us in this respect. Liz Shewry volunteered to ask a magistrate that she knows as to whether they would be able to help us.

Action: Sylvia Cresswell/ Liz Shewry

Accounts for year ending Nov 2014

Having voted for a rule change the meeting then turned their attention to whether we would elect to have an accountant's report (which requires an accountant to volunteer to undertake this function) or unaudited accounts **for this financial year (ending Nov 2014)**. Alan Oliver proposed that we use unaudited accounts, Noel Kendall seconded the proposal. A vote was taken and this was carried unanimously.

4. Treasurer's report

Dave reported that this year we have spent very little (again). What we have spent (£118) has been mostly on stamps, printing, website costs, National Allotment Association membership costs and fees to register the IPS with the FCA. Currently there is £1076.34 in the bank.

5. Election of Officers/Management Committee

Officers

The Chairman advised that the existing post holders were prepared to stand for re-election.

President – Cllr Sharyn Wheale, Chairman – Sally Martin, Treasurer – Dave Bell, Secretary – Sylvia Cresswell.

Management Committee

The current management committee (President, Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and committeemen Martyn Garvey and Alan Jones) were prepared to stand for re-election. Additional volunteers for the committee were Martin Stephens, Tim Buswell, Diane White, Barbara Doel.

Sally expressed thanks to those on the committee who had resigned – namely David Fisher, Mikki Hall & Bruce Reece-Russell and Jim Haffrey .

Penny Bradley proposed that the officers/management committee above form the committee for the next year. This was seconded by Alan Oliver. A vote was carried and all agreed.

Since we elected to use unaudited accounts there is no requirement to appoint an auditor.

6. Lease of private land for allotments – Pilcot allotments

Sally showed the satellite image for the proposed Pilcot allotments and explained that parking had become an issue as it is expensive to provide it on site when the longer term demand for the allotments at Pilcot is not known.

Cllr Wheale gave us an update on the situation where the nearby old Hitches lane (referred to as the lay-by) might be able to be used. She mentioned that she had had a site visit with the senior engineer responsible for the lay-by and discussions were still in hand. She reported that she had been able to establish that the land is owned by Hampshire County Council. A suggestion was made that perhaps the Parish Council might be able to help.

Finances

Sylvia explained the 3 component parts to the proposed fee that ploholders will be required to pay for a Pilcot plot.

1) Hart Allotments Ltd membership fee, 2) water charge, 3) rent to farmers.

Before the meeting the financial forecast was distributed. This showed the estimated expenditure for Hart Allotments.

This showed a shortfall of £491.97. This shortfall can be paid for out of existing funds as it was discussed that some of these costs were set up costs that might not be incurred in years to come. The total income figures were based on 100 people paying £10 per head.



Sylvia showed the proposed layout of the site. Plot sizes, rabbit fencing and paths were all discussed. Sylvia explained that the committee had applied for a grant for deer fencing. However, at this time it is not known as to whether this has been successful.

It was discussed that the deadline for application forms for a Pilcot plot would be **end of December 2013**. Application forms and cheques are being held by the Secretary so that the interest in the proposed site can be gauged. (If the site does not go ahead or if people are unsuccessful in getting a plot their cheques will either be destroyed or returned).

7. Waiting List & Membership list

Sylvia explained that there will be two lists – the waiting list for an allotment and a Hart Allotments membership list. Sylvia explained that the committee had discussed the allocation of plots and that for those that had applied for a Pilcot plot these would be issued in strict date order on the waiting list irrespective of where you lived. (It is intended that the allocation policy for the proposed council Edenbrook allotments contains an area for Fleet only residents (previous action point from last meeting) along with an area specifically for estate residents as required by the developer).

8. Website

Stephen Janaway showed an offline version of the website and explained how it had been updated to reflect the recent news concerning the potential Pilcot allotments, the policies and procedures, proposed tenancy agreement and application forms.

Complaints and Appeals Policy

One of the draft policies (to be put on the website) concerning the complaints and appeals policy was discussed. Sally explained that the current draft has 2 stages to it, whereby the complaint is dealt with 1) by informal discussion and if the matter is not resolved it progresses on to 2) Committee to discuss and resolve. She explained that there is the possibility of establishing stage 3 – an Independent Appeals Committee. This independent committee needs to have volunteers who are not on the management committee to run this stage. It was discussed that the Independent appeals committee should have a number of volunteers to draw from – just in case the complaint concerned an individual on the committee. A vote was taken to establish if a stage 3 independent appeals committee is required. 17 votes were given in favour of this committee, with 11 votes received from individuals who did not think it was necessary. The motion to create an independent appeals committee was therefore carried. The following individuals volunteered to be on this committee: Amanda Buswell, Julie Jones, James Taylor, John Bobbitt.

9. AOB

Alan Oliver mentioned that he was concerned about the wetness of the site, and asked whether drainage was a possibility. The farmers responded by saying that the field already had drainage and although the field was normally damp (which would be good during the summer) that the weather had been particularly bad. (SC note: During the site visit it was discussed that the plot could be moved further down the field to a drier area).

10. Date of next meeting

It was decided that the next AGM would be held in January 2015. This is to allow the accounts to be finished/signed off (end Nov 2014) before the next AGM. Sally thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions and invited folk to visit the proposed site.

11. Site visit to proposed Pilcot allotments

Many of the attendees took the opportunity to visit the proposed site following the meeting. Plots had been prepared to show the different sizes of plots available.