



Leominster Allotment Association

Minutes of Meeting 7 pm Wednesday January 8th 2025 at Town Council Art Gallery

	Present	Kay West, Chairperson, Hilary Tuite , Treasurer and Membership Secretary, Sue Morris, Secretary, Stuart Sidebotham, Town Council Grounds supervisor, Heather Davies, Penny Fear.
1.	Apologies	None had been received
2.	Minutes and matters arising	Read and accepted. Hilary and Heather visited the bank, not Hilary and Kay as in the minutes. They were assured by Lloyds staff that bank charges can no longer be avoided.
3.	Planting flower tubs	Hilary and Kay bought bulbs and plants from a sale and planted most of the tubs at the site. Surplus bulbs will be planted in the community garden.
4.	Christmas Tree	Kay and Sue decorated the Christmas tree in the Tourist Information Office using decorations made from pegs by Penny and natural objects collected by Kay. The decorations have now been stored in the filing cabinet in the cube at the site. Thanks to Penny for the lovely dolly peg decorations.
5.	Manure delivery	Two loads of cow manure were delivered by Mr Rob Barnett on 4 th and 5 th December at a cost of £180. Many thanks to him for making two journeys in order to have heaps at both car parks. £2 per barrowload or £15 per 10 barrowloads
6.	Membership and treasurer's report	Membership is unchanged at 26. Current account balance stands at £ 1,580. Lloyd's Bank have started to raise bank charges on all bank accounts. Hilary and Heather visited other banks in Leominster but all raise charges on current accounts now. We now need to budget for a cost of £4.25 per month or £51 per year just to maintain the account, plus extra charges of 50p for every cheque paid in or out and 75p per £100 cash paid in or out. With our present membership this will present a challenge. Also, the fees LAA has to pay for affiliation to the National Association of Allotment Gardeners will rise in August to £3.50 for each of our LAA members. Hilary's suggestions for meeting these costs: 1. Recruit more members 2. Raise membership fee 3. Find savings perhaps on web-site costs or fewer awards (Council pay for most of these) 4. Charge extra when membership fees are paid by cheque. Points arising from the discussion – the main benefit of National Association affiliation is public liability insurance for your plot. Stuart suggested a membership drive. Sue to investigate the amount of traffic on the web-site. Penny thought a suggestion box to be fixed to the main gate. Kay suggested not accepting payment of membership fees by cheque. Heather proposed raising the membership fee from £7.50 to £8, Kay seconded and all were in favour.
7.	King's seed order	Thanks to Jane Lacey for administering and delivering the seed orders for member.
8.	Waiting list	10 on the waiting list and one vacant plot which is being considered by a potential tenant.
9.	Site Security	Over the Christmas period (probably Christmas Eve night), the perimeter fence was cut through and a shed was taken. A gate is also missing. Kay has identified several places where the fence has been damaged and has attempted to fill them up with branches.



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		She and Stuart will inspect the fence next week. Further steps:- 1. Stuart will plant prickly hedging plants in the gaps. 2. Stuart will investigate the legality of placing wildlife cameras around the site, looking down the tracks. 3. Stuart will liaise with the police at a meeting on 9th Jan. 4. A security marking session will be held at the allotment site on Sunday 12th January. Sue will get the community wheelbarrow marked. 5. The possibility of arranging a rota of people willing to keep an eye on the site over the festive period has been raised.
10.	RSPB Birdwatch	24 th -26 th January. Kay will put observation sheets and bird ID sheets into the community shed so that anyone who wishes to watch for birds in the site for an hour on one of those dates, can fill in the observation sheets. She will collect them from the shed and submit to RSPB.
11.	Future Events	Sunflower growing competition Bug hotel and bird box making session Possible scarecrow competition Penny suggested asking Welsh Water if they could donate water butts.
12.	Next meeting	March 5 th 7pm in Town Council Art Gallery
The meeting closed at 8.30pm		



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Minutes of the meeting held on Wed. 5th March at 7pm

