

Minutes for L.A.A. on Wednesday January 5th 2022, Town Council Offices at 7p.m.

- All welcomed and wished a Happy New Year.
- Apologies- Jane Lacey.
- Persons present – Kay West, Samantha Shakespeare, Hilary Tuite, Stuart Sidebotham, Glenys Millard, Graham Millard, Viv Pearson.
- Copies of minutes from last meeting referred to and available for people to read.

Matters Arising from Minutes of November 3rd 2021

- 1) No vacant plots.** Number on the waiting list has increased from **12** in November to **17**. However, several plots might become vacant in the Spring as there are five borderline plots and a couple of plot holders have been sent letters and will be receiving phone calls as a result of the plot inspection on Wednesday Jan 5th 2022.
- 2) Allotment Veterans scheme.** So far, there has been no response to this but, in time, it is thought likely that there will be an uptake for this scheme.
- 3) Using part of the Community Garden to create 3 more mini plots.** So far, no one has expressed an interest in having one of these plots but their availability has not been promoted because they are not complete. Three mini plots that were created need a peat free top soil added and this needs to be sourced. As this would need to be a considerable amount and quite costly it was thought that if it was left until the proposed new plots for the old composting area were constructed so that a bulk order could be placed.
- 4) Disabled toilet facility.** Funding is required for this and it is something that will be followed up once other commitments have been addressed. Stuart had forwarded forms for grant applications for proposed projects, from the Council, to Kay and these will be actioned.
- 5) Report from John Braithwaite - Kings seed Catalogues:**

“This year saw a drop off in orders: the year saw an order total of £295, after discounts compared with £400+ for the previous year, in spite of an overall increase number of plot holders. and the well publicising of the seed catalogues. It's clear enough that ordering with Kings is of benefit to all Members and plot holders not only terms of quality and pricing of goods but also for the free availability of gardening advice from experts at Kings.

Still, we must continue to persevere and hope our is more widely acted upon in the future.” (Delivery of goods to 11 Ryelands Road and orders can be collected from the Council Offices as the Committee do not have contact details many of our members). It was felt that the various Covid restrictions had made it more difficult to access the catalogues, which were widely advertised on Face Book, the Allotment Web Site and posters on the Allotment noticeboards.

6) On site secure post box. A secure post box will be placed in the Community Shed. Forms and cheques for LAA membership can posted in this. **N.B. see below**

7) Treasurers Report from Hilary. The bank signatures are now up and running and the balance was £1,363.16 mid-September. Payment for the insurance is due at the end of January. Because of Data Protection, the Committee still have no definitive list of who is a current member so the amount to be paid will be based on the estimate of £154.74 for 2020 until 2021.

8) Admin for 2022 LAA membership. In future this will be administered by the L.A.A. Treasurer, Hilary. There will be a secure post box in the Community Shed for plot holders to post their membership form with a cheque and a designated day and time for plot holders to go to the Allotment Community area to hand over relevant payment and paperwork to a Committee Member. This could be a social event with refreshments being available.

a. Membership Forms can be collected from the noticeboard on the Allotment Site and forms and pens can be made available to collect from the Community Shed.

b. New invoices for 2022/23 will be issued to plot holders in March for payment in April. and a letter re membership payment details will be included in this.

c. The Committee feel that the annual fee of £7.50 is a reasonable amount to pay for the benefits of Allotment Membership and hope to promote this.

9) Wildlife Area and area for more mini plots. This area has been strimmed. The new mini plots will be marked out in the Spring and it is hoped that these can be constructed in the Spring. Stuart has been researching materials for making the mini plots. These are manufactured by The British Recycled Plastic Company and were mentioned in www.allotment-garden.org/product-reviews/ Although initially expensive,

they work out as good value for money as they do not need any time or money spent on maintenance, and are longer lasting than timber frames, which eventually rot away. Perhaps this is a project for the Council Grant application or lottery funding? (See 3 and 11).

Planning the wildlife area. See suggestions below:

- a. As there is vehicular access running parallel to one side of this area it was thought that a small hedge or border would be advisable to prevent vehicles from inadvertently encroaching on this area. This would protect plot holders raised bed pathways and provide a suitable habitat. A small "ditch could run on the inside to aid and attract greater biodiversity and help with drainage as the track can become waterlogged in the winter.
- b. Pond in wildlife area/scrapes.
- c. Bug hotels - could do this as an allotment workshop and involve families with this. Find information on designs and what recycling materials can be used in construction.
- d. Wildflowers/ plants that attract insects.
- e. Places for animals to hibernate and suitable mini habitat (for slow worms).
- f. Plant hedge with some trees to provide food source for birds and insects.
- g. Mow pathways through so habitat is not trampled on.
- h. Seating areas.
- i. Keep a record of birds spotted in the Community Area, where ploholders record what has been spotted, like they do in hides at Bodenham lakes.

10) RSPB Garden birdwatch 28th — 30th January 2022. It was suggested that this could take place at the allotments. Information on Face Book, the Allotment Web Site and posters could be used to advertise this. To take part, watch the birds for one hour at some point over the three days the Birdwatch is taking place. Only count the birds that land, not the ones flying by. We could assign an area to anyone interested in doing this from their plot and submit results from everyone to the RSPB. You can **pre-register** to take part and receive a free guide that will help to identify most common garden birds. It will also entitle you to a 20% discount code to spend in RSPB's online shop. Julie has contacted the Environment Agency about having **bat and bird boxes**. Stuart is looking into the possibility of obtaining these but advice might have to be given from an independent source as Leominster is currently an Environment Agency Red Zone.

11) Swap table/ keeping this area tidy is difficult as being open to the weather can be an issue particularly when the wind blows lightweight objects into the nearby hedges. **Follow up the idea of having** an open Swap Shed that could also have advertising and notices on the walls? Perhaps this can be included on the Grants Form (see 3 on minutes) Possibly sponsorship from a local business?

