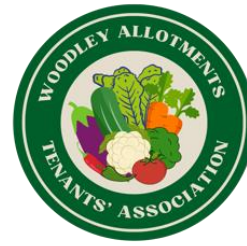


WATA Annual General Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Thursday 26th March



Present: F13, E18, F22, M23, H15, J28, D28, J23, M08, K25a, A24, K17, C33a, D12, E18, M11, C15, D27, L18c, C30, M10, M28, K33, D16, D11, G23, F12, B10, J26a, M14, H24, H25, F17, F18,
Also present, representing WTC Kevin Murray and Kieran Mullane.

Apologies: M27, M34, F33, K24, K25a, J23

1. Agree Minutes of Last AGM

The minutes of the 2025 AGM were agreed by a show of hands.

2. Welcome from the Chair

Mike McNamara welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained how the evening would proceed. Each committee member would take part in the following presentation explaining the various activities that have been happening since the previous AGM when the new committee was formed.

3. Overview of the Past Year – Mike McNamara

Several things have happened in the past year all working towards clearing up the site, getting rid of the rubbish and generally making it a pleasant environment in which to work our plots.

The committee in conjunction with Woodley Town Council (WTC) have introduced a few recycling schemes to remove, metal, glass, hard and soft plastics from the site. Rubble can be piled on the large mound in the recycling area by the front gate. The council will crush this and use it to fill potholes in the roads across the site later in the year. These schemes do seem to be working as the site is looking tidier and tenants seem to be getting the message that this waste needs to be removed from their plots. The metal recycling has already been collected once; it almost filled the truck which is a great start.

Work has begun to clear up the front gate area. This is an ongoing project. The willow tree has been removed as its root system was rotten. That area will be covered with wood chip or bark and enclosed using a low willow fence. We will have a new notice board provided by WTC and place planters on either side of the noticeboard with seating between them. There is no news yet on when the project will start on the road by the main gate to reduce the flooding which occurs annually. This is still under discussion between the committee and WTC, although this year flooding has occurred on site, the main gate area seems to have

been less affected than in previous years. Historically a gully was thought to be in that corner of the site and may have been blocked, hence the recurrent flooding. WTC have investigated and there is no gully. L-row is probably the worst affected area for flooding and it's interesting to see how some of the tenants have adapted their plots to keep them accessible.

WTC have given permission for the committee to hold weekly bonfires on Wednesday mornings. These will run until the end of April which will allow us to have five more bonfires. We've had seven so far and they've been very successful. We would encourage tenants with pruning cuttings or old, unused, unwanted or rotten wood on their plot to move it to the bonfire area by the back gate where it will be burnt at the next managed bonfire. Please do not bring wood or rubbish from offsite. If a tenant is unable to move the wood themselves, email the committee who will collect it from your plot if you pile it up ready for collection. Tenants can't have bonfires until after 4pm in the winter months which puts some people off so please do take the opportunity to use the managed bonfires.

The first ever tree survey was carried out last year and proved very interesting. The committee would like to thank Peter Wheat for his invaluable help with the project. The tree survey is on the website if any tenant is interested. Peter surveyed the wilderness trees (the large trees on communal areas). Peter and Mike surveyed trees (not fruit trees) on or near the plots along each row. The next phase of the survey will be to look at fruit trees on plots. To identify them and assess general health and whether any will require pruning in the winter.

Peter has also mapped the water table across the plot. It will improve understanding of why certain areas are prone to flooding, so measures to mitigate this can be targeted accurately. We all know the main gate tends to flood in wet weather but it's interesting to know where the secondary areas will be in extreme wet weather.

In July we held a best plot competition and Summer BBQ on the Memorial Plot. It's been many years since we held any competitions on site but as one of this committee's goals is to reinvigorate a sense of community, we decided this would be a good place to start. There were eight participants this year and we're hoping for a few more for the coming year's competition. It was interesting seeing the different produce tenants grow on their plots and the different methodologies used. Everyone who attended the BBQ seemed to have a good time and again we're hoping more tenants will attend future BBQs. We'll be holding a few over the coming Summer.