	Present	Kay West. Acting Chair person, Hilary Tuite, treasurer and membership secretary, Sue Morris, secretary, Stuart Sidebotham, Town Council Grounds supervisor, Heather Davies, Penny Fear, Mary Locock, Andrew Watkins, Jane Thorley-Watkins
1.	Apologies & Minutes	No apologies had been received. The minutes of the last meeting were circulated read and approved.
2.	Matters arising	Sue Morris apologised for two errors on the summary of the Jan. 8 th meeting: one was the date of this meeting and the other was the price of the manure which was £180, not £199 as stated on the summary. Payments for the manure now amount to £140.
3.	RSPB January Birdwatch	Kay observed a variety of species but not including the pair of pheasants which have taken up residence on the site. The weather was very bad that day.
4.	Site Security	The gates are still sometimes left unlocked when there are no plot holders present, including this evening. Stuart will approach the Council environment committee to purchase an infra-red motion activated wildlife camera which could be deployed along the track at vulnerable times e.g. the Christmas and New Year period. The Association could also purchase one if the Council cannot fund it. Community Support Officers visited the site to do security marking on Jan. 12 th . Various items belonging to the Association and plot holders were marked but there were not many takers.
5.	Membership and Treasurer's report	Membership is now at 27 as we welcomed a new member at the meeting. Membership becomes due in August, in line with the National Allotment Association. Last year we tried collecting the fees early, in April, but this did not make any difference to numbers. From August, the membership fee will be £8. The bank account stands at £1576.19 after paying £4.25, the new monthly bank charge. Hilary wishes to stand down as Treasurer so there will be a vacancy for a Treasurer after the AGM.
6.	Site matters	10 people on the waiting list but three vacant plots, two small and one full-size. The council has reintroduced a £10 key deposit charge as many leaving tenants have not returned their keys. Water will be turned on at the end of March provided it is frost-free. The gates allowing access to the tracks will be opened once the ground has dried out enough. Bird-feeders can be used from October to May but not in the summer, to keep rat numbers down. Stuart's team will collect a donated bench for the wildlife area and some paving slabs from Hilary tomorrow.



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		Stuart has about 20 bird boxes made by people at Leominster Meeting Centre, a centre for people living with dementia. Contact him at grounds@leominstertowncouncil.gov.uk if you would like one. Tips for siting them can be found on the RSPB web-site.
7.	Future Events	It was decided to combine various events into a small Produce Show to be held on site in August, including a scarecrow competition. A working party is to be set up to organise the event. We will not have a stall at the Leominster in Bloom Spring Plant Fair but hope to have one at the Autumn event. We are also looking at the possibility of having a stall at one of the Farmer's Markets, which take place on the second Saturday of the month. If anyone has a glut of produce in the summer, it can be donated to the Food Bank.
8.	AGM	The new date for the AGM is 14 th May 7pm at the Town Council Art Gallery. This has been moved so as not to clash with VE day celebrations. We need a new treasurer and other office holders.
9	AOB	Penny donated a book of woodwork projects such as bird boxes and bug hotels available to borrow from the community shed.
Kay thanked those who attended and closed the meeting at 8.25 pm.		



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Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wed. 14th May at 7pm

	Present	Kay West. Acting Chair person, Hilary Tuite, treasurer and membership secretary, Sue Morris, secretary, Stuart Sidebotham, Town Council Grounds Supervisor, Heather Davies, Mary Locock, Andrew Watkins, Jane Thorley-Watkins, Bill and Freda,
1.	Apologies & Minutes	Apologies from Charley Crosse, Coral Lemm, Marcus Williams The minutes of the last committee meeting and the last AGM were circulated read and approved.
2.	Matters arising	• Drainage : Stuart outlined successful drainage works on the flooded plot which has now been relet. • Andrew has replaced broken/missing panes in community greenhouse • Wildlife area now has a bench(thanks to Hilary) and Kay has made a pond • Community garden. Kay has repaved paths and is currently weeding out and replanting the border. Thanks to Hilary and Heather for donating the slabs. • Potato growing competitions and sunflower competitions were held and judged. Tallest sunflower results attached. • Competition to make Christmas decorations from natural materials and dolly pegs won by Penny Fear who provided a whole collection of decorations. Kay and Sue used these and other natural materials to decorate the Christmas tree in the tourist information office. Decorations stored in cube for next time. • Security: Stuart has funding to obtain 2 motion activated cameras which can be installed at times when the site is vulnerable to break-ins i.e. Christmas and New Year. There were 2 break-ins when items were stolen. Police have attended twice to security mark plot holders' items. Stuart asked to be notified of suspicious activity around the site. He meets weekly with the police and often our reports fit in with a bigger picture of possible criminal activity around the town. • Plot holder awards were judged by Heart of England in Bloom judges David and Lesley Pritchard, who presented them to some of the winners at the Harvest Supper in October. Leominster Town Council will again fund the prizes for 2025, £20 garden token for best overall plot and £10 for the other categories. • Stuart will book the Forbury for this year's Harvest Supper on Friday, 10th October.