12) Is it possible to act upon recommendations from The IYN Assessment?

- a) *Alternatives to pesticides and herbicides – Plot holders need to be given alternatives. Perhaps a workshop delivered by a relevant organisation such as the Wildlife Trust, Soil Association information, Ryton and the web site:
<https://www.allotment-garden.org/product-reviews/> (see 8)*
- b) *Companion planting? (see above)*
- c) *More plots to have water butts to conserve water- A mains water supply is still needed as there can be very dry spells. A person from Ledbury had contacted Sam re 1,000 litre I.B.C (Intermediate Bulb Container that is used for storing liquids) being available for a delivery charge of £35. This was advertised on FB and one plot holder requested one. When this was followed up it appeared that only one could be delivered and there have been no further communications from this person for a considerable time. Stuart said that the Council had an I.B.C. with a slight leak so it could not be kept on Council lorries but they couldn't keep it so it was suggested that it be given to the interested plot holder.*

A.O.B.

Dates for future meetings

Day	Date	Place	Time
Wednesday	March 2 nd	Council Offices	7 p.m.
Saturday	May 7 th A.G.M Election of Committee for 2022-23	Allotment Community Area And committee meeting as appropriate	2 p.m.

Sunday	July 10th	Allotment Community Area	3 p.m.
Sunday	Sept 11th	Allotment Community Area	3 p.m.
Wednesday	Nov 9th	Council Offices	7 p.m.

Other dates

- May Plant Fayre (Held on the 23rd in 2021).
- Leominster in Bloom I Y N assessment?
- September Plant Fayre (held on the 18th in 2021).
- October Harvest Supper (held on the 8th in 2021).

Harvest Supper. There was a discussion regarding the pre-covid Allotment Awards which were presented at the Harvest Supper. It relied upon three inspections over a year by an independent person. Obviously, this meant that decisions were not biased. However, one view was that these awards were not always fair as people had differing commitments timewise which would obviously impact on time spent on their plots. Also, plots were cultivated in a variety of ways with a different emphasis on what was grown. Consequently, it was decided that there should be more and different categories. It was suggested that these could be advertised in advance so that plot holders could be asked for nominations.

To be discussed at a future meeting.

Fallen Tree by allotment Entrance – The Steward has been informed and has said that it is the responsibility of the farmer as it borders his land. On the morning of Jan 5th, as the allotment site inspection was completed, someone scrutinised the tree and was then seen approaching the farmer's residence.

Social events for 2022

It was felt that social events, such as a BBQ, were an important as it gave an opportunity for plot holders to exchange news and information. The Committee decided that this should be discussed at the meeting in May as events would probably take place in July and August.

Thank you to those who attended and for your ideas for the topics discussed.

Minutes for L.A.A. on Wednesday March 2nd 2022, Town Council Offices at 7p.m.

- All welcomed.
- Apologies- Viv Pearson, Graham Millard, Glenys Millard.
- Persons present – Kay West, Samantha Shakespeare, Hilary Tuite, Stuart Sidebotham, Jane Lacey.
- Copies of minutes from meeting of Jan 5th 2022 referred to and available for people to read.

Matters Arising from Minutes of January 5th2022

1. **NO vacant plots.** (We have 117 plots (including 7 mini plots) with 95 plot holders.) 19 people on waiting list.
2. **Allotment Veterans scheme** Viv Pearson and John Braithwaite will become Veteran Members as a thank you for all their work and support for the L.A. A. It has been agreed that the LAA will pay for their membership for one year. To date, no other people have taken up this offer.
3. **Using part of the Community Garden to create 3 more mini plots.** Their availability has not been promoted because they are not complete. They need a peat free topsoil added and this needs to be sourced. Hopefully ready by May
4. **Construction of raised mini beds on strimmed area.** It was decided that recycled plastic structures would be a more environmentally friendly alternative and they would require little maintenance once constructed. However, they are more costly. Stuart researched cost and worked with Kay to complete a grant form, which was submitted to the Council. Hopefully, there will be some funding available for this project in the near future. They are manufactured by The British Recycled Plastic Company and were mentioned in www.allotment-garden.org/product-reviews/. Although initially expensive, they work out as good value for money as they do not need any time or money spent on maintenance, and are longer lasting than timber frames, which eventually rot away.
5. **Disabled toilet facility.** Funding is required for this and it is something that will be followed up once other commitments have been addressed. Stuart has forwarded forms for grant applications for proposed projects, from the Council to Kay, and these will be actioned.

6. **Report from John Braithwaite.** Kings seed Catalogues 2022/3. These will be available for Allotment Association members to collect from John's home address, 11 Ryelands Road, between 10.00am and 12.00am on given days of the week. (To be announced.) Also, orders can be collected from this address. Facebook, the Allotment Web Site, the Allotment notice board and post box in the Community Shed will be used for relevant information.
August - Catalogues arrive
Start of November - hand in first orders
Mid December - goods arrive
Early December- second order (about a month after the first one.)
7. **Fallen tree by the allotment gate.** The farmer responsible for this fallen tree was informed about this at the start of January as it borders his land but has not yet dealt with this. It cannot be touched by the Town Council in its current hanging state but they are monitoring it to ensure the safety of plot holders.
8. **On site secure post box.** A secure post box has now been placed in the Community Shed. Forms and cheques for LAA membership can be posted in this. It is regularly checked for communications from plot holders.
9. **RSPB Garden birdwatch 28th – 30th January 2022 at the allotment site.** The information was advertised on Face Book, The Allotment Web Site and posters on the Allotment notice board. Forms and identification charts were made available for those who wished to take part from the allotment site results for the whole area. Hilary, Sam and Kay all took part and the results have been submitted to the R.S.P.B.
10. **Bat and bird boxes.** Stuart is in contact with Jude from the Environment Agency and is looking into the possibility of obtaining these and advice on where to site them.
11. **Membership Report from Hilary.** Membership payment is due in August 2022. In future this will be administered by the L.A.A. Treasurer, Hilary. There will be a secure post box in the Community Shed for plot holders to post their membership form with a cheque and a designated day and time for plot holders to go to the Allotment Community area to hand over relevant payment and paperwork to a Committee Member. This could be a social event with refreshments being available.
 - a) *Membership Forms can be collected from the noticeboard on the Allotment Site and forms and pens can be made available to collect from the Community Shed.*

