

Romsey Allotment Association Committee Meeting

Monday 16th March 2026 7.30pm Comrades Club

Present: Carole Allen-Morley (Chair), Iain Messenger (Treasurer), Jules Facchini (Membership Secretary), Vincent Coutable (Grounds Maintenance Coordinator), Eddie King (Grounds Maintenance Coordinator), Matthew Simpson (Secretary), Bill Chandler, Leena Dawes, Jenny Fawkes, Deborah Sargent, Alf Tilt, Rob Hiley (item 3)

1. Apologies

Georgia Bird

2. Approve Committee minutes from 19th January 2026.

Minutes were approved by the committee unanimously.

3. Hedge Planting

Rob outlined the work planned to establish a hedge along the boundary between the site and the council allotments, and is led by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). This will lead to a reduction in the brambles along the boundary (although some of these will be left as a dead hedge to prevent access) and will be limited to the road. The work is to be carried out by a team from Network Rail as part of a staff outreach exercise. Ten plants will be planted, a mix of native species to increase biodiversity. Some concerns were raised regarding the impact to biodiversity in the short term before a vote passed the activity (8 For, 3 Against). The committee thanked Rob for his work arranging this, which will commence 27th March.

4. Chair Resignation

Carole outlined stepping down as Chair, owing to moving to Liverpool.

The committee voted unanimously for Iain to act as interim chair, responsible for the appointment of a new chair.

Any member of the association is entitled to stand as chair, and are asked to submit their interest in writing to info@romseyallotments.org.uk, with a short paragraph on why they would be the best candidate for the role.

A new chair will be elected by the committee via a blind ballot from those who come forwards at the next committee meeting (18th May 2026).

The committee thanks Carole for her leadership and tireless work to improve the association over the past 12 years.

5. Crime Prevention

In light of ongoing vandalism and theft at allotments across Romsey, the council have set up a meeting with the respective allotment associations. They'll outline a CCTV scheme covering access to all allotment sites which will be council managed. The committee will attend on behalf of the Association, we invite plot holders to submit any items/comments they wish for us to raise in writing at info@romseyallotments.org.uk by April 6th.

In the meantime members are asked to remain vigilant of strangers on site. All theft and vandalism should continue to be reported to the committee (for monitoring) and the police.

6. Network Rail Works

Network Rail will require access throughout the day on Sunday 12th April whilst carrying out work on the railway line adjacent to the site. During this time their vehicles will require access between Southampton road entrance and the track side of the site. Plot holders should be able to access the site, but should be wary as Network Rail vehicles will also exit via Southampton Road.

7. Code of Conduct updates

The updated code of conduct should be available on the website and notice board imminently, as outlined in the previous meeting.

8. High Voltage Pole Replacement

A group from the committee attended a meeting with SSEN and Clancey regarding work required to replace the high voltage electricity pole on site. There's been mixed messaging regarding the extent of the work from the two parties. Iain has been in contact with Broadlands regarding the matter, and the committee have requested full details of the agreed works to further advise plot holders.

9. Plot Status

Jules confirmed that 22 plots have been let, of which all but two have stayed. This leaves us with only 2, 2.5 rod plots remaining. There are a further 7 people on the waiting list, with a further 3 existing members wanting additional rods.

10. Finances

HSBC operating account is £7,844.57 as of 1st March 2026.

The deposits balance stands at £5,380.13.

Mandate holder to be updated at next AGM to reflect change in Chair.

11. Social Events

The Wassail was well attended and considered a success by those there despite the change in date due to the weather. The committee discussed learnings from running this event, and the continued efforts to grow social events within the association. The committee thanked Leena for her efforts in arranging the event.

The committee also discussed the practicalities of purchasing a gazebo for events.

The next social event is the Coffee and Cake Morning taking place on the 11th April, a few members have kindly expressed an interest in baking cakes for the event, which is strongly encouraged.

12. Pumps

Eddie talked through the new pump maintenance group, and the work already carried out. Since the previous committee meeting two further pumps have been installed, two more serviced and several repaired.

Eddie and Vincent are to provide a recommendation for further pump locations to ensure full site coverage.

13. Building Development Nearby

Deborah shared information regarding a new development of 98 homes south of the Council allotments on Broadlands land. The committee will write to Broadlands to understand the long term plan for allotment land.

14. Romsey Art Group

The Romsey Art Group have expressed an interest in holding a few sketching sessions on the allotment site, the committee are supportive of this activity, and providing this opportunity to a local community group.

15. Any Other Business

a. 28 Day Letters

The committee discussed a policy revision regarding the 28 day letter provision, to prevent repeat offending, this will comprise of two elements:

1. No plot holder should be able to receive more than one 28 day letter in a 12 month period
2. An 'are you okay' letter will only be sent once in the same period

After a detailed discussion the committee found in favour (8 For, 2 Against, 1 Abstain), details to be shared on the website and take effect April 1st 2026.

The meeting closed at 9:20pm.

The next committee meeting will take place 18th May 2026.