



## Minutes of the Hart Allotments AGM on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2020 held at the Harlington Centre at 3pm

### 1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

The Chairman (Tim Buswell) opened the meeting at 3.05pm. He welcomed the attendees to the meeting and thanked everyone for coming. Tim advised the number of apologies that we had received. (A full list of attendees and apologies is given at the end of these minutes in Appendix 1.)

Most of the committee members were seated at the front so that they could answer questions. Tim introduced the committee; Treasurer – Terry Collier, Secretary – Sylvia Cresswell, Committee members , Gavin Branch, Antony Jones, Alan Oliver, Diane White.

Tim advised that Dave Bell (ex Chairman and committee member ) and Alan Jones (previous Treasurer and committee member) had now given up being on the committee. Tim thanked both Dave and Alan who had been involved on the committee for many years. Paid up members were issued with voting slips on arrival.

### 2. Previous minutes and action points

The Secretary (Sylvia) ran through the previous minutes and mentioned that all actions had either been completed or the item was on the agenda for further discussion. A copy of the minutes had been sent out prior to the meeting and a few were available at the meeting. The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

### 3. Chairman's report

The Chairman read out his report of the year. Please see Appendix 2 attached to these minutes.

### 4. Treasurer's report and acceptance of unaudited accounts for year ending Nov 2019

The Treasurer (Terry Collier) referred to the summary of the accounts and the expenditure breakdown that he had distributed. The total expenditure for the year was £2357.35 and the total income was £2800.50. This gave a surplus of £443.15. Terry explained that the main reason for the surplus was due to the top soil levy which tenants paid, however, since the previous stocks of top soil had not been used up no further loads had been ordered during the year. See topsoil item below. It was also noted that the usual annual charge (of £47) to the Financial Conduct Authority was not required this year. A summary of the accounts is given in Appendix 3.

These accounts were accepted by the meeting (unanimous vote). Tim mentioned that if any tenant representative wanted to look at the accounts in detail then to make contact with the Secretary.

These accounts will now be submitted to the Financial Conduct Authority in line with their requirement for an annual return.

**Action: Secretary/Treasurer**

### 5. Election of Officers/Management Committee

#### Officers

The Chairman thanked the officers for their work on the Management Committee. All officers were prepared to stand again if acceptable to the members. Current officers are:

<i>Post</i>	<i>Name</i>
President	Sharyn Wheale
Chairman	Tim Buswell
Treasurer	Terry Collier
Secretary	Sylvia Cresswell

#### Management Committee

The Chairman wanted to thank **all** the committee members for their work throughout the year. The existing committee persons were prepared to stand for re-election: Gavin Brach, Antony Jones, Alan Oliver and Diane White, Helen Butler and Jane Westoby. Tim asked for volunteers to come on to the committee. A new member (Tei Jones) volunteered to join and Sylvia mentioned that Mike Vanata had indicated he would like to join the H&S committee, however, no recent

contact had been received confirming this. Tei was voted on to the management committee. Tim mentioned that we could co-opt members such as Mike on to the sub-groups if tenants had relevant experience.

The officers and the revised management committee were unanimously voted in.

#### **6. Proposal for unaudited accounts for next year (as per this year) (annual vote required)**

Attendees were happy that the accounts would be unaudited for a further year. A vote was taken and this was carried unanimously.

#### **7. Edenbrook site update**

Tim invited Gavin to give a presentation on the work of the Edenbrook sub-committee.

Gavin mentioned that the sub group had had a number of meetings with HDC. He showed a layout of the proposed site and mentioned some of the benefits of the site viz:

Topsoil to a depth of 30cm, Eco toilet, solar powered bore hole for water leading to troughs across the site, bike rack, communal composting area, use of gazebo with seating and BBQ area, height restriction gate, access path to the site from the Country park (bike friendly), car parking, security with fenced in site, CCTV and with the ranger opening and closing the site on a daily basis. In the surrounding area there will be a wildlife pond, possible use of a polytunnel and further up the track there will be a pump track for bikes. Along with Hart Voluntary Action (with whom we will be sharing the resources and the costs), HDC want to make this a prestige site. However, HDC apparently need to make this 'Cost Neutral' to tax payers – so the price of the allotments needs to incorporate a share of all of the costs, along with depreciation so that these items may be replaced which will enable the site to operate in years to come.