- b) *A letter re membership payment details will be included with the plot payments for April 2022/23. However, it is not due to be paid to the L.A.A. until mid-July, in readiness for August renewal.*
 - c) *The Committee feel that the annual fee of £7.50 is a reasonable amount to pay for the benefits of Allotment Membership and hope to promote this.*
12. **Wildlife Area.** The Woodland Trust has donated saplings/ whips to the Town Council and Stuart has agreed to pass these on to Leominster Allotment Association to plant as a hedge to border the track adjacent to the Wildlife Area. This would protect plot holders raised bed pathways and provide a suitable habitat. A small “ditch” could run on the inside to aid and attract greater biodiversity and help with drainage as the track can become waterlogged in the winter. Suggestions given below, as recorded in minutes of previous meeting on Jan 5th 2022.
- a) *Seating areas.*
 - b) *Pond in wildlife area/scrapes.*
 - c) *Bug hotels- could do this as an allotment workshop and involve families with this. Find information on designs and what recycling materials can be used in construction.*
 - d) *Wildflowers/ plants that attract insects.*
 - e) *Places for animals to hibernate and suitable mini habitat (for slow worms)*
 - f) *Plant hedge with some trees to provide food source for birds and insects.*
 - g) *Mow pathways through so habitat is not trampled on.*
 - h) *Keep a record of birds spotted in the Community Area, where plot holders record what has been spotted, as they do in hides at Bodenham lakes.*
13. **Swap table.** Keeping this area tidy is difficult as being open to the weather can be an issue when windy weather blows lightweight objects into the nearby hedges. The idea of having an enclosed swap area is being followed up. This could be as simple as boxing in the table on two sides and the back, adding height so that some form of roofing could be added, possibly using the side of the metal cube to aid with this enclosure. Stuart kindly found and delivered different sized pallets that could be used as part of this structure. Face Book, Allotment web site and notice board posters have been put up to request a work party or volunteers to help with construction.

14. **Leominster In Bloom It's Your Neighbourhood.** Ongoing discussion and action needed to see which recommendations can be actioned? (See minutes from January 2022)
15. **New categories for judging plots.** It was felt that there should be a wider range of categories and awards, to be given out at the Harvest Supper. This would reflect the fact that plots are cultivated in a variety of ways with a different emphasis on what is grown. Face Book, Allotment web site post and notice board posters have been put up to ask plot holders for ideas. Stuart is contacting possible judges for this. Awards will be given at the October Harvest Supper (Friday 7th to be confirmed).

A.O.B

1) **Having an Allotment site Open Day- Sunday June 5th 2.00pm until 5.00pm.** Leominster Festival organisers were contacted to see if there would be "Open Gardens" in 2022. This event has previously been organised by the Priory but they said this would not be taking place in 2022. Leominster Festival has kindly offered to promote an Allotment Site Open Day on our behalf. **This will only be able to go ahead if people will volunteer to be the necessary Stewards to assist with visitors safe parking.**

2) **Improving the entrance Parking Area. Make it more welcoming (apart from tidying up the Swap Table).**

It was suggested in a previous meeting that a post to prevent the gate from swinging right back into the hedge might be an improvement. Other ideas are:

- a) Painting a "Welcome to Ginhall Lane Allotments" sign on the cube.
- b) Moving the tubs from the overgrown hedge area to go along the side of the cube and plant them up.
- c) Ask the Grounds team to put rosemary plant in the rotten tub into the ground in the same area, keep the plaque and apply for a replacement tub.
- d) Use posts with a rope to demarcate parking area as vegetation is encroaching on this.

LIB have offered two no longer needed planters to the Town Council and they have agreed to place them on the allotment site. These could be used to help demarcate parking area, rather than posts and rope.

3) **Leominster in Bloom, It's Your Neighbourhood Award.** We will be taking part in and the judges will visit the allotments on Saturday July 16th at 11.00 a.m. to look around the allotment site, accompanied by LAA committee members. They may stop for a chat with anyone working on their plot as they

have a keen interest in getting different viewpoints on the way in which a plot is used and the wider allotment community.

4) **Seed Swap.** At the end of January, we were asked if we would like to have a stall at the February 12th Seed Swap. The Committee declined this invitation as it was thought we would not have enough donations to make this viable.

5) **Proposed increase in rent.** The Town Council asked the L.A.A to notify plot holders of a proposed increase in rent in 2023. This is due to the increasing cost of maintaining the allotment site. This will be clarified prior to the proposed rent increase. As well as recording this in the minutes the plot holders have been notified of this on Face Book, Allotment web site and notice board posters will be put up.

6) **Request from Romey for donations of herbs to L.I.B.** The Leominster cubs will be planting up the two beds (as you exit the Etnam Street car park walking into town). They were thinking about having sustainable beds planted with herbs. This request was put on the Allotment website, Face Book and the Allotment noticeboard.

7) **Social events for 2022.** It was felt that social events, such as a BBQ, were important as it gave an opportunity for plot holders to exchange news and information. The Committee decided that this should be discussed at the meeting in May as events would probably take place in July and August. However, without support from plot holders, the lack of funds will make it increasingly difficult for the committee to raise any revenue to subsidise any social gatherings.

