



**Humber Avenue Community Allotments Community Interest Company
Committee Meeting
Saturday 16th December 2023 11am – 1pm
Durrington Community Centre**

Present:

Judy Kara (JK)
Peter Davey (PD)
Christine Busfield (BD)
Terry Smith (TS)
Malcolm Hedger (MH)
Linda Head (LH)
Ruth Allan (RA)
Ros Knight (RK)
Stephen Garrett (SG)
Richard Billingshurst (RB) – guest plotheader
Tony Knapp (TK) – guest plotheader
Lavinia Knapp (LK) – guest plotheader

Apologies:

Andrew Scoon (AS)

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Apologies

JK welcomed the committee to the meeting. Richard, Tony and Lavinia were welcomed to the meeting as a guest plotheaders. Apologies received from Andrew.

2. Minutes from the last meeting

Approved as an accurate reflection of the meeting, as proposed by PD and seconded by MH.



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

3.1 Defibrillator management – JK and LH reported this action was now complete. JK explained that training was not being provided as the defibrillator gave out instructions once 999 was called and she and LH would be checking the batteries were working and pads were in date on a regular basis.

3.2 Review of policies and procedures – TS reported he had read through all these now and minor changes only had been made. Latest versions are now available on the website. TS drew the committee's attention to three documents they should familiarise themselves with – Terms and Conditions, Definition of Cultivation and Mission and Values and also the Health and Safety policy once this is ready. This and the SLA will be discussed later in the meeting.

4. Reports

4.1 Chair's Report

JK thanked the committee for their support including thanking TS for going through all the policies. She also thanked the committee for their work on the accessible plots. She informed the committee that she would be unavailable for approximately two months from January due to planned surgery. TS asked if anyone would be willing to step up in JK's absence and SG volunteered, proposed by TS and seconded by PD. JK concluded by wishing the committee a happy Christmas and New Year!

4.2 Treasurer's Report

PD handed out the Income Expenditure Report for December 2023. He thanked CB for her work on the accounts, which had resulted in a very small loss so there was no tax to pay. PD highlighted the income for December of £7726.93 plus an additional CIL payment of £6000. He explained that the council still owe HACA CIL money of £1581.90. RB queried HACA having to spend their money first before receiving CIL money and PD explained that the process had been changed at the last minute and now HACA had to provide invoices for their expenditure. PD went on to highlight the total plot fees received to 15th December 2023 was £5731.02.

PD explained that projected costs of £7170 was within the £15000 budget.

He informed the committee that, following a conversation with the council, HACA needed to improve its public liability insurance from £5m to a recommended £10m and the renewal was due in January 2024. The committee agreed to increase the public liability insurance.

PD informed the committee that, following a meeting with Theresa Elvin from Adur council, Adur council had decided to move from a plot deposit scheme to a joining fee for their allotments. TS felt this could be discussed at the next AGM. RA queried whether moving to a joining fee would increase HACA's profits and PD replied that it would. TS explained to the guest plot holders that HACA is a community interest company and not a charity and are



therefore asset locked. He reminded the committee that HACA will receive revenue from the new plots and this money would need to be spent.

JK suggested the money could be invested in a larger social room and this is discussed under agenda item 5.

4.3 Membership Secretary's Report

CB informed the committee that she had found tenants for the vacant plots although was currently having problems with people on the waiting list not responding to emails. She informed the committee that she kept a non-response list to help manage this. She reported that she had been liaising successfully with the WAM membership secretary regarding people who were on both waiting lists, however a new secretary had recently taken over and was not willing to share information, citing data protection as a reason. TS explained that a data sharing agreement was being drawn up between WAM and HACA but was not sure on the progress of this. RA highlighted the importance of people ticking a box on their application form to agree for their information to be shared.

CB informed the committee that two new people had recently been added to the waiting list, making a total of 87 on the active waiting list, with one plot and one half plot coming up to let in January 2024.

4.4 Company Secretary's Report

TS updated the committee on Plot 65, explaining that the tenant had now been evicted for non payment of their invoice and non cultivation. There had been no communication from Plot 65 and the key had not been returned. CB commented that she rarely has keys returned and the committee discussed moving towards a barrel style combination lock, allowing the number to be changed from time to time, which can be communicated via email. RA commented that the lock needed to be of a type easy to manage for those with dexterity problems and also large enough for numbers to be easily read.

TS informed the committee that Plot 63a's debt had been passed to a debt recovery service on a no win, no fee basis.

He informed the committee that Theresa Elvin wishes to meet with HACA in the New Year to discuss self-management for the Adur allotments, following the HACA model.

TS reported that he and PD had attended a CIL event at the Town Hall where the HACA presentation was well received, resulting in a raised profile on social media sites, Radio Sussex and articles in both the Argus and Herald.

TS thanked plotholders for their help in clearing Plot 42.

He informed the committee that the council would be supplying grass and mulch to HACA from Spring 2024. RB queried whether they could certify this as non-treated and TS replied that he was waiting for a response to this question.



5. Projects

MH thanked those who helped with the raised beds on plot 92, the levelling and footpath work on plot 90 along with the new shed and also the work done on plot 49.

MH informed the committee that the wheelbarrows needed replacing. TS has blown up some of the tyres but these had a limited life. RB suggested purchasing puncture proof wheelbarrows. JK requested some lightweight wheelbarrows. The committee agreed to purchase 4 new wheelbarrows initially and that return of wheelbarrows to the bay is publicised in the newsletter and on the website.

