

HANSLOPE PARISH COUNCIL

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ANNUAL ALLOTMENT TENANT'S MEETING

Monday 2nd February 2026 at 7.00pm

MEETING NOTES

Present:

Pat Cook - committee chairman
Ian Laurie - committee member
Fiona Armstrong- committee member
Cllr Roland Simpkins - committee member
Cllr Helen Needham - committee member
Clerk: Gillian Merry
17 allotment holders

26.001 Introductions and summary of the last year

Mrs Cook welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the committee. Apologies were received from Stuart McFarlane, Jackie Cheshire, Janette Middleton, Kevin Poole, Kerry Brown, Sharda Lochan, Jackie Harper, Teena Boobier, Roger Pettit, and Janice Gentry. 2025 saw the implementation of a professional tree survey and risk assessment, which identified some trees to be reduced or removed and this was carried out. The large Goat Willow in the middle of the site will be monitored. New taps were installed and these were well received and well used, and the back fence was replaced, which seems to have cut down the muntjacs. There was less growing due to the hot summer and the committee helped to keep the site tidy and maintained.

26.002 Who does what, who to contact and keeping in touch.

Cllr Simkins introduced himself and is responsible for letting new plots re letting plots and first point of contact if giving up your plot. Mrs Cook Mr Laurie and Ms. Armstrong are generally responsible for clearance maintenance and looking after untenanted plots. Mrs Cook explained that the new numbering is now in use and the posts and numbers will be completed this year.

26.003 Legals and Agreements

- i. **Payments, Public Liability Insurance, 2026 agreements: changes & clarifications:** The Clerk introduced herself as responsible for payments banking invoices and legal agreements. She asked that everyone pays by the end of December each year and if they are not renewing, to let her know as soon as possible. She further explained that a proportion of the annual invoice goes to membership of the SWCAA and importantly, this includes public liability insurance. If this is not paid, plot holders are not insured and the council's insurance does not cover what happens on the plots. She also advised that there is a new rule this year, stating that ponds are not allowed.
- ii. **Issues when giving up your plot:** Tenants were urged to give as much notice as possible when relinquishing their plot, as untenanted plots creates significant extra work for the committee.

- iii. **Plot reduction options:** Mrs Cook outlined that there are options to have smaller plots or to reduce plot sizes and asked anyone wishing to do this to contact any member of the committee.

26.004 Allotments round-up

- i. **Equipment hire procedure:** Mr Laurie is responsible for the hiring out of equipment. There are now 2 lawn mowers and two strimmers, as of last summer. The large Bushwacker was not popular but it has been decided to keep it for now. He asked for at least two days' notice for hiring out machines. He asked if anyone else would be willing to be a key holder to the container where the machines are stored.
- ii. **Tidiness – keeping plots in 'good order':** Mrs Cook advised that inspections take place three times a year. If tenants can't work their plot, they should at least keep the weeds down and mow paths and ridings. There is the option to cover any areas that can't be worked in the event of illness etc. She urged everyone to keep their plots tidy and to avoid weed drift in fairness to others. Plots giving concern at inspection time will receive formal letters giving 28 days to improve the situation and this can ultimately lead to eviction. A skip will be ordered three times a year for rubble and other debris and these are always well used.
- iii. **Gate and water arrangements:** The gate is opened and the water switched on, on the 1st of April. The site needs to be kept locked during winter due to waterlogging and to avoid anyone driving on the site when wet.
- iv. **Bonfires:** Bonfires are allowed but tenants are urged to check the wind direction via the wind flag on the site, to ensure it is not blowing in the direction of the houses on Newport Road or the horses in the adjacent site.
- v. **Weedkiller:** Weed killer must not be allowed to drift on to the paths or ridings, as it does blow around when windy. Again check the wind levels and be very careful about applying this, as last year there was a lot of damage from weed killer.
- vi. **Other:** Mr Laurie will move the swap table so it is adjacent to the fence, where it can be more sheltered and secure. Anyone wishing to get rid of large items, was asked to take a photo and put it on the WhatsApp group instead. This year collections for the food bank will be organised in the event of excess fruit and veg. Plot 22 is now a turning space and Mr Laurie will mark this out.

26.005 2026 Events & Plans

- Cllr Needham introduced the idea of and of allotment competitions to include up to 10 categories. These include a cup for the best plot and then prizes such as medals for smaller categories. She suggested that judging takes place in the summer during national allotment week with prize giving in early September, on a Sunday afternoon with the idea of a BBQ and bring your own drink and food. She asked for a show of hands in support and several hands went up. She went through the list of categories and asked for volunteers to help organise the competition. It was mentioned that allotment holders with children, would enjoy getting their children involved in a competition. Cllr Needham will put the details on the WhatsApp group and will find out more about national allotments week and report back.
- Cllr Simpkins reported that at the start of the year there were several vacant plots due to non-renewals. The open morning this year will therefore be held on the 15th of March - a Sunday morning and asked that tenants attend and be on their plots, so that

they can chat to any visitors. He reported that Hanslope now has its own podcast produced and compared by local DJ Trevor Marshall. Trevor would like to include an item about the allotments and Cllr Simpkins asked for volunteers to appear on the podcast.

26.006 Tenants Q & A and feedback session

- With regard to plot 75, the plot has been re-let and pond will be filled. Tenants will be able to help themselves to the wood and pallets once these are removed but the new tenant will be consulted first.
- There is a seed swap at the Methodist Church on Buckingham Rd, Bletchley on the 14th of February.
- There will be no horticultural show at the village hall this year.
- Mrs Cook closed the meeting and urged that anyone who notices a plot not being worked for three to four months should let the committee know so that they can take action.

G Merry
03/02/26