

Minutes of the Haringey Allotment Forum – 12 April 2025

Forum website: www.haringeyallotmentforum.org.uk

Present: DeQuincey Road (Murielle Porter-Weiss), Elmar Road (Adam Blaxter Paliwala); Franklin Street (Deborah Cawkwell, Marnie Nash); Golf Course (Patricia Kelly); Highgate (Geoff Kemball Cook); Mannock Road (Janet Slater), Myddleton Road (Chris Walker); Quernmore Road (Bruce Calderwood, Vivienne Bennett); Risley Avenue (Linda Dyer, Colleen MacLaren); Shepherds Hill Railway (Helen Killick); White Hart Lane (Derek Willmont); Wolves Lane (Iain Drury **Chair/Notes**); London Borough of Haringey (Alex Fraser);

Apologies: Vicky Stones (London Borough of Haringey), Alison Liney & Julie Vaggers (Alexandra Palace), Lindy Berkman (Creighton Avenue), Naomi Doran (Creighton Road), John Porter-Weiss (De Quincey Road), Sally Jones (Highgate), James White & Deborah Brett (Marsh Lane), Colin Kerr, Kate Pemberton (Ranelagh Road), Juliet Mann (Shepherds Hill),

1. Minutes of the 11 January 2025 meeting

1.1 Accepted as correct.

1.2 Indoor Wood Burners, Stoves, and BBQs - Ongoing concern over use of indoor wood burners and BBQs as well as gated and fenced plots on a specific allotment site.

Action – Alex to arrange a Fire Prevention Officer visit later in the year with a view to issuing Council guidance.

2. Allotment Service Updates

2.1 2025 Invoice Issue – Success and Lessons Learned

- Significant improvement from the previous year's chaotic billing process.
- Still 5–10% of tenants are serial late payers.
- Common issues: emails going to spam, postal delays, outdated contact info.
- Introduction of the new update to the “Colony” database is expected to improve tracking.

Action – Alex and Vicky to meet with Finance to discuss issuing invoices from Colony database following the Colony upgrade

2.2 2026 Invoicing – Aligning with Fiscal Year

- Proposal to move from calendar year (Jan–Dec) to fiscal year (Apr–Mar).
- Recommended option: issue a single 15-month invoice in Jan 2026 (covering Jan 2026–Mar 2027).
- Concerns: affordability, communication, and risk of confusion.
- Need for an early and clear communications strategy to explain the change.
- Considerations around payment deadlines, pro-rata refunds, and handling legacy issues raised.

Action – Forum Steering Group to meet to discuss the concerns and report back in July

2.3 Bank and Post Office Payments – Proof Required

- Many payments via bank/post office lack proper references, causing delays.

- Main problem being the Payslip does not include 10 digit invoice number
- Vicky can match payments if provided with date and amount.
- Suggestion: improve payment instructions and include correct reference details on invoices.
- Discussed the challenge for tenants with limited digital access or language barriers.

Action – Alex to take up the issue of payslips with Finance

3. Devolved Management Best Practice

3.1 Pre-Inspections – Best Practice

- Pre-inspections help build rapport and identify issues early.
- Strategy: gentle, supportive communication tailored to individuals.
- Encouragement to cultivate at least 75% unless valid reasons are given.
- Pre-inspection notices via newsletters and direct contact were praised.

3.2 Site Inspections – Frequency

- Sites confirmed preference for one or two inspections annually.

Action - Vicky to coordinate based on individual site feedback.

4. Allotment Biodiversity

4.1 Allotment Biodiversity Guidance Note – Deborah and Kate presented a revised draft of the Biodiversity Guidance Note for Tenants.

- Aim: clarify how tenants can support biodiversity without breaching the 75% cultivation rule.
- Encouraged biodiversity-friendly practices in the uncultivated 25% (e.g. container ponds, native plants).
- Concerns raised about netting, tree management, and defining acceptable biodiversity.
- Discussed legacy trees vs. new planting; stricter enforcement of 3m height rule to begin.
- Importance of case-by-case handling of tree issues acknowledged.
- Revised guidance to emphasize balance between biodiversity and cultivation.

Action – Iain to finalise a draft document and circulate

5. Other Business

5.1 Water Usage – Best Practice Note introduced by Iain

- Emphasis on reducing waste and avoiding conflict over shared hosepipes.
- Some sites consider limiting hose use to 1 hour per plot.
- Water meters and smart meters now installed in many areas.
- Highlighted rising water rates and need for sustainable use.
- Suggestion to share water usage guidance widely

Action – Geoff to redraft the document as a list of simple “Do’s and Don’ts”

Next Meetings

12 July 2025, 18 October 2025