

Romsey Allotment Association Committee Meeting

Monday 29th September 2025 7.30pm Comrades Club

Present: Iain Messenger (Treasurer), Jules Facchini (Membership Secretary), Matthew Simpson (Secretary), Bill Chandler, Vincent Coutable, Jenny Fakes, Deborah Sargent, Alf Tilt.

1. Apologies

Carole Allen-Morley (Chair), Dave Watson (resigned)

2. Approve Committee minutes from 21st July 2025.

Minutes were approved by the committee unanimously.

3. Chair 2025/2026

Carole will be unable to chair meetings for the majority of the coming committee year, she is happy to hold the role of Chair. The committee lacks a Deputy Chair, but decided they can operate well without a Chair. There is the opportunity for a deputy to step up at the Annual General Meeting next month.

4. Membership Fees/Costs

The committee discussed the current levels of membership fee, rent, and deposit amounts. Based on the strong financial position of the association both membership fee and rent were to be left as is for the coming year. Broadlands have kept our rent (the highest of our costs) at the same level, but insurance has increased in price.

On the matter of deposits the current level of £30 was discussed - vacant plots are often requiring significant clearing before being suitable to let, and £30 does not provide enough income to cover the cost of outsourcing this, relying on volunteers from within the association. However we would need to balance any change against preventing access. The committee felt this was worth a discussion at the AGM and would benchmark against local sites for context. There is no intention to change/increase existing deposits paid.

Honoraria arrangements remain unchanged for the coming year, although could be considered for a deputy chair.

5. Container Roof

The repair work required is more complex than first thought, and due to external commitments and planning required will now need to take place in the spring. Alf is to plan the work required in the meantime and a tarpaulin to be erected to keep the worse of the rain out.

6. Pumps

Two pump tops have now been purchased by the committee, as per the plan. One plot approached did not want the pump top installing due to an alternative arrangement, and a second plot holder has been contacted about installing a pump on an existing borehole.

7. Skip

Discussion about a skip on site. Committee agreed there wasn't adequate need presently based on plot inspections, so has deferred to the spring. Members are advised skips should only be used for rubbish on site, and not for personal waste, as such the process should be managed to avoid fly tipping.

8. Community Plot

The Wassail was well received previously and we should aim to hold the equivalent event in early 2026.

It was felt that the risk posed by holding a bonfire in November, particularly with reference to upsetting neighbours living adjacent to the allotments wasn't worth it.

The committee is keen for volunteers to support the running of community events.

9. Signage

Signage has now been moved as previously planned, thank you to Vincent for his hard work.

10. Plot Status

Five plots are currently available with a waiting list of around ten, the committee expects further plots to become available around rent day.

11. Finances

a. Account Balances

HSBC operating account is expected to increase to c. £9,000 after rent day

The deposits balance stands at c.£5,000

Jules thanked for support in sorting deposit transfers

b. Rent Day - November 1st 2025

Rent is due by all association members 1st November 2025. The preferred method of payment is via bank transfer:

Account Type - Business

Business Name - Romsey Allotment Holders Association

Sort Code - 40 39 05

Account Number - 51433938.

Your Reference - Your plot number

Alternatively rent can be paid in person on 1st November via credit/debit card, cheque or through a smart phone.

12. Any Other Business

a. Hedge Laying

Committee have been approached by the Broadlands estate regarding laying a hedge along the Southampton Road boundary. It was felt this would be great for wildlife and improve security along this border at no cost to the association and was approved.

b. Paths

In the latest plot inspections, it was noted that woodchip was being used on a few of the access paths. These paths are essential for ensuring members can safely be evacuated in the event of an accident or medical incident. Reviewing the risk assessment, the Committee decided that woodchip provide inadequate grip for this purpose. Communal paths are to be left as grass which is short. Paths within individual plots are outside the scope of this assessment, and can be woodchip at the members own risk/insurance.

Meeting closed at 8:20pm.

The Annual General Meeting will take place 7:00 pm 27th October 2025 at the Comrades Club, Romsey. Please come. Be heard. All members invited.