

ROSEDALE ROAD & BULL MEADOW ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION - MEETING 9th January 2026

1. Present: A Klecha (Chair), S Walsh (Secretary), S Cheeseman (Membership Secretary), C Cheeseman (Committee), J Stephens (Committee), C Robertson, J Alabaster, B Alabaster, K Walsh, L Brede, S Simmonds, P Wootton, K Deex, J Bishop (14 total)
2. Apologies: J Fielder (Treasurer), S Carter, S Klecha, T Whiberley, L Dartnell, K Stephens (6 total)
3. Minutes from 14th November 25: Agreed.
4. Matters Arising:
 - a) Plot Inspections – inspection carried out on 17th November resulted in 10 emails sent, 6 for BM, 4 for RR; mostly trees to be reduced, or pruned, all were offered AK's advice and support, one person has taken up offer; 2 plots for poor overall state of plot both RR – a reinspection needs to be arranged.
 - b) Christmas Social – Wreath-making; very well attended 20+ people came along to make wreaths, helpers and folk coming to socialise, best Christmas Social turnout for years. A very good evening, very well organised and led by Karen, Amy and Julian – big thanks! All of the wreaths looked great and have lasted very well.
 - c) Groworganic – CR reported not yet ordered as unclear if need half or full pallet. Sheila has contact number for the person who was interested in half a pallet. Order size to be clarified.
5. Theft from Plots Monthly Report – 2025 focus (Sharon Walsh)
 - a) AK, SC and CR attended the Police Fire & Crime Commissioner (PFCC) meeting on Monday 1st December. "Top Brass" on top table, and plenty of other police officers in attendance to talk to – all seemed genuinely interested in taking information about the spate of break-ins across Thurrock allotment sites. Some sites had clear photos of the suspect. All shared with police at the time of reported break-ins but useful to share again. No break-ins have been reported on allotment sites since just before Christmas – unclear why that is the case. AK will message the Allotment Steering Group's Whatsapp for any updates.
 - b) SW asked if meeting wanted this item to remain as a regular agenda item as had been a focus for 2025. Meeting agreed it was a useful item for discussion and updates so to be kept.
6. Rosedale Road Report (Clive Robinson):
 - a) The main path grass needs to be strimmed, CR asked if any member would be able to help out.
 - b) Manure – all gone; woodchip – all gone.
 - c) Water meter reading could be 6114, CR not 100% certain
 - d) Strimmer(s) need to have service arranged as difficult to start – please can AC advise
 - e) Boscombe Ave gate padlock has been reported as being hard to open/lock – JS will grease/WD40. May need to be replaced.
 - f) JS has trimmed the Pyracantha hedge growing against the external fence at BA end needs a trim on the outside – thank you!
 - g) Break-ins prevention – meeting discussed various options regarding raising the height of the gates – metal extension, rolling anti-climb topping, mesh across gate to make it difficult to use crossbars for footholds. Need to explore ideas and other options – all suggestions are welcome.
 - h) Working party at RR – provisional date Sunday 15th February – general clearing up of site and/or clearing an overgrown vacated plot 23N so can be relet. SW will update nearer the time.
7. Bull Meadow Report (Andy Klecha):
 - a) Manure – low; wood chips - low.
 - b) AK clearing plots 41B & 48A – weather limiting what can be done at the moment.
 - c) AK has pruned LD's tree and will be working on BP's tree.

d) Working party at BM – provisional date Sunday 15th February – general tidy up of allotment garden, entrance from bar gate etc.

8. Treasurer's Report (Sharon Walsh from info supplied by Jane Fielder):

- a) Chris Knott annual insurance for allotment site paid - £298.82
- b) Thurrock Borough Council annual rent paid - £50
- c) Petty cash £56.10, bank account £4700.91, total funds 4757.01
- d) CR asked if that was all the large bills paid for, and if the 2026 annual donation to Tyrells Hall is due JF to confirm

9. Membership Secretary's Report (Sheila Cheeseman):

- a) 20+ on waiting list, none of whom are in our zone 1
- b) 5 plots available; 2 on RR and 3 on BM; all are half plots
- c) SC to speak to AC to arrange date to show plots

10. Any Other Business:

- a) **Raffle** – held over to February meeting as this meeting agreed to not have a break and finish early.
- b) **Chadwell Shed Shop** – reopening on Sunday 18th January 9.30 am to 12 noon. They will have seed potatoes, onion and shallot sets for sale.
- c) **Talk** – Thurrock Local History Society talk on 20th March will be on Ellen Willmott and Warley Place – this lady was an important plantswoman of her time and Warley Place is a nature reserve run by Essex Wildlife Trust. 8.00pm St John's Hall, Victoria Avenue – non-members pay £3 on the door.
- d) **Committee cover needed** – to chair March meeting as AK on holiday, JS offered. Cover also needed at April meeting to take minutes as SW not available that date.
- e) **Prizegiving** from AGM handed out: Best Grown Overground – Walter McNicholas BM – at end of meeting
- f) **Veg Talk**
 - Beetroot** need regular watering whilst growing then it should be able to stay in the ground until needed and not get woody. If ground freezes could go soft so cover with fleece. Still can be eaten if not bolted, or gone soft – good roasted with garlic.
 - Sprouts** – current crop are small but tasty, some folk have reported the sprouts smelt strong, sulphurous but were fine when cooked not sure if weather has affected the smell. Make ground firm when plant seedlings and stake – should then get a decent crop of good sized sprouts. Don't forget to eat the sprout tops – protect with netting from pigeons, crop once sprouts harvested, delicious steamed with butter.
 - Parsnips** – have had their freeze and are tasting good.
 - Purple sprouting broccoli** – if growing too large will need staking. Usually crops March onwards but is cropping earlier as climate warms.
 - Celery** – JS has tried growing celery for the first time and that the plants are tall enough but the stalks are thin. AK said that amazing still alive as usually go over once cold. Shop bought celery is grown in Lincolnshire's moist soil, homegrown celery rarely gets to the proportions of supermarket stock. It can be used to make a delicious soup. LB reported that his celery grew well and tasted good. Celeriac is a good alternative to celery – swede shaped, not a looker, has a mild celery flavour. AK is will be trying red celery this new growing year
 - Pruning** – time to prune your currant bushes – take out old black branches to encourage new green growth. Raspberries cut out all canes that have fruited, they are usually brown, tie in the new green canes. Autumn raspberries pruned differently – cut out fruited canes, leave green shoots which will grow into new canes. Good time to prune apple and pear trees.
 - Time to plant** broad beans though they may need to be protected.

11. Next meeting:

Friday 13th February 2026 7.30pm upstairs at Tyrells Hall Club, 67 Dock Road, Grays RM17 6EY