

MAIDSTONE ALLOTMENTS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF AGM MEETING
THURSDAY 25 September 2025 7pm
Maidstone Working Men's Club

Present:

The Committee: Olivia Hawkins **OH**, Lisa Moore **LM**, Paul Ramsey **PR**, Steve Sharkey **SS**, Tony Newcombe **TN**, Helen Groombridge **HG**, Alex Palmer **AP**, Jo Aylett **JA**

Pllotholders: 22 Pllotholders from 9 different sites.

Item	Heading	Action
1	Welcome	OH reminded everyone that JA is recording the meeting.
2	Apologies	Adrian Sweet, John Jezusek and Malcolm Wright
3	Chairs report	<p>To start with the good news that OH and JA have secured a £7,500 grant. It was an in depth project which took Liv and Jo several days to apply. The grant was to be specifically for environmental purposes, so as water is one of the main issues that we have, we based this on improvements to the tanks, taps, ballcock systems and IBC tanks. We will be looking for help to install these improvements, please let us know if you are able to help.</p> <p>Liv prepared a statement:</p> <p><i>As some of you may be aware there are going to be some big changes with the local councils. The plans so far are that by 2028 Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council will no longer exist and decisions are currently being made as to whether to hand over to one big council or smaller individual Parish Councils.</i></p> <p><i>For us this means in the next few years, all of our allotments sites will be affected. I am meeting with MBC on Monday to discuss what preparations if any we need to make. I will keep you updated with any developments.</i></p> <p><i>As a result of the changes in April this year, Glebe Lane allotment land was transferred in to the ownership of Barming Parish Council. For many years the pllotholders at Glebe have felt that they would be happier self managing their site and during a meeting with Barming Parish Council in August, they asked again if they could separate from MAMC. I spoke to Andy at Maidstone Borough Council after the meeting who confirmed that under the circumstances, they could see no problem with Glebe Lane leaving as it was. It was decided that as it is much easier for MAMC to terminate the contract at the end of our allotment year, so Glebe Lane will be separated from MAMC from the 1st October this year.</i></p> <p>Liv opened the floor for questions before she continued.</p> <p>Q Mick Streatfield Glebe Lane – About the key money, will that be returned to Glebe?</p> <p>A Yes, we are hoping to get it to you from 1 October for when you start having to manage yourselves.</p>

		<p>Q Cheryl Wermuth Glebe Lane – I actually have a breakdown of key deposits (who has them, how long they have had them? To give to the Treasurer or Jo.</p> <p>A That’s lovely, we have done the same.</p> <p>Q Bob Wermuth Glebe Lane – Have you got a cost for key deposit refunds?</p> <p>A Steve Sharkey has requested we hear Livs report in full first.</p> <p>Liv stated it was a shame as Glebe is a lovely site and she had a really good working relationship with Andy and wished them all the best.</p> <p>There will be an impact on MAMC financially as a result of Glebe Lane leaving and price increases all round, so unfortunately with regret and after much discussion MAMC are going to have to increase the rent next year. We are required to give a years notice under the terms of the Tenancy Agreement.</p>
4	<p>Treasurer report</p>	<p>Alex introduced herself. Her report covers a year where she wasn’t involved with MAMC as she took the role of Treasurer in April. Alex is happy to give information should you require it, but it may mean she needs to go away and look back over the previous financial information. If there are any questions, please email Alex directly.</p> <p>In 2024, we have spent more money than the previous year, due to site up keep and water leaks and the rent has not been increased for many years, since 2020. Alex has carried out some preliminary research into allotment rents around the Kent area and MAMC does not charge a super high rent or a very low rent, we are around the middle of what others charge. We must look at the running costs and if we want to have a healthy reserve and ability to pay all of the bills and future proof ourselves, we do have to look at increasing the rent.</p> <p>Liv stated that the water bills are £11,500 already this year and we still have September bills to go. Hopefully we can get our water project under way and start collecting the rainwater. Liv worked out that each IBC tank takes £3 to fill from the tap. So, if every single plotholder (approx. 600) used one tank of rainwater on their allotment, we would save £1,800 from our water bill. At times like now you shouldn’t ever need to be turning on the tap as it is raining intermittently. If we supply everybody with the means to do it, it’s more about education as opposed to saying no you can’t do that. There will be future changes in the Tenancy Agreement which are going to be more stringent as to not being able to fill up tanks and barrels with hosepipes, but we didn’t feel we could do that immediately until we have offered people other options. This frees up money for other site work as there is still a lot to be done including rubbish in places.</p> <p>Q Mick Stretfield Glebe Lane – Surely it’s the responsibility of the plotholder to get rid of their own rubbish.</p>

