

RUSHDEN PERMANENT ALLOTMENT AND SMALL HOLDING SOCIETY LIMITED

Registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014.

Register no. 3126R

E-mail rushdenallotments@hotmail.co.uk

Field Minutes of the Committee Management Meeting Held on Monday 11 April 2022

Masonic Hall, Rushden

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.40 PM

Present:

Russell Jarvis	RJ (Chair)	Dave Flook	DF (Vice Chair)
Mark Cox	MC	Pasqu Di Salvo	PDS (Treasurer)
Peter Wright	PW	Anita Jarvis	AJ
Peter Swindley	PS		
Minute Secretary			
Jayne Evans	JE		
Apologies			
John Lowe	JL		
Shane Webster	SW		
Anita Medlock	AM		

1. Minutes from Previous Meeting

Proposed PW

Seconded AJ

2. Actions From Previous Meeting

No colour = new action this meeting/action from previous meeting modified

Red = action not started

Amber = action in progress

Green = action completed

Note - numbers not sequential, completed action numbers removed from table

Action No	Date arose	Subject	Action Required	Action Taken/agreed at meeting	Person responsible	RAG status
2.43	18/10/21	Facebook Group	Identify moderators/admin from each field. Send out link to all members via email	To update on progress next meeting	RJ	Action in progress
2.46	15/11/21	Communal composting facility – provision of containers by council	Communication was sent to North Northamptonshire Council and waiting for a response.	SW not at meeting- To report back at next meeting	SW	Action in progress
2.51	17/01/22	Speaker for event	To confirm dates with speaker and Hall and to report back at next meeting	Confirmation provided that Russell Attwood is available to provide a talk at the Masonic Hall on 1 June.	RJ	Action completed remove from plan
2.52	07/02/22	2 nd letter to Member	Member to be removed from the society membership.	DF is in the process of clearing the plot ready to re allocate. DF is going to pick up the field keys as these have not been returned		Action completed remove from plan
2.53	14/03/22	Gates across Alexander RD	Letter has been sent	To check if gates have been removed in 4 weeks following receipt of letter sent to landowner after last meeting	RJ	Action completed remove from plan

2.54	14/03/22	Application to be added to the waiting list from previously expelled member	Letter has been sent to Lorimar George		RJ	Action completed remove from plan
2.55	14/03/22	Request to share small holding land to stable a horse	Written request has been received from a horse owner and small holding member	Rent costs decided and water bill costs to be calculated. Owner needs to move horses very quickly, will be up to small holding member if she allows horse owner to share the land before the payments have been confirmed.	RJ and PDS	Action in progress
2.56	14/03/22	Creation of wild flower and pond area on HR field	Committee to meet with plot holders on HR field to support them to organise the creation of the wildflower and pond.	Meeting to be arranged	All committee members	Action in progress
2.57	14/03/22	Security cameras on WR field	RJ to provide AM with the new password for the security cameras on the Washbrook Rd field	Password provided at end of meeting 14/03/22	RJ	Action completed remove from plan

2.43 Facebook Group

Previous action dated 14/03/22- RJ will set up a new Facebook group

RJ has created the Facebook Group and has tested it with a handful of members and will start to send out to the whole membership. This must be done in stages as Facebook will 'tag the group as a scammer'. PW asked if the moderators had been identified. RJ stated that it would take time to send out to all of the 350+ members and once that was done, he would find someone from each field to be moderators/admin.

Agreed Action 11/04/22- to update committee on progress next meeting

2.46 Communal composting facility of fields and council providing containers

Previous action dated 14/03/22- SW to report back at next meeting

SW not at meeting

Agreed Action 11/04/22- to update committee on progress next meeting

2.51 Speaker needed for the Celebrate Rushden 2022 event

Previous action dated 14/03/22 – RJ to confirm and report back at next meeting

Speaker and room booking has been confirmed for 1 June. Event will take place at the Masonic Hall and Russell Attwood talk will be entitled as 'A Passion for Pumpkins and weed control'.

Agreed Action 11/04/22- complete, remove from plan and add to significant dates.