There has been a record number of tenants giving up their plots this year for a variety of reasons. Some of the plots were in a poor state and one of the problems the committee faced was showing completely overgrown plots to prospective new tenants. The committee bought weed suppressant and Sylwester Dawlud (C10) strimmed the plots which were then covered making them a lot neater when shown during a viewing. The committee would like to thank Sylwester for all his hard work and have a small token of our thanks to give to him next time he's on site as he was unable to attend tonight. A lot of tenants have left an immense amount of rubbish on site when they've vacated their plots, and the committee is working with WTC on a scheme to ensure plots are cleared of rubbish by the vacating tenant

prior to handing back their keys. A deposit system was proposed but eventually voted against by local councillors. A fine system has also been discussed but we have no firm solution yet although one does need to be found as we are a collection of people with garden allotments used for the cultivation of vegetables and flowers, not an unofficial tip. The committee took over management of the Launchpad plot after the last AGM and it's been very successful. We've also improved our finances. A few work parties have been organised to carry out work around the site, and this is something we are hoping to expand on the coming year, so any volunteers would be very welcome. The Monday night General meetings are due to resume shortly. The newsletter has been restarted after a long absence and finally we have strengthened the relationship between WTC and the committee. We have regular meetings, and they listen to our concerns and are open about what can or can't be done to help improve the overall condition of the site and ensuring each plot is as productive as possible for our tenants. Without the WTC the recycling scheme, Bank holiday skips and weekly bonfires would not be possible.

4. Elections – Wendy Wilkinson

All the current Ordinary Committee Members (OCM) were due for re-election. No other tenant put themselves forward to join the committee in this role either with prior notice or on the night.

As only the four existing OCMs were up for re-election voting was by a show of hands and they were all re-elected for the coming year. The four being: -

- Peter Buley (E17)
- Caroline Chaytor (K25a)
- Debbie Ballard (K25a)
- Hannah Varley-Thompson (L18c)

All committee members will be up for re-election in March 2027.

5. Launchpad report – Teresa Buley

Launchpad is a charity which feeds the homeless in Reading. They have three plots on site which are managed by the committee on their behalf. Launchpad organise working parties consisting of employees from corporate firms. Most corporate firms have environmental, social and governance elements to their business. They offer volunteer days where employees can go out into the community and do work for a variety of charities or volunteer organisations instead of their usual work. They are supervised during the visit by Teresa and other members of the committee and tenants who volunteer their time and experience to guide what work is required for each visit. Launchpad charge the companies a fee and pay a percentage of that fee to Woodley Tenants Association for their work with the corporate teams. The money is used to improve the site by the additional security cameras or funding communal events such as the Summer BBQ. Launchpad is where most of our annual income comes from.

Teresa would like to thank Peter Wheat ((M35a), John Anderson (H27) and Jim Reed (F17) for their invaluable help with Launchpad over the last year. She would like to thank the watering team of Jim, Andrew, Elizabeth, Stuart, Rebecca, Andy and Peter for ensuring the plots never dry out during the Summer. She would also like to thank Mike, Wendy, Caroline and Debbie from the committee for their help during corporate visits and finally thanks to Mike for delivering the food to the ReadiFood Foodbank in Reading.

Teresa took over management of Launchpad on behalf of the committee following the AGM last year. There were seven visits from corporates last year and we delivered 92 containers of produce to the ReadiFood Bank in Reading. They prepare the food which then goes to feed the homeless.

Should any tenant have a surplus of produce it is always welcome at Launchpad. Just leave it in the polytunnel on the Launchpad plot (L25/L26 and L27). The food goes to ReadiFood Bank every Monday, so Saturday or Sunday are good days to leave any excess vegetables or fruit.

This year one team of corporates have been on site, and we have five more planned with capacity for many more.

The committee help with sowing seeds and looking after them until they're ready to plant out but we could always do with more help on Launchpad. Any volunteers would be welcome, either to help water or weed when no corporates are booked or to help when the corporate teams are on site. It's a good cause and fingers crossed we have an even better year moving forward.