Gavin showed the proposed layout of the site. This showed that the design for the site currently holds roughly 89 x 10m x 5m plots. Gavin mentioned that the CAD plans for the site were still awaited from HDC as it was considered that further plots could be incorporated in to the existing space. This might slightly reduce the price per plot and share the costs further.

Currently (although not finalised) the cost for a 10m x 5m plot will be **£69**. This size equates roughly to the medium plots on Pilcot. (Yet to be decided is whether tenants will be required to pay the £10 membership charge for Hart Allotment membership).

It was explained that in order to help set up the site, Hart Allotments will be working in conjunction with HDC and importing as far as possible the existing Pilcot policies and procedures. He also mentioned that it is the intention that those on the site will be invited to join a Board so that items that affect tenants in the area can have a say in the decision making.

Gavin explained that we are now at the point of making decisions as to whether folk wanted to be on the Edenbrook allotments or on Pilcot. He invited members to go over and see the area for themselves (access off Pale Lane).

It was also explained that HDC had asked Hart Allotments to take a vote at our AGM to establish whether we wanted:

a) Hart District Council to run the site (taking over the finance, tenancy agreement, monitoring responsibilities) with the exception of maintaining the waiting list [which would still be run by Hart Allotments]. Price per plot is estimated at £69.

b) to lease the land from HDC and run the site ourselves (taking monies, issuing tenancy agreements, monitoring plots for compliance to procedures etc. Price per plot (as costs still need to be covered) is still estimated at £69.

The group discussed the two options and concerns were raised about controlling our destiny and how much input we would have in the future. Concern was also raised that not everyone at the meeting wished to move to the Edenbrook site and so we were trying to make decisions for others, however, Sylvia explained that the agreement was with Hart Allotments and as this is our AGM we can only consider the opinions of its current members. It was also discussed that since Hart Allotments is run purely on volunteers, the extra work involved in option b) would put a large burden of work on to the existing Treasure and Secretary – work that they could do without. The group also discussed that there was no financial incentive for Hart Allotments to run the site and that HDC are in effect taking the manpower cost burden themselves.

A vote was taken as to which option Hart Allotments should go for.

21 votes were recorded for option a) – HDC running the site.  
0 votes were recorded for option b) – Hart Allotments running the site.  
3 people chose not to vote.

Tim thanked all for the discussion and advised that we will therefore go back to HDC with the decision so that it can be included in the HDC Council meeting in Feb.

**Action: Tim/Sylvia**

It was discussed that now that we have approximate costings for the site and a clearer idea of the facilities available that we shortly contact all those on the *total* waiting list and ask which site they want to be on and the size of plot required so that the site layout can be adjusted to suit the requirements of the majority of people who wish to hold a plot on Edenbrook. Some larger plots (double the size quoted) are envisioned (with double the price).

**Action: Management Committee to consult**

## **8. Pilcot Farm allotment site issues**

The tenants discussed the following issues.

### ***Lease with the farmers***

Sylvia mentioned that since we roughly know the number of Edenbrook plots and the number on the waiting list we should have sufficient numbers to populate both Pilcot and Edenbrook sites. Consequently the 'temporary' label that had been given to the Pilcot site until numbers were known can now be removed. Sylvia explained that she had been in contact with the farmers and they were happy to sign a 5 year lease to carry on from April 2020. A vote was taken by those present to confirm that a 5 year lease should now be signed. All were in favour.

**Action: Sylvia**

### ***Subscriptions for 2020***

Subscriptions are due by 15<sup>th</sup> February 2020. It was discussed that we had not increased the 'rent' portion of the subscriptions since we started the allotments in 2014. It was agreed that there should now be a small price increase as follows:

Mini plot - £8.00 (was £7.50)

Small - £16.00 (was £15.00)

Large - £32.00 (was £30.00)

The group discussed whether, for this year only, we should instigate a half year rental for those that wished to move to Edenbrook. A vote was taken and, due to the admin and small amounts involved, all voted in favour of continuing with the current 1 year format (to lessen the administrative burden).

