

Romsey Allotment Holders Association Committee Meeting

Monday 18th May 2026 7.45pm Comrades Club

Present: , Iain Messenger (IM), (interim chair, Treasurer), Charlotte Cheal (CC), (Membership Secretary), Vincent Coutable (VC), (Grounds Maintenance Coordinator), Eddie King (EK), (Grounds Maintenance Coordinator), Georgia Bird (GB), Bill Chandler (BC), Matthew Simpson (MS), Alf Tilt (AT), Jenifer Smith (JS).

1. Apologies

Leena Dawes, Jenny Fawkes

2. Introductions and Committee Update

Since the previous committee meeting, Jules and Deborah both stepped down from their roles on the committee. Their commitment and efforts were recognised, and thanked. Iain chaired this meeting as interim chair, and was thanked for acting as chair since Carole resigned.

Charlotte Cheal has stepped up as the new Membership Secretary. Jenifer Smith has indicated her willingness to undertake the role of Interim Chair. These roles were ratified unanimously later in the meeting.

3. Plot update and map update

Since the previous meeting steps have been in place to handover membership secretarial duties, and a plot has since been let out. There was a discussion regarding deposit return (declined), and handling of a notice to quit (alternative solution proposed).

VC raised concern that the existing plot map is no longer accurate or fit for purpose. It was agreed that this should be updated to reflect the current plot layout and sizes, but noted it would be a very significant task. AT was willing to work with BC to start the process by updating one quarter, contacting plot holders to confirm the boundaries of plots where necessary.

4. Risk Assessment Review

AT is leading a review of our risk assessments for our insurers. This is a routine task that takes place every two years and ensures that we are addressing any safety risks to those on site. There was a discussion regarding new/evolving risk factors to be considered. EK offered to support this key activity. JS raised a concern about risks posed to the increasing number of children visiting the site.

5. Business Continuity

The committee discussed options to reduce the impact of key committee changes, including email access, record management and wider processes. It was agreed that correspondence should be directed through the info@romseyallotments.org.uk which GB monitors on a regular basis and distributes for action to committee members as appropriate. CC asked for an “official” email address which she could use to avoid correspondence coming from her personal account. It was agreed that we should have email addresses under our main account for chairman, membership secretary and others if required and feasible within our contract.

6. Social Activities

Both the coffee and cake morning were very well attended, and popular with a wide number of members. The committee thanked Leena (in her absence) for her work in making these happen, and Vincent for clearing and tidying the community plot. There was a short discussion regarding practicalities and wider work around preparing for such events. It was agreed that we would not participate in the Romsey Show.

7. Finances

HSBC operating account is £6,843.35 as of 18th May 2026.

The deposits balance stands at £5,398.35.

Expected to have c.£6k in the operating account (HSBC) by the end of the year.

There was a further discussion regarding whether or not we would have another skip. Whilst recognising many plotholders welcome these, they are both expensive and abused creating considerable challenge for the committee. The situation will be kept under review.

8. Security/Flytipping

Those present reflected on the council meeting (discussing CCTV) in the previous month, and recent break ins both on our own site and also at the neighbouring Council plots. Flytipping continues and is increasing with the recent incident involving a large fishtank. MS is taking a lead of collating this information to better understand the nature and extent of these issues. Members are asked to email info@romseyallotments.org.uk with details of any break ins, this will help the committee understand the extent of the issue and identify common behaviours, and to support in discussions with the local police. In the event of break-ins, plot holders should still report this to the police directly.

9. Estate Management

Work taking place on the south boundary to be completed Sunday 24th May, the volunteers involved are thanked. There was a discussion regarding the size and scope of the grounds maintenance duties. VC raised a concern about plot inspections, and the number of plots which are overgrown with no plan in place to rectify this. It was agreed the estate team needed to prioritise, escalate inspections of plots being monitored if appropriate. CC has viewings underway for vacant plots.

10. Pumps

The committee discussed in detail the allocation of pumps across the site, and the principles for installing further pumps. These are not evenly distributed across the site and despite the commendable efforts of the pump team, some areas are poorly served. It was agreed that access to working pumps is a high priority for RAHA.

The committee had received a request for a member to sink an electrically assisted pump for personal use and this prompted a wider discussion regarding “member owned” pumps. The committee wants to bring all pumps under communal ownership and maintenance hence will neither fund nor encourage such pumps. However there is a transitional period. Where an existing pump has been funded by the **current** plot holder it will permit the current pattern of use, but bring the pump into the communal arrangements once the respective plot holder changes. It was agreed that EK would discuss the current request with the plot holder and permit this provided all costs were borne by the plot holder, they understood the direction of travel was for communal use, and that the proposal was operationally sound.

11. Any Other Business

a. Transformer access

The electricity company have advised informally of significant work required to replace the transformer on site. The committee are seeking advice from the contractors and Broadlands for further information as the extent and impact of this work is currently unclear.

A number of additional items raised via email were not addressed in this meeting. They will be brought to the next meeting (roads, signage, notice boards, website)

The meeting closed at 9:35pm.

The next committee meeting will take place 13th July 2026.