6. Finance report – Geoff Wilson

Geoff was coerced onto the committee following the last AGM as treasurer. He took the opportunity to thank the rest of the committee for all the hard work they do to try and improve the site, from arranging the removal of a dead fox, to painting the stakes to mark plot boundaries, resolving disputes between neighbouring tenants and many more. One of the things that came up at the last AGM was the fact that the committee had never had the accounts audited, so tenants could never be certain the accounts were being managed correctly. The accounts have now been audited by HolyBrook, a local accountancy firm and been given a clean bill of health. There were four minor recommendations.

- I. That WATA follow a 'charity style book' of accounts using a cash book v receipts ledger. They provided a template which Geoff will be using once the new financial year begins on April 5th.
- II. Previously we didn't ever close our accounts from one year to the next, so the committee have agreed to define our financial year in line with that of the UK government.
- III. We do touch on the accounts at the monthly committee meetings but moving forward beginning in April a full overview will be given on a quarterly basis.
- IV. The "dual approval" for any payments out of the account will continue. The approvers are all current committee members.

The current account balance is £11,955.73 which is a very healthy balance. £10,000 of that is due to the hard work of Wendy with support from Mike who have secured Lottery Funding for a project to refurbish the community shed on F-row near the toilet.

Launchpad is our biggest contributor bringing in £1,303.30 last year. Most of the rest of our money (£365.00) came from Huntley and Palmers Pop-Up shop and the sale of seeds and fruit bushes. There were some issues with Lloyds Bank changing over access from the previous committee to the current committee and we also went on-line. Mike complained and was awarded £50 compensation.

There were several outgoings last year. The new security poles and bases cost £980.40. Expenses came in at £946.07, this included paying for the Summer BBQ. Site improvements including buying the buckets and chains, paint for the stakes came to £460.57. The managed bonfires account for £63.20. IT subscriptions work out to £53.32 and finally the financial audit at £180.

Our accounts are in good shape, and we'll continue to follow best practice where our money is concerned.

As launchpad is our biggest income generator the more successful it is the more money will be available for site improvements so if anyone can volunteer any of their time it would be for a worthy cause and bring in more money to improve our site. We could potentially have corporates in from March to October, think what we could do with the extra money that would bring.

CCTV was our biggest outgoing as safety and security is a high priority for the committee. We want speeding reduced along with thefts from plots.

Please come forward with any funding ideas, applying to the lottery fund turned out well but there are other projects that would be too expensive to fund ourselves. Geoff has investigated turning The Woodley Allotments Association into a charity for the benefits and funding opportunities that would allow but it would be a lot of work and although it may be revisited in the future, he doesn't currently have the time to pursue it.

7. Memorial Plot/Work parties- Peter Buley

Peter reiterated the sentiments that this committee is one of the most forward thinking and inclusive he has ever been on.

The Memorial Plot is F30 and sits at the junction of F-row and Victory Way. It is now around 4 years old and was created after the passing of a previous chairman, Scott Golding from a brain tumour. F30 was his plot. It is a quiet area for contemplation. You can sit there and have lunch or just pass time with your own thoughts.

The committee looks after the plot, but it has no budget assigned so all the plants and turf are because of donations. Peters neighbour is a landscape gardener who donates any leftover turf via Peter to be used on the plot.

We're on the lookout for old sleepers as the current ones forming the raised beds are beginning to rot and need replacing. If anyone knows where to source some of these the committee would be very grateful.

There is a pond on the plot which will need some work levelling so that's another project for 2026.

Volunteers are always welcome to do weeding or watering. Just when you're passing or can spare an hour, thirty minutes or whatever you can to help maintain the plot.

8. Events/Monthly meetings- Wendy Wilkinson

When the new committee was formed, we decided to run monthly meetings on Monday nights. A couple consisted of catch-up meetings where the committee could inform tenants of what they were doing and planning and tenants could feed back thoughts and ideas. The December meeting had mulled wine and mince pies which we thought would attract bigger numbers.

