

Minutes of EWAA Committee Meeting

8th 22nd January 2025

1. Apologies: Daniel Thorpe, George Liddell, Mike McNaboe, Jon Willis, Harriet Akkouche

Present: Mo Leen, Vicky Bell, Amy Douglas, Lydia Wainwright, Michael Harloe, Janita Good.

2. Approval of minutes of last meeting 13th November 2025.

Approved.

3. Matters arising

Claire – general tidying. Terms of her contract? Owes 26 hours.

Leaving gate open – unless we know who, it's hard to do anything. One suspect emailed. Camera to go up.

ODS – quote for works. Mo and Dan met with him. Revised quote but didn't outline what he was going to be doing. Waiting on ODS to get back to us.

Refundable deposit for keeping plot tidy – hold over till Jon is here.

Action point: Contents insurance – ask Jon.

4. Treasurer's Report

Since the last meeting on 13th November, other than the usual recurring payments and receipts, we have spent £101 on the mower repair, and received the last few rental payments.

Clare has been ill for the last couple of months so owes us 26 hours maintenance work which she will be carrying out in the coming month or so.

5. Membership Report – Plot Inspections

Since the last Committee meeting, 5 people on the waiting list have been invited to a series of allocation meetings and we have welcomed 2 new allotmenteers. I will also be emailing 21 plot holders about the status of their plots on the basis of last Saturday's plot inspection. The waiting list now stands at 47 with the oldest name on the list being June 2025. We have 4 vacant plots that are in mixed condition. There are a further 7 plots totalling 35 poles that have been abandoned, are now very overgrown, and vacant for over a year. I've passed details of these on to Jon to ask Claire to look at.

Mo: Invite new people to bring timber waste to shop for bonfire.

Get plot 131a half-built shed taken down. Committee will do it.

Plot 131a for bonfires temporarily? Add 131a's brambles to it.

Action point: Mo will invite people to have a big fire on condition they attend for an hour. Ask them to talk to Mo about it.

6. Shop Report - New shop officer

VB: Handover of shop documents and setting up shop accounts on a standalone laptop has been a challenge but has been completed. (Thank you Vicky and Jane!). VB will continue as shop officer until 31 March 2026, after which a new shop officer will be needed to keep the shop open.

Shop officer jobs involve:

- Ordering produce etc
- Accepting deliveries
- Organising volunteers
- Being on hand on Sunday to give them a key, and in case there are any problems etc.
- Clearing email spam...

Most of these jobs require an ability to use computers, specifically Word, Excel, OneNote etc.

Linking up new produce with the Treasurer's systems still needs to be done.

Would the shop volunteers be able to take on the sub-roles listed above?

Deliveries – Mo could supervise in short-term.

Would a Key safe help? No.

Action point: Priority to get an email out asking for volunteers to take over shop officer duties from 1 April. AD to send email out.

7. Report of the CLG sub-committee (Janita Good, Michael Harloe)

Worries around conflict between directors and committee. Solution: make the committee the directors. Involving election and rotation. Three-year terms (you can quit when you want before that though). Need registered office and post box. Appoint a secretary for the company (not same as committee secretary) to deal with companies house returns (accounts, confirmation statement, notification of director changes). Is everyone on the committee comfortable with that?

Janita happy to take everyone through what the responsibilities are. Biggest one is that directors must act to promote the success of the company for the benefit of all its members (i.e. all plot holders). E.g. ordering stuff for the shop has to be declared.

To be clear the lease and this company are completely separate. It does give everyone on the committee protection of limited liability under a company limited by guarantee. We would not need trustees to sign the lease and take full liability anymore.

Other benefit is a free constitution which the sub-committee has tweaked a little bit. Have also researched other allotment committees – Barnett Council inspired us.

Oxford Council is confused – it has granted a lease (and from that you have the statutory allotments). Janita recommends do nothing. Allotment law is not easy to understand, dates back to 1918. Not massively modernised.

Next steps to decide to appoint a secretary and how much that'll cost etc. **Action point:** We need to talk to Jon about whether he would submit to Companies House or get an accountant to do it.

Sub-committee happy to have this conversation with him (we still need a treasurer, but does he draw up annual accounts or want someone else to).

The company will hold public liability insurance and any other insurances.

We have to actually form the company - can do it online. Janita says it's easy.

1. Must have a subscriber to incorporation and at least one director. Can appoint others later. All plot holders become members.
2. Or all committee can be first subscribers and all become directors.

Janita recommends the first course of action.

Subscriber: person who sets up the company ('a subscriber to the articles'). Subscriber does not need to be a director but can be easier if they are. Takes about a day.

8. EGM

To pass resolution to form company. Mid-April. 25th April. Notice of an EGM. Give 21 days notice. Send notice 31st March. Amy to make a post on the website. Must have formulated resolutions before end of March. All plot holders need to see a copy – send round to everybody. Any issues with it, votes during EGM. If majority against, start again. Cannot negotiate it during the EGM. Circulate before calling EGM. Any comments before _____ please.

Action point: When should proxy votes be in? (We need to check).
18th April? A week before?

9. Area beside shop/bonfire area

Dan wants to set up a covered workshop area. Committee think this is a nice idea. Ask around for wood.

Close to shop, fairly important space.

Who owns fence between us and children's allotment? No one present knows.

Two trees dug up – belonging to Rosemary. Chris had his shed stolen. Stuff does go missing. Jim has asked to put up a camo camera. Camera by gate? Encourage people to use double-gate. Are we up for buying a camera? A) 180 one to cover gate and shop and bonfire area. B) one or two others, roving? Maybe George L knows about this?

10. AOB

Snappymail to be shut down, will happen at the end of February – all EWAA email addresses use this. Several alternatives, let's use Microsoft Outlook and open new emails so reduced spam. **Action point:** AD to look into this.

Boundary fence – landlord owns house, treehouse falling into allotment. Dan is on the case! Can we find out who the letting agent is?

11. Date of next meeting

Next committee meeting is 12th March 2026.