

Minutes of the Annual Plot Holders meeting held on Monday 6th October 2025 at 7.00pm at the Council Offices, Haydon Wick

In attendance: Councillor R Hailstone, V Manro, J Ireland, R Worman, L Jackson and A John.

Officers in attendance: J Watts, POS Operations & Facility Manager and J Fawcett, Office and Community Administrator.

Plot holders: 36 were present.

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.
There were no apologies received.

2. Guest Speaker – TWIGS Community Garden – Alan Holland

Alan Holland from TWIGS gave an interesting, insightful introduction to the work involved with the TWIGS community garden project. Highlights included:

- The project's 29-year journey from initial concept through lottery funding to its current operation with 7 paid employees.
- 61 active volunteers providing weekly therapeutic support to 63 individuals.
- Supporting mental health recovery by helping participants rebuild confidence, develop self-esteem, and acquire new skills.
- Promoting the therapeutic benefits of gardening: stress reduction, spiritual and physical wellbeing, and discovering purpose through nature connection.
- Providing garden spaces plus 14 allotment plots designed for exploration and community connection.

Alan distributed information about upcoming events and volunteer opportunities.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th October 2024 were agreed as a true record.

Proposed: Plot Holder A Hunter **Seconded:** Plot Holder D Leggitt
Vote: **Agreed** **unanimously.**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th October 2024 were agreed as a true record.

4. Actions arising from the previous minutes

- **Grounds Maintenance Facility (GMF)** – The water trough at Goodearl Site has been restored.
- **Noticeboards** – New noticeboards scheduled for autumn purchase and winter 2025 / 2026 installation.
- **Security improvements** – Ventnor Close fencing repaired; fence near SBC buildings requires developer attention; partial hedgerow replacement completed at Goodearl.

5. Income & Expenditure for 2024/2025

The meeting noted the income & expenditure report for 2024/2025.

- A tenant requested skip services be reinstated at each location.
- Members in attendance, favoured individual composting; Ventnor Close's council-installed communal composting system is working effectively.
- Enquiries about reduced Green Waste subscription rates for plot holders were noted, but this service falls under Swindon Borough Council's jurisdiction.

6. Maintenance Updates

The Parks and Open Spaces (POS) Operations & Facility Manager introduced himself and provided updates:

- **GMF Completion:** Timeline shared; parking arrangements to be finalized once facility is operational.
- **Safety Notice:** Goodearl tenants advised about increased vehicle traffic when GMF becomes active.
- **Service Enhancement:** GMF will improve operational efficiency across the Parish.
- **Leisure Garden Maintenance Activities:**
 - Regular grass cutting during growing season.
 - Ventnor Close: Communal composting bins installed at both site ends.
 - Goodearl: Ongoing landscaping around community garden; plant donations welcomed.
 - Rose Walk: Last year's hedge reduction will be maintained at current level.
 - Vacant plots covered with tarpaulins until new tenancies begin; winter projects planned for VC and GE including plot reinstatement and subdivision.

7. Leisure Garden Competition Awards

Councillor R Hailstone, Chair of the Parks & Open Spaces Committee, presented the Leisure Garden Competition Awards for 2025 alongside Councillor J Ireland who was one of the judges. Warm congratulations were extended by all. Those winners who were in attendance received their prizes.

Rose Walk	Goodearl	Ventnor Close	Overall Best Beginner
1 st Mr R Adsley	1 st Mr R Neal	1 st Mr M White	Mrs J Griffiths
2 nd Mr A Kembrey	2 nd Mr K Humphries	2 nd Mr R Gatt	
3 rd Mr D Hague	3 rd Mr A Harris	3 rd Mrs A Hunter	

8. Leisure Garden Representatives

The new communication framework, operational for one year, enables representatives to liaise directly with the Council via the Office & Community Administrator. Quarterly meetings and regular site inspections have proven beneficial.

- **Ventnor Close:** Ann Hunter reported positive meeting outcomes; ease of raising concerns; and issues arising are resolved in a timely manner. The social gathering at Rose Walk this summer was a success and they are planning at hosting the next social at Ventnor Close in the Spring.
- **Goodearl:** John Sheppard – Absent and did not provide a report in advance.

- **Rose Walk:** Paul King highlighted how good the growing season was this year with an abundance of fruit. Paul also mentioned the success of the summer picnic and welcomed tenants from other sites to build the leisure garden community.

9. Questions & Ideas from Plot Holders

Q) Ventnor Close car parking improvements?

A) While funding is unavailable, the area will be tidied to clarify boundaries; added to winter projects.

Q) Why are some plots overgrown at Goodearl?

A) New procedure in place to cover vacant plots with tarpaulin until occupancy; some plots are left in poor condition by previous tenants which deters new ones. The Terms & Conditions for plot relinquishment will be clarified and communicated.

Q) Is there a height restriction on trees?

A) While no formal rule exists, 6-foot height is recommended to prevent shading neighbouring plots. A newsletter article to be published.

Q) Pathways between plots are becoming very narrow.

A) Tenants are reminded not to encroach on pathways; adequate width must be maintained for pedestrians and machinery access.

Q) Preventing unauthorised access to Leisure Gardens?

To ensure the public do not access the leisure gardens, plot holders need to ensure they always close and lock the gates. Rose Walk have adopted a peg board where tenants can sign in and out, to prevent people being locked in.

Q) The Council should take courses in hedge laying.

A) This is a skilled task; the team has reinstated a hedge behind the GMF recently so they will monitor this. Training possibilities to be explored.

Q) Will there be an extra water trough at Rose Walk site?

A) The POS Operations & Facility Manager will explore the feasibility of this requirement.

Comment: The Parks & Projects Team were commended for their excellent grass maintenance and fencing repairs.

Meeting ended at 7:58pm