8) **Communication / Community Shed Post Box.** The Committee work closely with the Town Council, who are very supportive, on the behalf of plot holders. Minutes of the Committee Meetings are posted on Face Book, the Allotment Web Site and hard copies on the Allotment Notice board. Numerous questions that are received have already been raised and the outcomes recorded in the minutes. Checking the minutes will help to keep plot holders informed and make them aware of ongoing developments and issues. There is a secure post box in the Community Shed which can be used as a means of communication. The post box will be regularly checked to see if plot holders have any suggestions or concerns regarding the running of the allotment site.

9) **Request from Stuart on behalf of the Town Council - Planting trees at Ginhall Lane Green Community Orchard, Wednesday March 16th at 9:30.** Notification of this has been put on Face Book, Allotment web site and notice board to ask if any plot holders are available to help plant thirty fruit trees.

10) Important Notification for all plot holders re The Future of Leominster Allotment Association

A number of the current committee are relinquishing their posts. Consequently, the LAA will need a Chair Person, Secretary, Membership Secretary and Treasurer.

The current incumbents will remain on the committee to support and maintain a viable number to allow this association to continue and flourish. Nominations can be given to the Town Council or placed in the Community Shed Post Box before the AGM on May 7th

Dates for future meetings

Day	Date	Place	Time
Saturday	May 7 th A.G.M Election of Committee for 2022-23	Allotment Community Area	2 p.m.
Sunday	July 10 th	Allotment Community Area	3 p.m.
Sunday	Sept 11 th	Allotment Community Area	3 p.m.
Wednesday	Nov 9 th	Council Offices	7 p.m.

Other dates

21st May 2022-Plant Fayre. Without support from plot holders, it will become increasingly difficult for the Committee to raise any revenue to subsidise any social gatherings and improve the Allotment site

- Allotment Open Day Sunday June 5th from 2.00pm until 5.00pm
- Leominster in Bloom I Y N assessment Saturday July 16th at 11.00am
- September Plant Fayre (held on the 18th in 2021.)
- October Harvest Supper (held on the 7th in 2021.)

Thank you to those who attended and for your ideas for the topics discussed.

Leominster Allotment Association Annual General Meeting 2022

Saturday May 7th at 2 pm, on Ginhall Lane Allotment Site, Community Garden, Leominster.

Committee members present: Kay West, Samantha Shakespeare, Hilary Tuite, Graham Millard, Jane Lacey, Glenys Millard.

Others present: Stuart Sidebotham, Sue Morris, Claire Powell, Marcus Williams, Diane and Phil Eames, Mary Lacock, Heather Davies, Jen Turner, Margaret Coldman, Gill Ding, Lucy Sockett, and 3 x junior plot holders with parents.

Apologies: Viv Pearson

Minutes: Samantha Shakespeare

Minutes Approval

The minutes from the previous A.G.M. meeting, Wednesday 7th July 2021 at 7 p.m. in the Town Council Offices were approved as a true record of last year's meeting.

Opening matters

Kay welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. Everyone introduced themselves. A brief explanation of the format of the meeting was given for the benefit of newcomers: reporting on activities and projects that have taken place since the last AGM and the opportunity for discussion and questions re items on the agenda or for A.O.B.

Report from the Secretary, Samantha Shakespeare

Three meetings have taken place since the last A.G.M - Sept 8th, Nov 3rd, March 2nd all at the Town Council Offices at 7pm. Sam also mentioned activities (**Refer to item 2 re activities**)

Report from the Chair, Kay West

After the A.G.M. of July 7th 2021 various covid restrictions came and went. In spite of this, we were able to fit in a couple of events as mentioned in item 6 on the agenda.

When walking around the allotment site it is always interesting to see how the individual plots have been planned and planted and how they develop over time.

The allotment site has a mix of experienced gardeners, beginners and plot holders of all ages. There are many thoughtful people, unbeknown to others, who have helped out another plot holder in some way. These acts of kindness and the situation of the allotment site make it a special place for many plot holders.

The Committee members are very supportive of each other and have worked closely with the Town Council and plot holders to maintain and improve the allotment site. I would particularly like to thank the other members of the Committee for their efforts. Sam has helped paint sheds, plant the hedge, and run the stall at assorted plant Fayres. Viv Pearson has provided many plants for plant fayres and then helps to sell them. Jane has been invaluable for advice and information as she was on the original committee when the allotments were set up. Julie, Town Council Clerk, is very supportive and the Committee were delighted when Stuart became responsible for managing the allotment site because, as a plot holder and a local person, he has a good understanding of what is happening or needed at the allotment site.

Activities during the year

Leominster in Bloom, It's Your Neighbourhood Assessment took place on July 3rd 2021 and report was received September 2021. The criteria for assessment were explained along with comments from the assessors and positive aspects of the allotment site and suggestions for improvement. (The full report was made available as a hard copy on FB and the Allotment web site when it was first issued in September 2021. The comments about making the allotment site more environmentally friendly were discussed (**see below**).

1 - Encourage efforts to include more bat and bird boxes and bug hotels across the site. (The Council looked into this and the person who was going to assist was unable to. This is something that the Committee would still like to happen and set up as soon as possible.) Stuart explained the situation and has said it was something that would be followed up. It was mentioned that Echo could be approached for bat and bird boxes.

2 - Make maximum use of rainwater butts rather than mains water. Not all plots have sheds but a few containers could be used for collecting rain water. This is good advice as using water from water butts is more economical than paying the costs of mains water, which is metred.

