

Minutes of the Haringey Allotment Forum meeting on 17 January 2026

Forum website: www.haringeyallotmentforum.org.uk

Present: Alexandra Palace (Alison Liney); Creighton Avenue (Lindy Berkman **Chair**, Jeremy Whelan); Creighton Road (Naomi Doran); De Quincey Road (Murielle Porter-Weiss); Elmar Road (Adam Blaxter Patiwala); Franklin Street (Marnie Nash, Deborah Cawkwell); Golf Course (Trisha Kelly); Highgate (Sally Jones); Mannoek Road (Janet Slater); Marsh Lane (Jim Whyte); Myddelton Road (Chris Walker); Quernmore Road (Bruce Calderwood, Vivienne Bennett); Ranelagh Road (Colin Kerr), Risley Avenue (Colleen McClaren); Shepherds Hill (Juliet Mann); Shepherds Hill & Railway (Helen Killick); White Hart Lane (Derek Wilmott); Wolves Lane (Iain Drury **Notes**); London Borough of Haringey (Vicky Stones)

Apologies: Alex Fraser (London Borough of Haringey); Kim Samman (Aylmer Road) Geoff Kemball Cook (Highgate); Kate Pemberton (Ranelagh Road); John Porter-Weiss (De Quincey Road); Helen Killick(); Deborah Brett (Marsh Lane); Sophie Lawton (Alexandra Palace)

1. Minutes of the 18 October 2025 Meeting & Matters Arising

1.1 The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

1.2 Fire Safety review is being progressed with an external officer and guidance is being developed. Focus will be on:

- Safe burning practices
- Fire prevention measures
- Appropriate equipment and site rules

It was confirmed:

- There is no blanket ban on burning at present.
- Sites will likely retain local rules, but aligned to borough-wide guidance
- Committees may be required to inspect and ensure compliance
- Fire Brigade advice is that they should be contacted if there is excessive smoke or unsafe burning. Tenants maybe charged for non-essential call-outs

Concerns raised:

- Gas bottles and unsafe storage – Jim has a contact for calor gas disposal
- Old burners and improvised stoves
- Fire extinguishers vs. training and risk

It was noted that:

- Some past incidents have occurred but overall risk is currently low.
- Education of tenants is essential.

Action: Fire safety guidance to be circulated once finalised.

2. Allotment Service Updates

2.1 2026 Invoicing - Aligning with fiscal year

- Proposal to move invoicing to April financial year remains under discussion.
- Strong opposition from forum:

- Forum previously voted unanimously against the change.
- It was noted the council would gain only a one-off financial benefit.
- Significant additional workload and complexity would result.

Action: Iain to circulate a copy of his email to Alex. Members to write to Alex setting out opposition to the proposed implementation of the change of invoice year.

3. Devolved Management Best Practice

3.1 2026 issue of invoices – ongoing concerns

- Emails going to junk folders
- Full inboxes
- Incorrect contact details held by Finance

Emphasis placed on:

- Tenant responsibility to maintain contact details
- Tenant responsibility to make concession claims in time

Action: Site Associations to help educate tenants where possible and publish reminders about the time limit for concession claims

3.2 Probation Periods

- From 1 January 2026 the first invoice for successful probationers to be back dated to the start of the probation period unless there are exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis to consider a rent free period e.g. exceptionally difficult plots.
- New probation forms now require signatures confirming rules have been read.
- Stronger wording in Notes for New Tenants on “Pesticide/Herbicide Use” and “Responsibilities of Tenants” i.e. paying rent on time. Keeping plots to the required standard, observing Tenancy and local rules.

3.3 Best Practices to Share – examples discussed

- Local pre-inspections
- Early intervention before formal enforcement
- Education and community-led compliance

General agreement that this approach is reducing conflict and enforcement cases.

3.4 Inspection Timing – proposed cycle

- Main inspections: May–June
- Lighter touch in July
- Avoid August where possible
- Second inspections Sep – Oct maybe done locally with photos sent to the council officer
- Officer will attend where serious issues exist

Agreed: Continue this flexible, risk-based approach

4. Allotment Biodiversity

- 4.1 Updates & Good Practice – Several sites including Franklin Street reported
- Dead hedging projects
 - Habitat creation (frogs, insects, hedgehogs)
 - Hugelkultur beds
 - Reuse of prunings instead of burning

Strong encouragement to:

- Reduce burning
- Increase on-site reuse of wood and green waste

Discussion on pesticide reduction:

- Many sites now discouraging or restricting use
- Stronger probation wording helping to change behaviour

- 4.2 Problem Species: Cinquefoil
- Severe infestation reported on one site.
 - Manual removal currently the only effective method.
 - Strimming makes the problem worse.
 - No easy solution identified.

Action: Members to share any successful control methods for Cinquefoil and any other problem weeds such as Bindweed, Couch grass and Horsetail at the next meeting.

5. Forum Steering Group – New Members

- 5.1 Bruce and Marnie volunteered to join the Forum Steering Group

6. Any Other Business

- 6.1 Surveys of protected trees on allotment sites – a number of sites expressed concern about outstanding tree surveys.

Action – Members to email Alex with requests for a tree survey. Vicky can be copied in

- 6.2 Public Liability Insurance – strongly recommended that all site associations have public liability insurance and employers liability insurance for working parties. Without insurance, committee members can be personally liable for damage and injury.

Options discussed:

- National Allotment Society – individual or affiliated membership
- RHS affiliation
- Specialist providers (e.g., Chris Knott Insurance)

Action: Each site to review its insurance position.

- 6.3 Success Stories – Vicky said that we do not celebrate successes to raise the profile of allotments. Vicky encouraged sites to share photos, stories, projects,

events, improvements. These will be collected into an internal showcase to raise the profile of allotments and support future funding and recognition

Sally volunteered to set up a Forum WhatsApp group to share successes, ideas, stories and issues. Forum members were happy to share contact details. Iain to co-ordinate.

A link was made to Haringey Borough of Culture 2027 and possible allotment involvement.

Action: Sites to send photos and stories for central collection.

Iain to co-ordinate names and telephone numbers for the WhatsApp group.

7. Next Meetings – 11 April, 11 July, 10 October