A But unfortunately, they don't and if they don't get caught dumping it, we can't take action and it's down to the site manager and it just gets left. On Upper Fant at least there is about 30 year's worth knocking around. Rusting old bits or barb and all kinds of things, I couldn't put in my car even if I wanted to. We do understand what you are saying and we hope when the big stuff is gone, then we can keep it down and possibly even get a small second hand trailer and use that to clear rubbish as and when sites need anything collected but at the moment we have got historical rubbish that we have inherited.

Alex added that on the financial side we have implemented a preventative measure built in for the future where you will be charged for the removal out of a plot deposit. Photos are taken at the beginning and end of the tenancy as evidence.

In terms of savings the committee has secured free help from the probation service, clearing plots and sites.

The asbestos was cleared from all sites and paid for by MBC. We are always looking for volunteers.

Q Helen Groombridge Bower Mount Road – Are there any other grants that MAMC can apply for?

A Yes anything is worth a go. It's better to try and be told no than not try at all. If anyone sees anything, please let us know.

Lynne Hawkins Upper Fant Road – It is carrying out the research that is time consuming.

Helen & Jo have seen Cllr Stuart Jeffries posting recently on Facebook about the requests he had for his KCC combined member's grant. This is one to look out for.

Q Richard Coleman Sandling Road – Are there any tanks bigger than a water butt but smaller than an IBC tank for those that don't have much space?

A Liv asked Richard to take a look and see if there was anything suitable and let her know. This is a project for everybody, and Liv wants as many people as possible to be involved.

Richard has now started offering services for anyone who wants a small wildlife project carried out on site.

Various sites have begun setting up communal areas, so there is a possibility for wildlife areas, but it would be dependent on the size of the site and where the area could be placed.

Valerie Cullen Beaumont Road – Anybody that hasn't got room for an IBC tank Valerie has some butts that have had AdBlue in them at her site if anybody wants them.

		<p>Paul has a contact for IBC tanks that have just had fruit juice in them, from a farm shop. They are £35 each. Richard Coleman – You need to be careful what was in them. Paul – they have a label on them. Q Bob Wermuth Glebe Lane – Reads info from 2020 newsletter. Are you going to reply to Faye Gooch. A Yes we are</p> <p>Lisa asks if this is relevant to the AGM meeting. Alex states this is dealing with information before she was with MAMC and this is being dealt separately to the AGM.</p> <p>Another plotholder asks for the questions to be read out. Bob begins to read them out. Other plotholders ask Bob to stop reading as it’s not relevant to the AGM. Bob continues. One plotholder gets up to leave.</p> <p>Liv asks Bob to stop disrupting the meeting and contact her separately from the AGM as plotholders don’t want to listen to it or he will be asked to leave.</p> <p>Bob states all we want to know is what we are going to get.</p> <p>Liv states you will get your key deposits.</p> <p>Andy Symonds Glebe Lane – Andy Jesson MBC has some containers for water. He is checking to see if they are safe. They are at MBC depot.</p> <p>Q Richard Cole – Last year you mentioned IBC tanks attached to shops but the Sandling Road Shop hasn’t done this. A It’s quite a walk for plotholders if they are placed at the shop at Sandling Road. It is figuring out where to put them.</p> <p>Penny Phillips Loose Road – would use if it was attached to the shop at Loose Road.</p> <p>Others feel we need to manage peoples hosepipe usage. This is very hard to police. Perhaps we shouldn’t use hosepipes or lower the pressure of the water. Once the tanks are dotted about site we will ban the use of filling from the taps.</p>
5	Speaker	Maidstone CAN