3 - Continue to persuade all plot holders to garden organically. It was mentioned that there are hedgehogs on the site and a number of them had ended up with HELP 4 Hogs at Shobdon as they had been poisoned. It was suggested that signage to inform plot holders of hedgehog might help make them more aware that they were on site.

4 - Ongoing work on wildlife area – planting trees and flowers to attract insects and creating a small pond

5 - Consider whether to set out a (sponsored?) flower arrangement near the entrance gate. LIB have offered planters to the Town Council. We have said we would like them for the allotments and are waiting for them to be emptied of current plants before they can be moved to the allotment site.

- **Picnic on the Plot on Sunday** August 15th2021- this was attended by members of the L.A.A Committee and one other plot holder.
- **Plant Fayre** on Saturday September 18th2021- several courgettes donated but all other items were from the Community Garden, Sam's plot and from Viv Pearson. The stall was run by Hilary, Sam, Viv and Kay. The £26 profit was used to purchase blue wood preserve which Sam and Kay used to paint the Community Shed.
- **Harvest Supper** on Friday October 8th, 2021- The L.A.A used money from the funds to subsidise drinks and food. As usual, those that attended contributed an amazing selection of savoury and dessert dishes. There was the usual quiz but no awards were given as it was felt that the Covid situation had impacted on the amount of time that individual plot holders could commit to attending their plots.
- **Security Marking** sessions - A session for West Mercia police to carry out security marking was arranged for Saturday July 10th but this was poorly attended due to the short notice. Another date for security marking was organised for Saturday October 23rd from 1p.m. until 3p.m. but once again, no one turned up, even though it was advertised well in advance on FB, allotment web site and posters on the notice boards. It was suggested that instead of wasting police time security marking should be carried out by the plot holders themselves and that they use the resources left in the Community Shed from the previous police visit.
- **January 28th-30th R.S.P.B Garden Birdwatch at the allotments.** - Kay and Sam provided bird identification sheets and relevant forms (obtained by Sam) on the allotment notice board and, in the Community, Shed. Notification of this was given on the Allotment Web Site, Face Book and posters on the noticeboards. Only three people took part- Kay, Sam, Hilary.

Other Matters arising from last year's A.G.M.

- **Thefts/security Closing the entrance gate** - large signs were put on the gate requesting plot holders to close the gate after entering and exiting the allotment site and to lock it if they were last leaving. Most people abide by this. However, the padlocks/gates can be difficult for some people to manage, myself included at times. Ask for assistance if this is possible. Several weeks ago, a car parked in front of the open gate so it could not be closed. This might have been a walker using the allotment site for parking and not wishing to be locked in? It had been suggested in a previous LAA meeting that a post to prevent the gate swinging 180 degrees into the hedge would make it impossible for anyone to block the gate and help stop the gate from dropping on its hinges. The post might need to be removable, padlocked in place to allow easier access for Council vehicles.
- **Anti-social behaviour**- There have been a couple of isolated incidents but, luckily, the allotment community is mostly very respectful of others. However, there is a slight issue with littering as some seem to think it appropriate to put plastic bottles, bags and cans on a cordoned off compost heap or by/over the fenced off wildlife area. Littering is classed by law as antisocial. ([Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003](#) and [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#)) Kay and Stuart have removed five black bin bags full of assorted litter in the last few weeks.

Matters arising from last year's A.G.M.- Town Council issues

- **Communication with plot holders** - secure post box. This is now installed in the Community Shed plus an additional information notice board on the side of the Community Shed. Old notice board enables plot holders to access forms and Information. Communication continues to be an issue for the following reasons- The LAA do not have a list of contact details for all LAA members as this was handled by the Town Council staff and data protection laws prevents them from passing on personal details. See report from membership Secretary, Hilary Tuite, on how this will be resolved. The other issue concerns prospective new tenants. They are told about vacant plots but they are not shown round so no one to explain the existence and use of the Community Garden area and its facilities. Perhaps a welcome sheet would be useful? Gill Ding highlighted the need for simplifying all notifications and announcements to avoid confusion.
- **Compost loo** - became usable as soon as Covid regulations permitted this,
- **Recycling area/ Wildlife area** - work in progress. This was strimmed and Sam and Kay have planted a hedge of various species, donated to the Town Council, from the Woodland Trust as part of the Queen's Jubilee plant a tree initiative, Chris kindly donated three crab apple trees and Quince. Steve has donated a small walnut tree which is being grown on to give it a better chance of thriving in the wildlife area. It was noted that Mark had kindly offered to give the area another strim and many thanks and appreciation for all his hard work that morning were expressed at this meeting.
- **Disabled facilities/toilet to be actioned** - Raised beds to be constructed on the old recycling area. Application for a grant is needed to help cover the cost of a toilet suitable for those with disabilities. Raised beds made from recycled plastic were researched and Stuart and Kay filled out a grant in the hope of receiving a grant to help pay for the costs of these. Unfortunately, this could take such a long time to be successful that having wooden raised beds is being considered. Stuart is looking into the cost of timber needed for this.
- **Numbering plots** – over the years plots have been subdivided and the original numbering system has caused issues. Many thanks to Stuart for organising new number plaques and attaching them to the plot gates. Plot holders were given advance notification of this action on FB, the allotment website and posters on the allotment noticeboard. Sam and Kay helped Stuart to place number plaques on every plot.
- **Retiring ploholders "Veterans" scheme** - Notification and forms available.

- notification on FB, allotment website and posters to inform plot holders of this scheme. A registration form for this is available from the allotment notice board by the gate. **NB** The Committee consulted the Town Council and agreed to use some of its funds to pay for two people to have Veteran membership for a year. Both have been plotholders. This is in recognition of all the hard work and support that they have given to the LAA over many years. The appropriate paperwork has now been completed for one of these people.
- **Rotovators** - Stuart reported that they need attention as they are not working reliably.
- **Site lease renewal** - Julie is negotiating this.
- **Vacant plots** – none. 6 people on the waiting list.