Some of the meetings had guest speakers, one of which was Kirsti from Launchpad who explained everything the organisation does for the homeless in Reading.

Daniel and Freida from the soil laboratory who brought microscopes and examined the soil samples of tenants. They also explained the relationship between compost or soil with high levels of microorganisms in it and the health of the plants growing in it.

Tony Luck, the Learning and Development Officer from the Wokingham and District Beekeeper Association was the standout talk for me personally. Who knew bees were so interesting. We will be trying to get him back this year and it's a talk well worth coming too.

The Monday Night General Meetings will carry on. The rooms are booked and we're sourcing a variety of speakers. The first will occur on the 20th of April at 7.30 pm and the subject is about Sustainable Growing. The other dates are in the newsletter. One of the Summer meetings will be a BBQ held on the memorial plot. The committee is very keen to improve the sense of community across the site so the more tenants we can get to attend these events the better.

We ran a best plot competition in the Summer of 2025. It's been many years since the last competition, and it will now be an annual event. The winner in 2025 was B24 with H14 as runner up. Highly commended was M35a, C26 and F22. We're hoping to hold more competitions and this year, the prize for the best plot competition will be awarded by a local VIP. The winner of the competition is featured on the WTC allotments website along with a picture of the winning plot.

The Summer BBQ in July was a lovely day and all who attended seemed to have a good time. We will be holding it again and hopefully more people will come along, and we can start to hold more social events on site.

The committee is keen not just to instil a sense of community amongst tenants but also with groups from the community, especially young people. We welcomed 5th Woodley Squirrels on site in September for a couple of visits. They were an inquisitive group who were very interested in what we do, what kind of things we grow, the wildlife on site and especially how harvesting walnuts can turn your hands black if not done correctly. This is something we'll try to encourage amongst other local scouting and guide groups to encourage curiosity regarding nature and the benefits of growing your own fruit and vegetables.

We have started a rotavator rental scheme. You can hire one of the rotavators from Launchpad for a half day, full day or week. We have two rotavators and the committee will provide the fuel. There is a deposit of £20 but the rental rates are just £10 for a half day and £20 for a full day. There is paperwork to fill in and a risk assessment to read prior to using the rotavator. Please contact wendy.wilkinson@woodley-allotments.org.uk and teresa.buley@woodley-allotments.org.uk if you want further information. If the scheme is successful, we're thinking of extending it to lawnmowers and strimmers, also from the Launchpad plot.

At the beginning of December, the committee applied to The Community Lottery Fund for £10,000 to renovate the community shed and turn it in to a communal hub. We heard in February that we were successful in our application and the money is now in our account. The project will remove the asbestos from the shed roof and have a new roof fitted. Solar panels will then be mounted on the roof which will supply the electricity to run lights and a small kitchenette area with tea and coffee facilities and a small fridge. Once complete the shed could be used to store bulk deliveries of compost or manure until tenants can collect it. Act as a seed swap area and the money from the rotavator project could fund provision of water, soft drinks, tea and coffee at weekends for tenants. If not free, it would be heavily subsidised.

Several companies have been approached, and site visits are currently underway. From those site visits the committee will decide which company to go with and the work can be planned from there. Hopefully the community hub will be available in the Summer.

9. New newsletter- Hannah Varley-Thompson

Hannah saw the appeal for a newsletter editor and volunteered without perhaps understanding the scope of the role. Hannah's background is in publishing, and she's done a lot of proof reading. She's not a designer but has worked in a design studio.

Hannah has developed a logo that the committee will be using moving forward. The Spring Newsletter was published last week, and the aim is to produce one quarterly, the next being the Summer one. It is available on Facebook, the mailing list, and the website. Featured in the Spring edition is the recycling scheme, communal bonfires as well as the corporates on Launchpad and a guide on what jobs to do on the allotments.

Please opt-in to the mailing list if you haven't already. You can click the link in the newsletter or website. Facebook is also a good space to share ideas, tips and questions.