2.52 warning letter 2 to be sent to member (Ameer Ghanie)

Previous action dated 14/03/22 – letter to be sent informing member that appeal has been considered and rejected by the committee and giving him 7 days to remove any belongings from his plot which will be reallocated.

Letter was sent and DF is in the process of clearing the plot. There is a significant amount of rubbish present, including carpet so it is taking a significant amount of time.

Agreed Action 11/04/22- completed remove from plan

2.53 gates across Alexander Rd

Previous action dated 14/03/22 – write to landowner and request he remove gates that the society has not given permission to erect.

RJ-letter has been sent. Suggested that someone checks if it has been done in 4 weeks.

DF- we have taken the gates off twice before and they were put back on. MC-should we take the gates away? RJ-we can't remove the gates completely only take them off. Its not worth

the cost of going through a solicitor. **Agreed Action 11/04/22- completed remove from plan**

2.54 letter to expelled member re waiting list application

Previous action dated 14/03/22 – letter to be sent explaining previous expelled members will not be accepted on the waiting list

RJ-letter has been sent

Agreed Action 11/04/22- completed remove from plan

2.55 request to share small holding land

Previous action dated 14/03/22 – new contract to be arranged for existing occupiers and the horse owner requester

See discussion points for 3.2.3 for details.

Agreed Action 11/04/22- Contracts to be signed and water costs to be calculated.

2.56 creation of pond on Highfield Rd field

Previous action dated 14/03/22 – committee to meet with members from HR field to provide support and suggestions on the creation of the pond.

RJ – successful application of a pack of 30 hedgerow trees from the Woodland Trust, which includes the plastic spiral trunk protectors – the trees are aimed at attracting wild life as some have blossom and produce berries (eg hawthorn trees, dogwood etc). DF – a willow would be nice as it will be near a pond. The pack will cover a large area the size of a tennis court, therefore some could be distributed to the other fields. The trees will arrive in November. PW--the optimum time for planting trees is from 31 October to the end of November.

RJ-there has been a couple of members volunteered but unable to remember their names. Committee agreed that the members should do the work to create the pond, not the committee. MC suggested that members from other fields should be invited/encouraged to help as it is a 'nature project'.

Agreed Action 11/04/22-now weather is improving, meeting with members and committee to be arranged.

2.57 password to WR security camera

Previous action dated 14/03/22 – password to be provided to AM

RJ provided password at the end of meeting held 14/03/22

Agreed Action 11/04/22- completed remove from plan

Secretary's Report and Correspondence

3.1 Permission Requests

Item No	Date	Field	Details of Request	Outcome
1	April '22	BR	Shed 6ft x 8 ft	Agreed
2	April '22	HR	Two poly tunnels 6m x 3m	Agreed as member has a large plot

3.2 Correspondence

Item No	Date	Field	Details of Correspondence
1	April '22		Rushden Party in Park on 9 July 2022 Hall park
2	April '22		Chichele College Garden Show on 28 May 2022
3	April '22	Small holding land	Horse owner and current small holding member regarding sharing of small holding land
4	April '22	BR	See below for full version of letter submitted by member with a complaint about Russell Jarvis
5	11/04/22	WR	Has informed DF is not receiving emails and that this is the reason he has not paid his rent

Dear Vice Chairman and Allotment Committee Members,

A serious Health and Safety concern needs addressing as soon as possible for fear others may be subjected to the reckless action of the Chairman / Field Steward of Bedford Road .Russell Jarvis.

On arriving to our plot to finalize the removal of crops and sundry items I found Russell spraying down the area.

At no time had he arranged or even suggested this with us. The agreement had been that we would complete

the tidy up before Rent Day, and in Russell's last email to us he wanted us to let him know when we had finished. As we hadn't finished collecting crops and sundry items no such message had been communicated to him that we were done.

The Health and Safety fear I have is that I would have unknowingly walked onto our plot picking the crops and touching items not knowing the existence of the chemicals that Russell had just sprayed.

It was irresponsible of Russell not to have asked if we were finished removing crops/items from the plot before he commenced this action of spraying chemicals onto our plot.

It was poor that he saw me arrive to our plot yet didn't approach me to redress the situation to explain his action.