Report on Membership - Hilary Tuite

Membership fees that affiliate the L.A.A. with the National Association are payable by the end of August and will now be collected directly by L.A.A. This will mean that L.A.A. will be able to have a record of all members available that will enable us to access free insurance under the umbrella of the National Association amongst other benefits.

Collection will start at the May Plant Fayre and membership forms will also be available in the notice board by the gate at the allotments from the end of the month.

Once the L.A.A. has a record of all members it will be easier to keep in contact and inform people of any events and news.

Report from the Seed order Co-ordinator, John Braithwaite and Jane Lacey, Kings seed Catalogues 2022/23

These will be available for Allotment Association members to collect from John's home address, 11 Ryelands Road, between 10 and 12 on given days of the week. (To be announced.) Also, orders can be collected from this address. Facebook, the Allotment Web Site, the Allotment notice board and post box in the Community Shed will be used for relevant information.

August - Catalogues arrive.

Start of November - hand in first orders.

Mid December - goods arrive

Early December - second order, about a month after the first one.

Report from Treasurer Hilary Tuite

Since taking over as treasurer in December 2021 the only income we have received has been from King's seed order for £332.45, with only 10 members taking part last year.

Expenditure of £295.69 to King's seeds, £161.56 for plot insurance and £25.00 for a table at the Craft and Plant fair to take place on 21st May leaves a balance of £1138.36 in the bank. There was a profit of £36.76 on the seed orders. The insurance payment for members will hopefully not be necessary next year with the members' details being held by L.A.A. the committee should be able to take advantage of the free insurance as part of the affiliation to the National Association.

Election of Officers

Kay and Sam explained that they were relinquishing their roles but would remain active for the LAA. Sam works full time, long hours and not locally so is finding it increasingly difficult to give time to LAA matters. She also explained how time consuming our roles were because there were so few Committee members to spread the work load. People are keen to make suggestions but tend to expect others to action them. Kay said that she was prepared to support the new Chairperson but not to be tied up with all the admin that this involved. She wished to be active in developing the wildlife area. Kay would also take responsibility for 2022 LIB paperwork as this was an ongoing project from last year.

- **Claire Powell (Chair)**
- **Sue Morris (Secretary)**
- **Hilary Tuite (Treasurer and Membership Secretary)**
- **John Braithwaite (Seed order Co-ordinator with support from Jane Lacey)**
- **Graham Millard (committee member)**
- **Glenys Millard (committee member)**
- **Kay West (committee member)**
- **Samantha Shakespeare (committee member)**
- **Viv Pearson – (committee member - Veterans Representative)**

These appointments were seconded by Jane Lacey and passed by those attending the meeting.

Any other business

- **Harvest supper 2022** - New categories for harvest supper awards were given to Stuart and Julie. Plot holders were asked for suggestions via FB, web site and notice board posters but only two people responded. All categories will be judged independently. Stuart will organise judging.
- **Removing old leaf compost bay** - In spite of it being taped off it continued to be used. Unfortunately, there was plastic waste, including bottles, and tin cans in with the compostable material. Kay cleared the top layer as this could be burned. Stuart and Kay will be clearing more of it on Wednesday May 11th.
- **Allotment website - is it needed?** Question raised by Kay West as the L.A.A pay for this facility? Kay would like it noted that Chris Conlon does an excellent job as L.A.A Web Site Administrator.

Pros - It holds all sorts of documents on the Documents page, to which people can refer.

It's a good way of disseminating information, news, rules and regs.

Good contact point for those who are thinking of taking on an allotment.

Con's - There is a cost to the website.

People use Facebook rather than look at a website.

Not everyone has a computer/lap top.

- **Swap Shed** - the aim is to make it more weatherproof so that items placed on it are not blown into the nearby hedge or get wet. Notices re forthcoming events could also be pinned on it.
- **Funding for proposed events and projects** - Claire mentioned some local businesses who have helped out with various community projects. Howdens will give away old pallets, Cadburys and Kingspan will provide work parties for some projects.
- **Social events?** - Involve children more by organising a sunflower growing competition, a scarecrow competition?

Dates

- **Next A.G.M.** - Saturday May 6th 2pm 2023 at Ginhall Lane Allotment Site Community Garden
- **Next L.A.A. meeting** - Sunday July 10th 3pm at Ginhall Lane Allotment Site Community Garden
- **Leominster in Bloom I.Y.N. assessment Saturday** - July 16th at 11 a.m.

Kay West then thanked everyone for attending the meeting and the meeting was closed.

Leominster Allotment Association

Minutes of Committee Meeting, Sunday July 10th 2022

The meeting took place at the Community Garden on the allotment site at 3pm.

Present: Hilary Tuite (Treasurer and membership sec.), Kay West, Stuart Sidebotham (Council), Elizabeth Oxenham, Val Waring, Samantha Shakespeare, Laura Mill, Rob Evans, Sue Morris (minutes sec).

Apologies: Claire Powell (Chair), Graham and Glenys Millard

Kay chaired the meeting as Claire was unable to make it.