If you have any ideas about what you would like to see in the upcoming newsletters or want to get involved with the newsletter please contact the committee on the usual email or Hannah direct on hannah.varley-thompson@woodley-allotments.org.uk . Hannah also put a call out for photographs of our plots to be used in the next edition.

10. Plot viewings- Caroline Chaytor

Caroline and Debbie do the plot viewing between them and have welcomed 49 new tenants in the last year, some of which were present tonight. There are 365 plots currently in use, 340 are primary tenants and 25 have a shared tenancy.

It's always sad when a tenant leaves the site and it's visible from many of the plots just how much love has gone into them over the years. If your name comes to the top of the waiting list and you view one of those plots, you're very lucky indeed. One such tenant entered the best plot competition last year and was awarded runner up.

The previous tenant on Carolyn and Debbie's plot left a lot of tools, some of which they are still using.

On the downside there have been plots that have been unloved and are left in a terrible state. It was quite a struggle last year to promote plots where the grass was chest high with no sign of any cultivation.

Caroline thanked the committee and Sylwester for all the work to clear plots and cover them ready for viewings this year, it's made such a difference. We currently have 19 vacant plots and 40 people on the waiting list.

Caroline would like to thank Kieran from WTC for his work managing the waiting list.

Caroline and Debbie really enjoy organising the plot viewings and through this know many of the tenants and frequently smash their step target. We're lucky to have our allotment site so let's keep it special.

11. Moving forward- Mike McNamara

Mike thanked the team for their presentations promoting the work the committee have done in the last year.

With agreement from WTC plot viewings were paused in January and February so we could clear the vacant plots, get rid of the rubbish, trim the long grass and cover them with weed suppressant. Taking on an allotment is hard work but at least new tenants this year will have a blank canvas with which to work.

Inspections are scheduled for the week beginning 11th May. WTC have produced a new plot inspections policy, and this is the criteria which will be applied in May. So, if you feel your neighbour hasn't read the inspections policy and runs the risk of failing you may want to point them in the right direction to read the policy as they still have time to get their plot in a position to pass. Inspections will be run on a traffic light system. Green is a pass. To get a green rating the plot should be worked according to the tenancy agreement; no rubbish, no piles of rotten wood or broken hard plastic items and the correct level of cultivation. Amber means some minor work needs to be done in a specified timescale before it can be passed. If

a tenant fails to do that work, the termination process will begin. Red is a failure. The committee feels very strongly that if you have a plot, it should be cultivated and in good condition. If a tenant fails the inspection process, they should leave the plot as there are people on the waiting list who would very much appreciate the opportunity to have an allotment.

The lease for the land is due for renewal in 2028 and the last thing we want is to lose any of our plots to a block of flats. We want the whole site to remain as allotments and the only way to do that is to show we have pride in the site, and every single plot is cultivated and well managed.

We want to improve on the recycling. The hard plastic has been a big success, and this should reduce over time as there can only be so much metal and hard plastic on site. Once the piles of rubbish have been removed from across the site tenants should be able to manage small amounts of waste moving forward. Maybe by the AGM next year we'll be able to report that the recycling area can be taken down as it's no longer required. WTC has agreed to provide more skips on May Bank Holiday, August Bank Holiday and a final one in October.

The CCTV poles and cameras will go up shortly. Mike took the opportunity to thank Brian Grace (D27) for his help in collecting the bases once they'd been galvanised and for all his help with the front gate project. He will also assist in putting the bases in the ground. The committee presented Brian with an Amazon gift voucher as a token of our thanks. One of the poles will be positioned near the Reading Road toilet pointing towards the communal shed. We're just waiting to for WTC to confirm where the toilet cesspit is positioned. The second will go at the bottom of A and B row pointing towards the bee area. They are a one-off purchase and will have a solar powered camera on them which committee feels will improve security and safety across the site.

The committee is working with WTC and are looking to create a retirement plot (C37) for tenants who can no longer manage a large plot but would still like to come up the site and potter. There would also be small plots available for new tenants with no experience of gardening who can work a small plot for a year and then progress to a larger plot. There's a large shed and a couple of greenhouses for tenants to share.