Terry & Sylvia to send out an e-mail reminding tenants of the amounts payable along with details of bank accounts etc.

**Action: Terry/Sylvia**

### ***Straw Bale Gardening***

Sylvia asked whether tenants would like her to organise delivery of straw bales & fertilizer for those who wanted to grow vegetables via this method. Yes, was the response. Sylvia agreed to get prices from the farmer who supplied the bales last year.

**Action: Sylvia**

### ***Top Soil/Manure***

Top soil was discussed. It was agreed that we would not charge for a consumables levy this year. Since we did not need (and consequently order the 2 loads of topsoil in the previous year) we will now order the 2 loads in this growing season (after existing stocks have been exhausted). If further stocks are required the committee will consider taking this out of the surplus for the year. A vote was taken and all agreed.

(As a reminder the usage levels for the current loads of topsoil for the size of plot is:

Standard Plot (12m x 10) - 10 barrow loads

Small Plot (12m x 5m) - 5 barrow loads

Mini Plot (12m x 2.5m) - 2.5 barrow loads

With unlimited amounts of wood chippings and manure.)

Jane Westoby mentioned that she considers more soil improvement rather than topsoil is needed. She mentioned that she has contacts for ordering large cubic meters of compost that can be delivered to the Pilcot gates. She mentioned that she was happy to include others on an order. Jane to provide details.

**Action: Jane Westoby**

Alec Grant also mentioned that he had never had a problem (as alluded to in the previous minutes) with the quality of the compost from the Woking Compost Centre (price lessens for bulk),

Richard Berry asked about whether it was OK to bring top soil from one's garden on to the site. Sylvia mentioned that in the past the farmers had been twitchy about this and had pulled up a tenant for doing this. She explained that in relation to the initial loads of topsoil that we purchased the farmer had researched the soil and originally had wanted it British Standard approved. The farmers seem to be fearful of pests/diseases/seeds infecting the soil.

It was noted that the signs identifying the dates that manure had been deposited had blown away. The meeting discussed that these were useful to have. Since no other members volunteered to reinstate these, Sylvia agreed to reposition them.

**Action: Sylvia**

### ***Parking***

Alan Oliver was able to update the meeting with the news that he had been promised that, as a favour, a representative from Berkeley Homes would reposition the layby gate within the next couple of weeks. Tim mentioned that this would shortly have a lock on it to prevent fly tipping. It is intended that the code for the new padlock would be the same as the main gate (i.e. 3013).

### ***Tidy Days***

The Chairman thanked and congratulated all those who had attended the tidy days last year. He mentioned that the turnout was rather disappointing and that the same familiar people attended. He mentioned that we all benefit from a nice environment at the site and he wanted to encourage more to get involved.

The next tidy days were agreed as:

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May and

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May

The activities for the day will be set by the management committee and issued prior to the event

### ***Social event/Produce competition***

Tim posed the question as to whether August or September were preferred for a social event. September was given as the preference

**Action: Management Committee – set tasks for tidy day and date/activities for social**

### ***Livestock*** (excluding bees)

Some tenants had reported that they were concerned for livestock on site. Tim mentioned that the existing livestock was regularly being monitored. However, the proposal was put to the meeting to disallow any further livestock on the site. This was unanimously rejected and it was decided to keep the policy as is.

## **9. AOB**

### ***Potato Day***

Alan Wilson mentioned that following a successful Potato Day last year that he was running another on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2020, 9.30am -2pm, St Philips and St James Church, Kings Road, Fleet, GU51 3AR and that all were invited. He mentioned that 70 different types of potato would be available to purchase and that these were all available in small quantities. (Shallots available too). Entrance fee is £1. Tea /coffee available.

### ***Glass on site.***

A few tenants have unwittingly purchased greenhouses that contain glass rather than polycarbonate (some advertised on our gate but not put up by Hart Allotments). This is currently not permitted due to H&S concerns. One of the tenants has requested that we alter the policy to permit glass in greenhouses. The proposal was discussed at the

meeting. A vote was taken and the majority (all bar 3 votes) wished to keep the policy unchanged. The policy not permitting glass will therefore remain in force.