Minutes	Copies of the minutes of the AGM held on Saturday May 7 th at 2 p.m. were distributed and approved.
Leominster in Bloom report	Making the entrance more welcoming. Stuart has some spare tubs to be planted up and placed near the entrance. A welcome sign is to be commissioned from Sign-rite. Encouraging use of water butts – this is up to individual plot holders and whether they have a shed. This year's assessment visit will take place on Saturday, 16th July . David and Lesley Pritchard are the LiB representatives. They are looking for organic and wild-life friendly planting, community involvement and social events. They like to chat to plot holders, Kay West to prepare a portfolio, and will meet and greet. Sue Morris will bring cakes.
Matters arising from Site Inspection	<u>New loo for disabled and raised mini beds.</u> Stuart has approached a company which supplies composting toilets and will arrange a site visit. This will be sited near the second car park, close to the new raised beds which will also be wheelchair accessible. When the company has given a quote, Stuart will apply for funding. The gate at the far end of the site will be relocated in the Autumn to nearer the second car park to prevent vehicular access to the area adjacent to the wildlife area as this causes the track to become very muddy in wet weather. <u>Ruts in lane, fallen tree.</u> The Council will fill in the ruts in the allotment track and also the one near the entrance gate on the access lane. However, this lane is the responsibility of Western Power and they have been asked to deal with the other potholes and the fallen tree. <u>Bat and bird boxes</u> The Council have two bat boxes but need expert advice on where to position them. Samantha Shakespeare now has a bat certificate and is willing to help. Bird boxes are also to be site in or near the allotments. Sam will ask her bird expert work colleague to advise. <u>Waiting List</u> 13 people are on the list. Stuart is preparing a welcome leaflet with essential info: e.g., the gate key opens the community shed, discounts at local shops etc. Kay will cooperate with this.

September plant fayre	This is held in Leominster in mid-September. The Association will have a stall and plot holders are encouraged to volunteer to help and to contribute produce, cut flowers, preserves and plants to sell for Association funds.
Harvest Supper	<p>This will be held on Saturday, 8th October in the John Abel room in Grange Court. This year we are asking plot holders of odd-numbered plots to bring savoury dishes and even numbered to bring sweet dishes. Those present agreed that the Harvest Supper is a very enjoyable occasion and all plot holders are encouraged to attend.</p> <p>There was much discussion about awards that are usually presented at the supper. No awards were given last year as Covid restrictions meant that some people were unable to go to their plots at all. Stuart mentioned that at the moment, there are no judges available to decide on the awards. Kay proposed that more informal and inclusive categories should be chosen such as best shed, most bee-friendly planting, most improved etc. These could be voted on by other plot holders provided they do not nominate themselves. Discussion of this is ongoing.</p>
Treasurer's report	<p>Since the last committee meeting, expenditure has included £99.98 for a gazebo in May and £66.89 for compost and plants for the tubs by the second car park as well as slow-release fertiliser granules for continued growth.</p> <p>Income of £111.20 was achieved at the Spring Fair in May. £100 was banked and £11.20 retained as petty cash.</p> <p>The bank balance currently stands at £1076.49</p> <p>Forms for membership will be available for collection from the noticeboard near the entrance gate with various methods of payment outlined.</p> <p>Benefits of membership were discussed. The Association is affiliated with the National Allotment Association which provides liability insurance for your plot. Discounts are available at Phillpotts. Discounted seeds are available from Kings Seeds when you put your order in through the Association. Membership runs from August to August and costs £7.50 p.a.</p>
AOB	<p>The crackling noise from the electricity pylons was raised but Stuart assured us that it was not in any way dangerous.</p> <p>One plot holder turned his ankle in a hole on the track caused by a sunken molehill. It was thought quite difficult for the Council workers to eliminate all holes hidden by grass but plot holders were urged to watch out and if possible, to fill in any holes they happen to notice.</p>
	Attendees were thanked for their attendance and the meeting was closed.

Minutes of the Committee Meeting Sunday 11th September, 2022

The meeting took place at the Community Garden on the allotment site at 3pm.

Present: Hilary Tuite (membership secretary and Treasurer), Sue Morris (minutes sec.), Kay West, Samantha Shakespeare, Mary Locock, Ian Jones, Graham and Glenys Millard

Apologies: Stuart Sidebotham, Viv Pearson, Heather Davies, Phil and Diana Eames

Minutes	Copies of the minutes of the last meeting were circulated, approved and signed by Sue Morris
New Chairperson	Unfortunately, Claire Powell has had to stand down as Chair of the committee, due to pressure of other commitments. We will miss the excellent ideas she contributed. It is difficult to see how to operate legally without one of the main officers. A further appeal will be made through Facebook and personal contacts to see if another person could be found to fulfil this role. Graham Millard and Kay would give support. Graham will be moving away from the area soon so is unable to take it on for the whole year. If no one is found we may have to wind up the Association after the Harvest Supper in October, which would involve refunding subscriptions etc.
September Plant Fair	Sat. September 17 th in Corn Square. Contributions of flowers, produce and plants to sell are needed, to be left at the Community Shed by 7pm on 16 th September. More volunteers to man the stall for part of the day are needed. Posters and chalk notice appealing for donations Sue Picking flowers Mary and Hilary 6pm 16 th September Transporting goods 7pm 16 th Sept Hilary & Sue Stall Set up Corn Square 8pm Hilary, Sue, Graham Manning the stall: Sue, Hilary, Abbie Davies plus any others Tidy up Sue and Geoff Morris
October Harvest Supper	This is a lovely event to which every plot holder and partner is invited. The Council book the John Abel room at Grange Court for us. Kay will double check the date, Saturday, October 8 th , with the Town Clerk, as it has always been a Friday in the past. This year even numbered plots are asked to bring desserts and odd numbered plots are asked to bring savoury dishes. LAA to provide bread, butter and nibbles. Please bring your own drinks. Kay will send sign-up sheet. Notification on Facebook and web-site (Sue & Christine), Quiz (Kay), shopping and set up (Sue and others) Prizes for the raffle are needed.
Membership & Treasurer's Report	Membership: There has been a very poor response for membership this year with only 19 subscriptions having been paid in full. The reason is probably because, in the past, subscriptions were collected early by the council when rents were paid in the Spring. The