Even when he had packed away the equipment he stayed away from our plot.

His actions were without thought or care about the result of the spraying of the chemicals without our knowledge.

A huge concern I have is that Russell took no accountability for his actions. When we did speak as I was driving from the allotments and pointed out that we were unable to finalise the clearing of the plot he said we said we had finished. This was a blatant lie as the arrangement was we would let him know (see emails and above). He knew this and when challenged further said he had to take advantage of the weather. Again an excuse as the weather at the moment is set fair with no rain for the foreseeable future.

It seems Russell saw no dangers or issues with his actions and took no responsibility, trying to avoid accountability.

Could I have Russell's DEFFRA spray license number, the name of the chemical and the batch number so I can check out the situation with HAE.. Could I also see a copy of the Society's Health and Safety policy on spraying as this may need to be updated or reviewed.

Moving forward I still have a plot at Bedford Road allotments where I relish the thought of a great growing season, however I am also keen for such a situation not to occur again.

Kind regards,

Member

Discussion notes for correspondence

3.2.1 – The Society has been offered a free of charge stand at Rushden Party in the Park on Saturday 9 July. This will be free of charge as the Society will not be selling anything.

Although the waiting list is currently long, it was thought it important to continue to show a presence at this event (which has returned after being suspended during the pandemic) as there may come a time when the Society needs to attract new members. The display boards are already prepared and all that will be needed is some produce to put on the tables. PW-stated that he feels the display is impressive.

3.2.2-The Society has previously had a stand at Chichele College at their Garden Show, however, those attending reported that they were not made to feel particularly welcome by the person organising the stands. As the show is predominantly a commercial plant sale it was felt that this was not an event that the Society should attend.

3.2.3.- All small holders have a standard contract that was drawn up by Bletsoe's (land agent used by the Society years ago). As part of the 14-page-documents, there needs to be a map of the fields marking off the area each small holding occupant rents. RJ has confirmed with the small holding members the section of the 5 acre field they wish to retain (the area furthest away from the gate) which means they will each have contracts for 1.25 acres for the 2.5 acres they will share themselves. Horse owner will rent the other 2.5 acres nearest the gate.

Water charges – RJ has discussed this with small holding members, and it has been decided that the charge will be linked to the number of horses on the 5 acre field. Currently the small holding members have 2 horses and horse owner has 5 so the water will be divided into 7 and split as the ratio 2:5.

RJ has prepared an addendum to the contracts relating to the water charges and sought agreement from the committee about the way the charges should be split (with the proviso that should the number of horses change, the ratio would need to be changed too)

Voted on the split of the water charges – agreed unanimously.

RJ – needs to read the water meter so that the charges can be calculated from 1 May and the contracts would be dated as from 1 May. Several copies would be needed including one copy signed by the small holding members and one by the horse owner for the Society file.

The horse owner would need to pay 5 months of rent (from May to October) and the current small holding members would be refunded 5 months (was 5 acres shared between the two of them from October and will be 2.5 acres shared from 1 May)

Voted – the contracts beginning on 1 May and the 5 months of rent from the horse owner and refund of half of € 5 months to current small holding members– agreed unanimously MC-the requester horse owner needs to urgently move her horses to the field as the new landowners gave her very short notice to leave. DF-as the horses are currently ‘homeless’, he feels that if the current small holding members agree, they should be allowed to move onto the land before 1 May. MC to let both parties know they will have to sort this out themselves as will only be for 2 weeks.