TS circulated a photo of tools left in a potentially dangerous position on the ground in the area of the bays and the committee agreed to replace the metal tools with plastic ones. JK suggested installing a solar powered light as a deterrent to tools and wheelbarrows being taken off site.

MH reported that a post for the main gate had been purchased and would be installed in the New Year.

The committee discussed permanently locking the single gate, as the lock was quite difficult to get into now. PD suggested this be reviewed when the committee consider changing to a barrel style of lock. He confirmed there will be another access point at the other end of the allotments when the new allotments are complete, as the new ploholders will need access to the toilet and shop. TS confirmed that the car park for the new allotments would be outside.

TS informed the committee that the council had agreed HACA could apply for any funding they wished to in 2024 and keep the council informed. He reported that he, PD and MH had looked at bespoke social rooms and asked the committee if they would like money spent on a new social room. JK felt that the social room is used but a larger one would be more beneficial and future committee meetings could be held here rather than at the Community centre, as well as more on site social events being held. RB commented that the committee should consider solar power for the new social room. TS informed the committee that the current social room is council owned and it may be problematic to remove this and suggested it be used for storage in the future and LK suggested storing the tables and chairs here, thus leaving the new social room uncluttered. Due to the possibility of missing funding deadlines, the committee agreed to proceed with a funding application prior to the AGM. JK felt it was important to make clear to ploholders that the money for the new social room was separate funding and not from their plot fees.

6. Website and Facebook

RA informed the committee that the website is up to date and she is working on a growing page over winter, to be published in the Spring. TS commented that, following publicising the CIL funding with both WAM and WAGA, the most interest had come from WAM social media. He commented that it was still an issue getting HACA members to engage with



social media. JK commented that some ploholders may be concerned about Facebook scams. RA commented that she was still getting non ploholders applying to join the group.

7. Newsletter

RK informed the committee that the newsletter was having a break for December and a happy Christmas and new year message from the committee had been sent to all ploholders. The newsletter will start again in January. TS thanked RK for her work on the newsletter.

8. Health and Safety

LH informed the committee that she and RK had met to review the Health and safety policy and she had produced a new draft, which she will send to TS and JK. RK will show this copy to an external Health and Safety Manager, with a qualification in horticulture, for his comments before a final draft is produced.

LH added that the next Health and Safety walkaround is due and she will commence this soon with another committee member.

9. Biodiversity

As AS was not present, there was no update on biodiversity.

10. Service Level Agreement (SLA)

TS reported that he and PD had reviewed the document. He reported that the council are very supportive of the work HACA is doing around creating facilities for people with disabilities and the council had proposed that any accessible plots created remain as such in the future and can only be altered via a vote.

TS asked the committee if they were committed to creating facilities for people with disabilities. RA agreed and commented that there were more opportunities beyond just raised beds. CB felt HACA needed to also consider helping those who did not have a disability but would still benefit from getting out more and allotmenting. RB cautioned against HACA taking on too much in helping Adur council set up self-management, at the risk of diluting its own work.

LK queried whether the committee held a list of volunteers who would be willing to help ploholders who found they required a bit of help and TS explained this had been tried but there had been a lack of volunteers.

PD felt it was time to take stock and encourage use of the raised beds created and not create any more at present. The committee agreed.



11. The SAND Project

TS explained to the guest plotholders that the SAND project is for 16-25 year olds with mild learning disabilities who develop training around their clients' needs. He reported that members of the group had visited the site in the last few months and had taken over Plot 65a. He informed the committee that HACA will get a work placement from the SAND project after Christmas, along with a trainer, for one day a week, to carry out jobs as directed by HACA. He suggested that helping a plotholder who may be struggling to manage their plot would be a potential job the volunteer and trainer could help with.

TK commented that some plotholders may be afraid to ask for help and the committee agreed to publicise the work placement from SAND to plotholders via the newsletter, so they are aware of the help that may be available.

12. WAGA

TS reported there had been no response from WAGA to date regarding incorporation of their fees into HACA plot fees and PD will chase this up.

13. Plotholder meeting

TS suggested a wine and cheese evening in January/February for plotholders and inviting someone from the SAND Project and Theresa Elvin to talk about their projects. RA felt this would be a good opportunity to find out whether it was worth investing in a larger social room. A notice will go in the January newsletter to see if there is any interest in this event.

14. Review of the Year

TS commented that he felt the committee worked well as a team. PD, CB and MH were thanked for their hard work and RK and RA were thanked for the work they did on the newsletter and website respectively. He also thanked RB, LK and TK for their work over the last year and TK was presented with a "golden" toilet brush! TS commented that more plotholders were coming forward to help with projects around the site.

JK commented that there were a few sheds in a poor state on site and TS reminded the committee that sheds remained the responsibility of plotholders.

15. Any Other Business

RA thanked all who had done work on her plot. RB suggested HACA provide some incentives such as tea, coffee and biscuits to the volunteer workers going forward.



TK requested new sheets to record his cleaning schedule, in line with Health and Safety requirements, and TS will arrange this.

The committee agreed that the AGM will be on Wednesday 17th April 2024 and PD will book the room.

There was no further business raised.

16. Date of next meeting

Saturday 24th February at 11am. PD will book the room.

The meeting closed at 13.00