	<p>downside of this process was that because of the Data Protection Act, the Council would not release membership information to the committee, who therefore had no idea who their membership was.</p> <p>Treasurers 'Report: Since the last meeting, the only outgoings have been payment of £20 for the Plant Fair stall in Corn Square. With the influx of subscription payments, the balance at the bank now stands at £1112.10.</p>
Vacant plots and waiting list	There are 13 people on the waiting list at present. The Council has contacted holders of uncultivated plots.
Dangerous tree	One plotholder had a branch fall on his car earlier this month. This was part of the tree which had fallen across the track. Stuart has now inspected the remains of the tree and believes there are no more branches that are likely to fall. The Committee wish to record its thanks to Stuart and the Council workpeople who acted swiftly and professionally in clearing the fallen tree when it blocked the site entrance and filled in the potholes in the access track even though this work was the joint responsibility of the farmer and Western Power.
Site inspection	Stuart noted that there were trees growing near to the power lines on one plot. The Council can help plotholders who have trees which have become too large.
AOB	There was some discussion about and pictures circulated of the proposed wheelchair accessible composting toilet. Kay & Sue will try to inspect a similar model in use elsewhere locally.
Next Meeting	Wednesday, November 9th Council Offices, Corn Square 7pm
	Ian Jones was welcomed to the committee and attendees were thanked for their attendance. The meeting closed at 4.10pm.

Minutes of the committee meeting held on Wednesday 9th November 2022, at 7pm in the Art Gallery, Leominster Council building.

Apologies	David Sanders
Present	Kay West (Acting Chair), Sue Morris (Minutes Secretary), Hilary Tuite (Membership Secretary and Treasurer), Stuart Sidebotham (Town Council), Samantha Shakespeare, Viv Pearson, Heather Davies
Minutes	The Minutes were taken as read as they are available on the web-site.
September Plant Fair Sept. 17th	Hilary and Sue ran the stall. Grateful thanks to Abigail Davies who helped man the stall and provided beautifully presented bunches of dried teasel heads, which sold very well. Thanks to Graham Millard for helping to set up and also covering our lunch breaks. We sold produce, preserves, plants and bouquets of cut flowers from the allotment. Profit after expenses was £85.
Harvest Supper Saturday October 8th	This was held in the John Abel Room at Grange Court, booked for all plotholders by Julie, the Town Clerk. This was an enjoyable occasion with amazing food brought in by everyone. Thanks to Graham Millard for helping to set up even though he had to go to another event in Hereford, Sam for doing the flower arranging, volunteers who picked the flowers, and Kay for preparing a challenging horticultural and wildlife quiz. The proceeds of the raffle (£20) covered the cost of items donated by the LAA. David and Lesley Pritchard from Leominster in Bloom gave a brief presentation about their findings when they judged our site for the "It's Our Neighbourhood" awards, and Romy Worthington from Leominster in Bloom was also a guest. LiB have provided flowering plants for some of the tubs at the site. There was discussion about finding a new venue as there are now many restrictions on the use of the kitchen as it is now the main kitchen for the Grange Court Café. The Forbury and the Methodist Church were suggested.
Chair and Committee	Kay was persuaded to be acting Chair until a replacement comes forward. A Chairperson is required to be a signatory for cheques. She was encouraged to delegate tasks to other members of the committee who are willing to help.
Membership	There are now 22 paid-up members of the Association, significantly down on last year which will impact on our annual income. However, we do at least know who our members are so that they can be kept updated with what is going on by email. After paying National 'Association fees, we will be left with £99.00 for the year. However, we will no longer have the expense of insuring the plots as all our members' plots will be insured under the National AA scheme. If you are not yet a paid-up member but wish to benefit from the free insurance, please join by sending your £7.50 subs to Hilary. (details on noticeboard at site entrance.)

Treasurer's Report	The balance at the bank is £1288.99 with one outstanding cheque of £7.50 yet to be paid in. Available funds are therefore £1296.49. The plant fair raised £105, and after the cost of £20 for the stall, there was a profit of £85.
Vacant plots and waiting list	There are 13 on the waiting list with the possibility of one plot becoming vacant.

Leominster in Bloom report follow-up	Harvesting rainwater was a big theme of the LiB report so Kay and Sue looked round the site and found there were a number of plots where there was a shed but no guttering or water butt. Others had guttering and a down pipe but no butt. Sue will price up water butts and put out an appeal on Facebook for those with carpentry skills to help those who would like help with installing water harvesting. Committee members will look for sources of free or cheap containers. Stuart will install a large ICB by the community shed.
Tree/hedge trimming	Stuart's grounds team have cut the hedges. Stuart will contact any plotholder who has a non-fruiting tree (self-sown) which has grown too high. (Over 7 ft) He will ask permission to enter the plot to take down or reduce the height of any such trees. They will be shredded.
Water tanks	Stuart is getting quotes from plumbers to service all the tanks and connections to minimise leaks. It was proposed to limit the drinking water taps to two, one by the first car park and one by the community shed. This is to prevent unauthorised use of hosepipes.
New Plotholder information pack	Stuart is working on this and will call on help from Kay or Sue as necessary. When complete, he plans to email a copy to all plotholders.
Visit to composting loo	Hilary, Kay and Sue visited a NatSol composting toilet at St. Thomas a Becket Church, Huntington, near Kington. It was very neat and had plenty of room for a wheelchair to turn in it. The Town Council Grants Officer is looking into funding for this project.
Site inspection	There were a few neglected plots and Stuart will take appropriate action. There are some where we are aware of health or work issues and no action will be taken, Excellent work by some new plotholders was noted, especially plot 74. The wood needs to be renewed on some of the miniplots.
Date of next meeting	Wednesday, January 11 th 7pm. We have asked for the art gallery again as it is a nice venue and can be accessed directly from Etnam St. car park.
AOB	Next year's National Allotment Association AGM will be held in Leamington Spa in 2023.