The community shed has an area behind it which is currently covered with brambles, but if they could be removed, we could put up a lean-to with a couple of water butts in it catching water from the roof to help tenants in dry conditions. Once completed the community hub will be used for some social events. Teresa's father used to run it when Huntley and Palmers Horticultural Society were based there so she may carry on the family tradition.

Peter Wheat informed Mike that this year is the centenary of the site being used as allotments. Mike made an appointment with the Berkshire archives to do an investigation. He has narrowed down when the allotments first appeared to between 1912 and 1933. They had a record of a 1922 ordinance survey map (OSM) but the map itself is in the Library of

Scotland archives department. Mike rang them and there is no 1922 OSM, it was an admin error but after further research he found an online map showing the last of the Bulmershe manor lands to be sold off. It's dated 1929 and there's no allotment lands there. So, the search continues but it looks like the centenary will occur sometime between 2029 and 2033. The Reading Corporation (as Reading was known then) kept extensive minutes of all their meetings, and the archivists are currently looking at their records to see if they can come up with a definitive date for our centenary. Mike has another appointment with them in a couple of weeks. He put a call out for any old photographs of the site, if you have any, please get in touch with the committee as it would be interesting to have a comprehensive history of the site.

We want to appoint a wildlife warden to make the site more protected ready for 2028. We'd be looking to put up some bird boxes, bat boxes, ponds specifically designed for newts and wildflower areas for bees. Anything we can do to make it more difficult to revoke our allotment status. If anyone is interested in becoming our wildlife warden and taking this forward, then please do contact the committee.

Mike has been in communication with PayPal for most of the previous year trying to get the e-shop up and running. He thinks after a 30-minute phone call today the last hurdle may have been crossed. It was very successful three years ago when it only took a week to set up but with the modern age of tightened security it's proved difficult to resurrect in three months, but hopefully it'll be available shortly.

The gate project isn't finished; we'll be placing chippings over the area behind the notice board. The roads need improving and we're working with WTC to that end. More strimming across the site. The committee would like to build on a sense of community with more events, improved communication and continue to represent the views of tenants to WTC. Please opt in to the mailing list and join our Facebook page to ensure your included in communications.

Mike thanked all the committee members for their help and hard work throughout the year. We're a team working for the benefit of plot holders and new tenants.

Teresa took the opportunity to remind tenants of the H&P horticultural society pop up shop on the 3rd of April on Launchpad 10.00 until 12.30. They'll be selling a variety of useful items from compost to pots to fertiliser. Please support them.

She also took the opportunity to remind tenants that fruit bushes will go on sale in July and seeds will go on sale in September.

12. Q&A

One tenant reiterated his thanks for all the current committee is doing. He had been a tenant for seven years and it's the first year he's noticed things happening on site apart from potholes being filled annually by tenants. The bonfires and recycling have been great, and he felt the site was looking tidier. With respect to the accounts, he felt Geoff shouldn't give himself too much work. Our end of year could be anytime and coincide with a time

when Geoff is not so busy. A charity style book of accounts wouldn't be worth the work and effort. Geoff explained there are around 20 transactions a year and the accounts are managed via a spreadsheet so it's not too bad.

He is a local beekeeper and what they do to raise a bit of money is round up their subscriptions. So, if a subscription costs £28 it will be rounded up to £30 and with enough members that £2 soon mounts up. It's an idea to think about.

Another tenant also commended the committee on their hard work. He's had his plot for 50 years and feels the current committee are achieving more than any previous committee and he's been on two previous committee himself. He went on to ask if we would be staying with Lloyds Bank as they will be closing the bank in Woodley Town Centre. Geoff replied that as its on-line banking we would be staying with Lloyds. Mike went into the branch to pay in some cash and was charged a 10% administrative fee for depositing cash so losing the physical bank will be no great loss. Since then, committee members have deposited cash in their own account and transferred the amount electronically to the WATA account with a reference of what the money was for.