3.2.4- complaint from BR member. The following points were made

- The chemical used to spray was ‘Roundup’ which is a weed killer available from retail shops and therefore no licence is needed to spray it on private land.
- RJ- the member had two 10 pole plots and 1 6 pole plot. It was two 10 pole plots that were being given up. RJ was aware of her intention as she had given away a shed and a poly tunnel from the plots. She had also paid rent for the 6 pole plot on 14 March by cheque which also confirmed that she was giving up the two 10 pole plots.
- RJ – only the grass and weeds on the plot were sprayed
- RJ- there were no crops growing on the plot. Photographs of the plot were shared with the committee and no produce was visible.
- RJ-sprayed on Friday 18 March (the day before rent day) as wind was forecast for the next day and spraying in windy conditions is not advisable as the field was quiet at this time – not a good idea to spray on a Saturday when it is busy.
- DF- the member r has received several warning letters over the past 18 months for non-cultivation (one polite letter and one 1st letter). If a member receives 3 warning letters in 18 months, it will result in expulsion from the Society. RJ – confirmed that he had also telephoned her several times over the past 2 years to enquire why she hadn’t been down to the field, and she had stated this was due to Covid.
- MC- suggested that DF sends the response letter explaining that no licence needed for the spraying of Roundup. Also suggested that a refund for the 8 hours between when RJ sprayed, and the end of her occupancy should be offered. AJ calculated that the refund would be approximately 13 pence.

As the pandemic restrictions have been lifted, RJ and DF agreed that they would now return to ‘business as usual’ especially as there is no legal requirement to self-isolate if you have Covid.

3.2.5 DF- a WR member has informed DF that he is not receiving emails from the Society again and that is why he is late paying his rent as he did not receive the invoice. He has given DF a cheque for his rent. DF will ask the member for his email address again and ask him to email PDS so that he has the email for future reference.

4.0 Member’s Secretary Report – new members and leavers

Field	New Members	Field	Leavers
BR	2	BR	2
HR	2	HR	3
WR	6	WR	2

4.1 Vacant plots and number of applicants needed

Field	Number of vacant plots	Number of current prospective members field steward already has	Number of new applicants needed from membership secretary
WR	several	Sufficient for vacant plots	None at present
HR	No figure available		

4.2 Waiting lists

Number on list (as of 06/04/22)	Date of longest on list
78	October 2020 for Grafton Rd

	April – June 2021 for the other 3 fields
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5.0 Warning letters

Field	Polite letter sent	Outcome	1 st letter sent	Outcome	2 nd letter sent	Outcome
BR	To be sent					
HR			To be sent			
HR			To be sent			

6.0 Treasurer's Report (Appendix 1)

INCOME:

Store sales added:

GR £787.83

WR £ 95.50

BR £407.50

HR £255.10

EXPENDITURE:

Significant Expenditure

None this month

Latest Bank Account Balances:

HSBC Community Account £253.51 (as per Treasurers Report)

Investment Accounts: Breakdown

HSBC Business Money £ 13,502.60

Barclays Premium Account £ 18,909.11

Redwood Account £ 63,730.00

United Bank £ 81,295.58

Total in Investment a/c £177,437.29 (as per Treasurers Report)

UPDATE on Rent Revenue

Final date for rents to be paid was 19/03/2022

Outstanding Rents (11)

Field	Member
HR	2
	9

Outstanding Associate Membership

Associate Member
5

6.0 Field Reports

7.1 Highfield Road

Nothing to report

7.2 Washbrook Road

RJ and PW both thanked DF for the good job he had done clearing the large plot previously occupied by Mr and Mr Smart.

PW requested that there was an official acknowledgement for all of DF's hard work.

The plot has been cleared of a large amount of rubbish, rubble, bricks, slabs, wood and metal, the area ploughed and rotavated and 5 new plots created with paths and a parking area.

DF requested a skip from Mick George as there is a large amount of rubble to be disposed of – has estimated that a '4 yard' skip would be sufficient cost o £160. AJ-stated may be able to get a discount. RJ-stated that he also has some rubble to dispose of so if there is room in the skip at WR he may be able to bring it down on the tractor.

DF-we may need to reposition the security camera onto the skip as in the past, the skips have been filled up by other people on the field which is unacceptable.

A WR member has cut down some trees that are on land outside the rear of his plot (the other side of a wire fence). The trees shed seeds that germinate on his beds which is why he

removed them. Previously the trees have been cut back by DF. The trees are not on Society land but grow in an area of 'no man's land' between the field boundary and a palisade fence that the council have erected. The member burnt the tree branches and trunks although RJ stated that he should not have done so legally and should have left them in situ. The member has requested financial compensation for the time it took him to cut and dispose of the trees. DF suggested that he is given £10. RJ asked PDS to pay this as field hours as any member who does maintenance work on the fields can claim payment via this route.