#### 10. Date of next meeting

The next AGM will be held in January 2021.

The chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions and wished everyone a good growing season. The meeting ended at 4.49pm

#### Appendix 1

##### Attendees AGM 11<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Title	First name	Surname	Attendance AGM Jan	Apology Rec'd
Mrs	Marion	Abel		A
Mr	Carl	Baker		
Mr	Michael	Bartley		A
Mr	Richard	Berry	Y	
Mr	John	Bobbitt	Y	
Mr	Stephen	Bowering	Y	
Mr & Mrs	Martin & Penny	Bradley	Y	
Mr	Gavin	Branch	Y	
Ms	Jane	Brown		
Mrs	Amanda	Buswell	Y	
Ms	Helen & Phil	Butler	Y	
Mr	Terry & Svetlana	Collier	Y	
Mr & Mrs	John & Viv	Condon	Y	
Mr	Robert	Cordier		
Ms	Helen	Cory	Y	
Ms	Sylvia	Cresswell	Y	
Mr	Stephen	Crookes		
Ms	Janet	Dodsworth		
Mrs	Pauline	Earwicker	Y	
Mrs	Ni Lian	Engi		Y
Ms	Sara & Maria	Lacy & Hill		
Mr	Barrie	England		Y
Mr	Stephen	Garland		
Mr	John	Gildea		
Mr	Gary	Goddard		Y
Mr & Mrs	Alec & Sue	Grant	Y	
Mr	Derek R	Graves	Y	
Mrs	Natalie	Grey		
Mr	Paul & Dave	Heath/Bell	Y	
Ms	Helen	Howard		Y
Ms	Heather	Jarrett		
Mr	William	Jones	Y	
Mr	Alan	Jones		Y
Mrs	Ruth	Jones		
Mr	Teifiow	Jones		
Mr	Antony	Jones	Y	
Mrs	Joy	Keith	Y	
Mrs	Sally	Lane	Y	

Title	First name	Surname	Attendance AGM Jan	Apology Rec'd
Mr	Keith	MacKenzie-Ross	Y	
Ms	Lynsey	McDonald		
Mr	James	Marshall	Y	
Ms	Tara	Masters		Y
Mr & Mrs	Chris & Asa	Harvey		
Mr	Kevin	Meese	Y	
Mr	Mitko	Mitev		
Mrs	Catherine	Morton		
Dr	Alan	Oliver	Y	
Mr	Albert	Owen		
Dr	Jim	Parberry	Y	
Miss	Sarah	Petersen		
Ms	Liliana	Sitkiewicz		
Mr/Mrs	Stuart/Avril	Skidmore		Y
Ms	Sara	Sousa de Carvalho	Y	
Ms	Bridget	Stevens	Y	
Mr	Lee	Symonds	Y	
Mrs	Seong	Tuson		
Mr	M J	Vanata		
Mrs	Jane	Westoby	Y	
Ms	Diane	White	Y	
Mr	Alan	Wilson	Y	
Mr	Graeme	Wood		

## Appendix 2

### **Chairman's Report.**

To begin with, I'd like to remind you who the Committee are: Sylvia Cresswell, Secretary, Terry Collier, Treasurer, myself, Tim Buswell, Chairman and, in no particular order, Alan Jones, Diane White, Gavin Branch, Alan Oliver, Antony Jones, David Bell, Helen Butler and Jane Westoby. Alan J sends apologies but other than that we should all be here.

Dave and Alan J have said that they are stepping down from the Committee this year, so I'd like to thank them both for their many years of help and hard work, both having played key roles helping Hart Allotments progress from a nice idea to everything we have today. Dave was a founder member and of course HAA's chairman for many years. Both Dave and Alan's input will be much missed.

The Committee has continued to meet approximately every 2 months to discuss issues affecting plot holders, and the various sub-committees also meet individually to specifically look at Health and Safety, Boundaries and Sustainability, Livestock, Buildings, and Edenbrook, more about Edenbrook later.

This year's **Community Tidy Days** took place in June, and lots of good work was done, with the main central path weeded and re-covered in chippings, and all the internal paths weeded, and some much needed maintenance for the communal area, tidied, weeded and shed painted!