A question was asked whether the CCTV was a one-off expenditure given it was the biggest. Mike confirmed it was and went on to explain that the local firm who supplied the previous poles had gone out of business and a lot of companies weren't interested. One small engineering firm in Farley Hill agreed to do the work. They did a good job, and the bases have been galvanised so should last for years. It is currently a one-off purchase unless WATA come into a lot of money as ideally, we would have more cameras on site to improve security but the cost without a windfall is prohibitively expensive.

Another question asked if the cameras were solar powered or battery and whether the cameras conformed to GDPR rules. The cameras are solar powered with a battery backup. If there is a theft on sight Mike, in his own time, will go to the camera and download the images to see if he can find any evidence that could be passed onto the council and or police. The use of the cameras on site is consistent with the requirements of GDPR. There is a sign on the gate warning people that CCTV is in use on the site. WATA is registered with the ICO (Information Commissioner's Office) and Mike is registered as the Data Controller.

One tenant questioned whether the committee had a feel whether thefts were going up or down on the site. Mike explained there hadn't been as many in the last two years as previously. There were a few break-ins last year, one of which was Mike's shed. There is merit to putting a combination or key lock on your shed, but this could just alert thieves that you might have something valuable in there. Many tenants just use a clip or twisted wire to keep sheds closed. The Launchpad pod is locked but is also covered by CCTV.

A tenant took the opportunity to say that she'd had her plot since 2009 and had never seen the site be so organised. The recycling scheme is great and the newsletter is fabulous.

One tenant asked how you get involved in the Best Plot Competition. Any tenant can enter the competition; it will be publicised nearer the time. The committee are exempt from

entering but do judge all the plots on a designated date and then the prizes are awarded at the Summer BBQ. The prize is a silver cup, which you keep until the next competition and a framed photograph of your plot.

Hannah was congratulated on the quality of the newsletter by one tenant who is looking forward to the next one.

One tenant asked the average wait time for an allotment. Kieran said it was around 12 months currently. Mike has seen some figures recently and our waiting list is quite small compared with some others. One site in the South has a five-year waiting list with 142 people on it. Ours reached its highest during covid with 120 people waiting.

One tenant asked if the inspections in May would be publicised. Mike replied that the inspections would begin on Monday 11th May and end on Sunday 17th May. This would be communicated to tenants on the mailing list, via the website and Facebook. So, all tenants should be aware they are happening. We have a new form which matches the updated guidance from WTC. Each committee member has a row or row(s) to inspect which isn't their own. Allowances will be made for new tenants and tenants with long term sickness. There will be photographs taken of plots assigned an amber or red status which will be used if a tenant appeals. Photographs are also taken periodically throughout the year as evidence that some plots are just not cultivated at all.

One tenant asked what immediate remedial action meant in respect to the inspections process. What timescale is immediate. There is a period of 4-6 weeks for the work after which time the plot is reinspected and if there is no change that is fed back to WTC who will initiate the termination process.

Is there anything in the policy for people who have had a hip operation or other ailment that may keep them from the plot? Providing the tenant let's WTC or the committee know about any health issues that would prevent a tenant from working their plot, this is taken into consideration, and they are exempt from the inspection process. The committee can be contacted either via the row representative or on the usual committee email address.

One tenant agreed it was worrying about the 2028 lease renewal, especially as the site is 24.4 acres of prime real estate.

Whose job is it to empty the recycling bays? The metal was removed last week but has started to build up again. The glass is due to be removed shortly, and we had someone on site to quote to remove the hard and soft plastics. There is a cost to get the glass and plastic removed.

It was questioned whether an overflowing bay would put people off. In fact, the reverse is true. The more there is, the more people pile on top.

One tenant questioned whether the recycling area was becoming more popular via word of mouth amongst tenants who aren't on the mailing list. This could well be true. The ideal

would be for tenants to take their rubbish to the tip, but not all tenants have transport, some come to the site via public transport or bicycle. The recycling is primarily for them and if you can get to the tip that is where you should take your rubbish.