There has been fly tipping just outside of the Quorn Rd entrance gate, next to the electricity substation. This area belongs to the Society and is rented by the electricity board. A man was observed looking through the bags whilst speaking on the phone but he did not remove the bags. It was thought he may be looking for something that may identify who had left the rubbish. AJ – will report as fly tipping to the council

7.3 Bedford Road

Nothing to report

7.4 Grafton Road /Small Holding

Nothing to report

8.0 Store

£594 profit has been made year to date

9.0 Health and Safety

Nothing to report

10.0

10.1 items put forwards prior to the meeting

None

10.2 items put forwards during the meeting

10.2.1 Cost of field keys for members - DF

An agreement was made at the meeting on 13/12/21, item 2.45 that the cost of field keys for members would be £10 that was refundable when the key was handed back once a member left the society. It was also agreed that the cost of a replacement key and a second key would also be £10 but that this may need to be reviewed in future as it may result in members having their own keys cut at some outlets that supply inferior keys which would damage the padlock. MC- suggested that the charge for the 1st key should remain at £10 and that if a member wished to have a second key that this would cost £5. A replacement key would still cost £10. DF- made the point that there would need to be a list of how much each member had paid for the keys so that they are given the correct amount of deposit back when the hand in the key. DF is very careful and always writes the amount paid for the key deposit on the contracts signed by new members. RJ-reported that Angela Ballarano, membership secretary keeps a spreadsheet with this information on. It was agreed that these revised costs would apply.

10.2.2 clear up deposit – DF

DF is concerned about the amount of field hours he is having to claim to clear up plots left in a poor state by leaving members. He suggested that all new members should pay a 'clear up deposit' when they join and that the cost of the clear up when they leave should be deducted from this deposit. The majority of plots are 10 pole and DF considered that £50 was a reasonable cost. DF has calculated that for a 10pole plot, the new member would pay £92.50, and this would be, the key deposit, the £50 clear up deposit and 1 years rent and membership. If they left the plot in a good state, the £50 deposit would be returned. DF asked the Committee to have a "good think" about the deposit.

AJ- we would have to let the people on the waiting list know about the clear up deposit. It was also discussed that the deposit would need to be added to the prices on the website.

RJ- would find out what other societies are doing regarding clear up deposits and report back at the next meeting.

DF-noted that the treasurer should remember that the number of new members joining the Society means that there will be a boost in rental money this year but because 2 years are paid in advance, there would be a drop in the income next year.

10.2.3 –sales of tools profit used to help schools - RJ

RJ-the son of a member gives the Society packs of tools that are sold to members. The profit from these sales is used to pay for seeds and compost that the Society give to schools in the town to encourage children to start gardening. The last donation was to Rushden Primary Academy. The member is leaving the society due to ill health however, RJ hopes that the member's son will continue to donate the tools which are returns or slightly marked items from his Amazon online store.

10.2. 4–Masonic Hall booking for meetings - RJ

RJ – has booked the room for committee meetings for the next 3 months as the room at Grafton Rd is still not available. MC- asked if the rules stated the meetings should be on the 3rd Wednesday of every month, RJ stated that this was not the case.

Meeting Closed 9. 25 PM

11.0 Dates of next Committee Meeting

Tuesday 17 May 2022 7.30PM

Significant dates

Monday 1 June –, the Society will host a presentation by Russell Attwood on Wednesday 1 June at the Masonic Hall. (This will be part of the Celebrate Rushden event)

Saturday 9 July – Society to host a stall at the Rushden Party in the Park event at Hall Park