We had a pretty decent turn-out and I'd like to thank all the members who helped achieve a great deal – particular thanks Helen for the flapjack, and to Kevin and his petrol-mower which saved a lot of manual work on some of the hottest and most humid days of the year.

Nevertheless, I should reiterate last year's observation that while there is a good number of members who give their time to help outside the bounds of their own plot, it often seems to be mainly familiar

faces. There are (at least) 62 of us, and as a mutual society we're all in it together. It would make things even better if everyone could do their bit. I appreciate there are always going to be genuine reasons why some can't attend, and we're not keeping a register or anything like that, but please remember everyone is a volunteer, everyone benefits from pleasant allotments, and so everyone is expected to lend a hand where they can. Also, worth remembering that it's every plot-holders responsibility to keep the communal paths weed-free where they border your plot.

A further event, more of a social / vegetable competition thing, was discussed for September but due to my bad planning, we couldn't get a date where enough of us were available. We decided that this year we'd set a date far in advance so people could plan accordingly. As we can never agree whether we should do it late August around the bank holiday when the weather is hopefully good but some people are away, or in September when the days are getting shorter and colder, I'd like to ask for a quick show of hands for your preference of August or September. If you have any ideas for social events or communal jobs for the coming year then please let us know

It's been an interesting year with a wet March and April that seemed to delay the start of the season, then a mostly great summer, followed by early frosts and another wet autumn. There are still a few months for the water table to hopefully subside!

Our poor site drainage therefore wasn't an issue for most of the Summer, and perhaps as a result, our existing stock of topsoil hasn't been much depleted. We are conscious that everyone paid a **consumables levy**, albeit reduced, last year to cover the cost of further topsoil which, in the event, wasn't needed so none was purchased. We'll use last year's fund to buy more soil as and when it is needed. There's a specific agenda item for topsoil and the consumables levy for this year so will open floor to comments/discussion then.

The farmers have also continued to supply manure which has been well used – a big thank you to them - and we have also arranged for wood chippings to be delivered regularly. The piles had signs showing the delivery month to help you gauge how old and rotted down it was, however the signs have all gone now. Did people actually find this useful? If so any volunteers to replace them?!

There are a few Pilcot site issues worthy of a mention. There was another instance of vandalism this year where several sheds were broken in to and damaged, but little or nothing was actually stolen. The committee has previously discussed potential deterrents but rejected all as either undesirable, too expensive, or likely ineffective. Thankfully these incidents seem few enough, around once a year, but it seems we must accept it as an occupational hazard for allotments. A lot of the damage came from the forcing open of locks etc. so it may be worth leaving sheds unlocked but it's a personal choice of course. Either way it makes sense not to leave valuable tools, or things you couldn't bear to lose, on site. We'll deal with whatever the future brings and reconsider options as necessary.

We've also had several more incidents of fly-tipping in the slip road car park. Despite our efforts, the gate post remains unfixed and we've been asked by the Council to put a chain on the gate to discourage further fly-tipping. We are awaiting yet further updates from the Council and Berkeley Homes regarding fixing the gate post but either way a new chain and combo lost with the same number, is likely to happen soon.

We had to replace the combo padlock on the main gate earlier this year after it was cut off. We suspect this was because some phone mast maintenance workers got locked in, as soon after a fourth padlock specifically for them appeared on the gate chain. We took the opportunity to try a different sort of padlock, and many said it was easier to operate than the previous type. That padlock has itself just needed replacing as the shank became loose and wouldn't shut properly. We've replaced it with the same type again as members found it so much easier, but it does seem less hardy so please take care when locking and unlocking for instance don't drag the whole weight of the chain on the shackle etc.

As you can't fail to have noticed, or at least heard, we have a few chicken coops on the site now. There have been a few observations made that I'd like to discuss further when we get to Other Business later but for now I've been asked to remind everyone that though the birds are lovely to look at, please seek the owner's permission before accessing a plot to have a closer look.

A final note on our environment— please remember that it is all our responsibility to not to introduce pernicious plants or to manage any that threaten to become so. Examples include Mint and Bamboo, which if left unchecked will very quickly spread and begin to take over, and which are very hard to eradicate later.

