

Marlow Allotments Association (MAA) Meeting: 28 April 2025

Attendance: John Stilliard (Chair), Sylvia Miller (Secretary), Maren Talbot (Treasurer), Fred Tillier, Pete Cooper, Shaun Kennedy, Denise Bagge.

Apologies/absence: Harry Ferris.

1. Treasurer's Report and membership - Maren Talbot (MT) provided a summary of MAA finances and reported that there are currently 118 members.

The focus of the session was the MAA's relationship with the National Allotment Society (NAS) and whether membership continued to be of value. MAA's membership of the NAS continues to be in place until March 2026. MT had done considerable work for the MAA on the relationship with the NAS and two main issues were discussed. First, the intention of the NAS to require that MAA provides details of members names, addresses, emails and telephone numbers. Secondly, whether the NAS would provide real assistance in the face of threats to allotment sites. Experience of dealing with the NAS since the beginning of the year had raised serious questions about its efficiency at a time when it was also raising the cost of membership to £3.50.

The Committee agreed to challenge the NAS's request for more information about members in excess of the Govt's legal requirements. The Committee also agreed to assess the pros and cons of continuing membership and put a recommendation to the AGM in November 2025.

Action.

a) MT to submit an amendment to the NAS AGM (14 June) about membership information.

b) Committee members to provide MT with input to a report to members on the pros and cons of NAS membership by the end of June 2025 in good time for the MAA AGM on 6 November 2025.

c) SM to prepare a change to the wording of the MAA Rules of Association for the MAA AGM – reverting to an earlier and more flexible wording about affiliation.

2. Waiting lists, vacant and neglected plots - SM reported that there are currently 5 vacancies at FP and 9 at HH; the waiting list is 8 at FP & 5 at HH, 20 plots have been let since November 2024, 11 of which in April 2025. Marlow Town Council (MTC) are expected to review neglected plots in May 2025.

3. Overhanging and neglected trees and shrubs - MTC had employed tree surgeons to take down some large trees at Foxes Piece alongside the fence area with the surgery.

Action: Denise Bagge (DB) to follow up with MTC about budget allocation for this year on tree work.

4. Competitions - Decisions about this year's competition(s) are waiting on the appointment of new Councillors following Local Elections. The competition for Best New-Comers would continue, along with a variety of other competitions over the summer months to be judged by the Mayor and Councillors.

5. Plot numbering - MTC has prepared plans for the plot re-numbering, but are not ready to action this.

6. Manure - MTC had decided to stop deliveries of manure to Foxes Piece because of hygiene issues especially with the weather getting hotter. **Action:** SM to liaise with MTC to allow deliveries during winter.

7. Events - A dahlia talk by Richard Bailey was in prospect for later in the summer (usually August). A summer BBQ in mid June was also proposed.

Action: SM and Shaun Kennedy (SK) to liaise on arranging the BBQ at Hanging Hill.

8. Plant & Tool Stand: Foxes Piece: 24 May -The P&T Stand was discussed as a good opportunity for members to raise money for the Association by offering plants and tools and for tenants to pay their membership of the MAA. "Bring cash for plants, tools and renewing your membership".

Action: DB, MT and John Stilliard (JS) to liaise about arrangements for the 24 May. SM to advertise the Stand with members and ask them to contact DB about where and when to bring spare plants.

9. Next Allotment Working Party meeting with Marlow Town Council

Items identified for discussion included: action to address concern about thefts at both sites and need for new CCTV signs on the gates; state of pathways and identifying someone to cut grass on the main thoroughfares; playground area at Foxes Piece; fence at top of Hanging Hill; competitions; manure deliveries; budget for tree and shrub work in 25/26. **Action:** SM to liaise with MTC.

10. Newsletter - Items for the next newsletter included: deliveries of manure; events including plants for the plant/tool sales in May (FP) and June (HH); dahlia talk and BBQ. **Action:** SM.

11. AOB - Website. The website is badly out of date. Details of new committee members; the Contact Us section message from MTC; Newsletters and minutes; latest on the Triangle; all require work. **Action:** SM.

Notices for gates. New notices with the details of committee members. **Action:** SM. JS & DB to put up notices.

Wildlife area at Hanging Hill. A plot that was very difficult to cultivate had been allocated as a designated wildlife area. **Action:** SM and JS to liaise on developing the site with the available funding eg bird nesting boxes.

Tree pruning advice. **Action:** DB to see if this can be arranged for the Autumn.