One tenant asked if there was power in the shed. Mike explained the power would come from the solar panels once the project is finished via a battery which would store the electricity. There is water in the shed, but a drain will need to be installed as part of the project.

One tenant asked if there were aerial photos from Woodley airfield. Kieran has just provided up to date aerial photographs of the site in January taken by a drone. The old special bulletin heading was an aerial photo taken by one of Tony Carter's friends using a drone. More historic photographs may be found on a website called 'Britain from the air' showing the land in the 20s and 30s.

One tenant said there were two Facebook pages with very similar names. Mike agreed. There is our Facebook page 'Woodley Allotments Tenants Association at Reading Road' and 'Woodley Allotment Tenants and Friends' which is ran by one of our tenants.

One tenant asked if there would be another bulk delivery of compost this autumn. The committee didn't see why not. The committee will put out something across all communication lines later in the year to gauge interest and organise a delivery if there's enough demand. Possibly using Apsley Farms again if they give use a similar deal to last year. It could be ordered in September or October and then stored in the shed until tenants could pick it up. The committee will also look at other suppliers to get the best discount possible.

One tenant asked what happens to the bonfire ash as it acts as a good slug repellent. Anyone can take as much ash from the communal burning area as they wish until bonfires stop at the end of April.

One tenant noticed that there is horseradish growing on communal areas across the site and would it be ok to pick some. Teresa said there was some on Launchpad and he could help himself to that as well as that on communal areas.

One tenant noticed a problem with the water tank near his plot. He reported it before Christmas, but it hasn't been fixed yet. Kieran has asked the maintenance team to look at it, but he will chase it up.

One tenant commented that upon occasion we've given a plot to a new tenant. They've rotavated the plot in the beginning and he hasn't seen them since. The grass is now up to waist level. Mike said there's two issues. Don't rotavate a plot with pernicious weeds because you'll just create more. It's not a quick way of getting a plot ready and can cause more trouble in the long run. The second is that a lot of new tenants underestimate the amount of work required to run an allotment. This is something we're addressing during plot viewings to set realistic expectations. Other new tenants who work full time attack the

whole plot and can't do it in the time they have available rather than cover half the plot and work on the other half. Once that's in order then they can start working on the rest. We want new tenants to come and stay.

One tenant asked if you were allowed a second plot? They were directed to WTC but while there's a waiting list you would probably have to put your name down and wait until your name came up to the top.

One tenant suggested holding some of the Summer Monday night meetings on the site looking at a few plots and discussing the various methods of allotmenting. Make it more of a practical session. Many felt this would be a really good idea.

One tenant asked if we could have a speaker or newsletter article on the identification of weeds and how to control them. The committee will investigate how best to take this forward.

Another tenant mentioned that green manure suppresses other weeds. He was looking up wildflowers and wondered if new tenants couldn't use something like yellow rattle which also suppresses grass and weed growth. It would look good and attract bees and when the new tenant was ready it could be mowed down for mulch. Mike's used green manure for the last two years with great success. Maybe we could put together an article on living weed suppressants. 'Picture this' is a good app for plant identification.

One tenant asked about the removal of glass from the site. Mike explained this came about from a Leisure Services Committee meeting who voted to ensure the site was glass free by 2030. We have had feedback from two tenants regarding quotes to get their greenhouses made glass free. The tenant who approached Mike was quoted £900 to get the glass changed to polycarbonate. It's a lot of money. Any new greenhouses must be glass free, but discussions are still ongoing about how to manage plots with established greenhouses. Glass on site is dangerous and once it's broken it's difficult to clean up and we have many children on site.

One tenant suggested auctioning off greenhouse frames left on vacant plots. This has been suggested before.

One tenant asked what would be sold through the e-shop. Mike explained it was previously used to sell excess fruit bushes or seedlings grown for Launchpad that weren't required. That kind of thing.

The committee thanked Kevin and Kieran from WTC as well as all the tenants in attendance tonight.

The meeting then ended.