New Actions from this meeting		
Subject	Action Required	Person Responsible
Rushden party in the park (Item 3.2.1)	Inform Rushden Party in the Park organisers that the Society will attend and host a stall at the event on Saturday 9 July	RJ
Higham Garden Show (item 3.2.2)	Inform Higham Garden Show organisers that the Society will not attend	RJ
Water bill costs for small holding (Item 3.2.3)	To read the water meter on 30 April and note costs up to this date for current small holding member.. To provide an addendum to the small holding contract for the division of water costs based on the number of horses kept by the current small holding member and the requesting horse owner	RJ
Response letter to complaint received from Joanne Parker (Item 3.2.4)	To respond to BR member– no licence needed to spray, sprayed only the weeds and grass., no crops growing on the two 10 pole plots as demonstrated in photographs taken at the time, offering refund of rent of 13 pence calculated as 8 hours for 20 poles.	DF
Warning letters	Polite letters to be sent to BR member, 1 st letters to two HR member	RJ
WR member email address	To ask member to email PDS to ensure that the correct address in on the system.	DF
Skip for WR	Skip to be hired, to find out if it is possible to hire on a discounted price To check on the cost for a larger skip (possibly 8 yard size) as this may be needed to accommodate rubbish from BR too.	AJ & DF
Field hours	WR member to be paid £10 field hours for cutting down and disposing of trees impacting on his plot	PDS
Fly tipping	To report the fly tipping next to Quorn Rd entrance gates to WR to NNC to prompt collection	AJ
Key costs	Field stewards to ensure that the membership secretary knows the amount of deposit paid by new members for field keys	DF, JL and RJ

'Clear up' deposits	To find out if other Societies charge 'clear up deposits' and if they do how much the deposit is	RJ
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Appendix 1 - Treasurer's report

Rushden Permanent Allotment and Small Holdings Society Limited					
Income and Expenditure Account					
Expenditure			Income		
Anglian Water	837.86		Annual Rents	10,223.00	
	BR	162.52	New Rents	1,002.75	
	GR	9.60	Floats for stores and rent day		
	HR	161.01	Stores Sales	3,269.83	
	WR	470.60		BR	656.75
	Hay	34.13		GR	1,772.13
				HR	525.20
				WR	315.75
Printing, Stationary and Postage	527.22				
Asbestos Removal	-				
Stores Purchases	921.64		Ploughing, rotavating, topping	20.00	
Field Hours F	93.56		Rent card / website sponsorship	-	
	BR	75.74	Donations from members	-	
	GR	-	Machinery/accessory sales	-	
	HR	17.82	Replacement/Additional key	9.00	
	WR	-	Sales of pre-loved & ex stock	-	
Field Machinery (Fuel)	26.22		Seed Orders	-	
	BR	26.22	Brittons Potatoes	-	
	GR	-	Misc Income	-	
	HR	-	Transfers from deposit/investment accounts	65,731.86	
	WR	-	Assoc. Mens	-	
Official documents, etc	-		P in the P - Rushden Council	-	
Tractor fuel	-		Wayleave Consent - WPower	-	
Locks and Keys	97.91		Socials	-	
	BR	3.25	Water licence	975.00	
	GR	-			
	HR	94.66			
	WR	-			
Field / Property Maintenance	64.94				
	BR	64.94			
	GR	-			
	HR	-			
	WR	-			
Website / Publicity	-				
Professional Fees (accounts, etc)	960.00				
Gifts / rewards / donations	-				
Equip't Repairs & Servicing	775.08				
Insurance and Safety	532.55				
Hire of halls and refreshments	110.00				
Equipment purchases	-				
Field Steward rewards	-				
EDF	47.18				
Officer (Sec/Tros) payments	918.63				
Tax - HMRC Corp. & FCA	35.00				
Key and share returns / refunds	3.25				
Grafton Rd - refreshments	-				
CCTV - Running costs	142.75				
Payment to Kings Seeds (orders)	-				
Britton's Potatoes	-				
Good gardening rewards	-				
Bank charges	17.82				
Transfer To Deposit/Investment accounts	75,730.00				
Misc Exp	-				
CCTV Installation	-				
	81,841.61			81,181.44	
Income over Expenditure	- 660.17				
	81,181.44				
Balance as at 06/04/2022					
Income and Expenditure Account at 31/10/22			Cash with Cashier		
HSBC Current Account B/F	913.68		HSBC Current Account C/F	253.51	
Cash	-		Cash	0.00	
Floats	90.00		Floats	90.00	
Income over Expenditure	- 660.17				
	£343.51			£343.51	-£0.00
			Investment Accounts:		
				£172,436.92	