### **Membership and Waiting list**

We began the year with 100% occupancy however a few tenants have relinquished their plots. Some new tenants have been introduced but we also have some vacant plots as have decided to wait on contacting prospective plot holders until Edenbrook is resolved.

The waiting list has been maintained as always and we currently have 168 people on the revised list. This includes the 62 tenants that we already have on Pilcot so there are 105 waiting for Edenbrook (or Pilcot)

This coming year's **subs** will be due by 15 February. An email with details will be sent after the AGM (as we're finalising costs today!) We won't be doing renewal forms again this year as we don't think we really need them. **If possible, we'd prefer you to pay by bank transfer – details will be provided on the email, and please include your surname and plot number in the reference.**

If that's not possible then Terry will accept cheques today (once the actual amount is known) – please put your plot number on the back of the cheque.

Regarding **Edenbrook** further meetings with HDC have taken place over the course of the year and Gavin will be giving a full update later in the meeting.

### **Hart Lottery**

You may have seen the information on Facebook group but to remind you we are registered to receive funds from Hart Lottery. While I'm not encouraging you to gamble if you don't want to, if you are inclined to do a lottery, then have a look at [hartlottery.co.uk](http://hartlottery.co.uk) – details are on our website too. We get 50p for every ticket sold (if you've nominated HAA). Last year we raised £104, but realised this is just through 3 supporters, all of which are on the committee.

I would like to thank all the Committee for their work and time given to meetings and sub-committees. As I previously mentioned, two committee members (Dave, Alan) are giving up which of course means the committee is down on numbers and, as always, we would welcome some new faces on the committee if anyone is interested. If you'd like to be involved, please say when we come the Committee elections later in the agenda.

Shortly we will also need to vote on formally endorsing the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, agreeing whether the accounts to be unaudited again as they were this year, and elect the committee for the year ahead. Before we vote we will hear the Treasurer's report, but I'd like to remind you that voting for acceptance of unaudited accounts will save the Association considerable expense (~£500). To allay any fears, the accounts will be available for your inspection and, should you wish, an independent member of the association (not on the committee) can be appointed to review.

But as I said, before we do this, we have the Treasurer's Report.



## Appendix 3

<b>Statement of Accounts - Financial Year Ending 30 November 2019</b>		
<b>Year 2018</b>	<b>Hart Allotment - Accounts</b>	<b>Year 2019</b>
<b>£</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>
670.00	Membership (Tenants + member only + leavers)	620.00
1469.50	Plot Rentals (Plot holders + withdrawals)	1,395.00
226.50	Water charges - Tenants + joiners/leavers	214.00
430.71	Grant from Hampshire County Council	0.00
97.50	Maintenance Fund (from retained deposits)/receipt of new deposits	97.50
168.00	Donations and Hart Lottery Contribution	104.00
860.50	Topsoil income/consumables contribution	370.00
0.00	Debts paid	
3922.71	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>2,800.50</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	
503.80	Site Maintenance/set up	160.71
864.00	Topsoil	0.00
5.00	Fixed Assets - equipment	0.00
15.92	Admin (Stamps etc)	21.44
189.00	NSALG Membership	189.00
0.00	Refund of deposits	120.00
145.44	Insurance	145.44
67.00	Financial Conduct Authority	0.00
1605.00	Landlord (farmers rental)	1,410.00
197.06	Landlord water charges	240.76
72.00	Social Activity/AGM	70.00
3664.22	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>2,357.35</b>
258.49	<b>Surplus/(Loss) for the year - (Income-Expenditure)</b>	<b>443.15</b>
1693.03	Current Account	2,221.68
96.00	Cash	52.00
0.00	Debtors	2.00
0.00	Creditors	21.50
1789.03	Current Assets	2,297.18
-45.00	Less Uncashed cheques	-30.00
-1.50	Payment in advance	-35.00
1742.53	Projected Current Account	2,232.18
1793.22	Reserves = Fixed Assets + Current Accounts - Share Capital	2,225.98
	Savings Accounts (Holds Member Plot & Key Deposits)	
2503.13	Saver Account	2,512.45
4196.16	Total of both Current and Saver accounts at Year end	4,734.13
7	Issued Share Capital	6.20