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3.	Membership & Treasurer's report	Membership of the Association stands at 27. Membership is due for renewal by August 18th and the fee will be £8. This is because our membership of the National Allotment Association (NAA) is now £3.50 per head and the bank is now imposing charges on our account. Balance of our account on 31st March 2025 £1576.19 which is £103.17 more than this time last year but we are still awaiting the invoice for web-site hosting. Income/expenditure details attached.
4.	Chair person's report	• The very wet weather in 2024 made for difficult growing conditions and cars getting stuck in the mud around the tracks. • Wildlife area: Stuart has supplied plugs of yellow rattle for the wildflower section. This area needs to be mown this year to discourage nettles but next year can be left for the wild flowers to grow. • A bank of nettles has been left by the fence for insect life but also to deter intruders. • The bird feeders were taken down at the beginning of May as feeding the birds in the summer encourages rats. • A wide variety of birds, some bats, grass snakes, and small mammals including hedgehogs have been seen at the site. There is also a fox which visits as well as a couple of cats. • Hilary and Kay attended the Heart of England in Bloom awards ceremony and lunch at Holme Lacey • Ellie Chowns MP was invited to visit the site and did so in the summer
5.	Secretary's report	• Committee meetings were held every two months, at the site in the summer and in the Town Council Art Gallery during the winter. Minutes are available in the community shed, in the glass fronted notice board and online on the website. • Manure delivery.: This year we contacted Andrew Barnett of Yarpole for a manure delivery. The price was £180 but Andrew's father, Rob, kindly brought two loads one for each car park for the same price. I am happy to say that the cost has been fully recovered by plot holders paying their £2 per barrow load or £10 per 15 barrow loads. Thanks to all of them. Current balance is £237, leaving £37 profit for the Association so far. (Amended by Sec)
6.	Site matters: Stuart	• 17 on waiting list. 1 vacant plot which had to be cleared of rubbish and is awaiting fence repairs before being let. • Water turned on but tap by community shed was leaking so has been removed for now. Drinking water is available from tap by first tank near the entrance.



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Minutes of the meeting held on Sunday, July 6th at 2pm

Community shed on allotment site

	Present	Kay West, Chair person, Jane Thorley-Watkins, assistant chair person, Sue Morris, secretary, Hilary Tuite, Penny Fear, Mary Locock, Andrew Watkins, Val Waring, Jane Lacey
1.	Apologies & Minutes	Apologies from Stuart Sidebotham, Heidi Batt The minutes of the last meeting were circulated, read, and approved.
2.	Matters arising	Hilary reported that Heidi has taken on the role of Membership Secretary as well as Treasurer, as the two go together. The bank is still sending statements to Hilary. We need to check whether the invoice for web-site hosting has been paid yet.
3.	Membership & Treasurer	Bank charge of £4.25 is the only change.
4.	"It's your Neighbourhood" Judges visit	David and Lesley Pritchard visited on Saturday 5 th July. They particularly like hand-painted signs and decorated gates. They admired the wildlife area having seen it from the beginning of the work and chatted to several plot holders. The awards ceremony will be on October 31st at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern.
5.	Site Matters	Plot 2 is now vacant and has been trimmed. Plot 51 is under offer. 6 Mini plots are vacant. 17 on waiting list. The site has been mown, some hedges trimmed back and the wasp nest under the toilet has been dealt with. Our thanks to Stuart and team for this work
6.	Summer Fun Day	Saturday August 16th probably at 2pm for plot holders and families not the general public. Kay to check arrangements with Council. Please walk or cycle, if possible, to avoid congestion in car parks. Refreshments to be served from Community Shed area Tea, Coffee, squash, and plastic cups will be provided. Bring your own alcoholic drinks if desired but not glasses, please. Can any plot holders provide cakes/biscuits?



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		BBQ Jane and Andrew to organise. We will have to BBQs, one for meat and another separate one for vegetarian food. Please bring your own food to cook. We will provide paper plates and cups. Activities • Treasure Hunt for children -Kay to organise. • Bug Hotel making workshop – Heidi to organise, Sue to check if Leominster Meeting Centre can help. Please donate materials e.g. wood, corrugated cardboard, fine wire mesh, pine cones (Kay), bamboo canes (Heidi), nails and screws. • Produce Show Categories a. Cut flowers in own jam jars. Stickers to put on base of jar to be available from Community shed b. Plate of 3 of the same variety -onions or potatoes etc c. Plate of 3 different veg (Plates provided) d. Longest green bean e. Largest onion • Plot number to be written by exhibitor on the bottom of the paper per plate as judging will be in house. • Penny to do notices on thin card or paper which Kay can laminate in in case it rains.
7.	Next Meeting	7 th September 2pm at the Community Shed
8.	Wildlife sightings	Rabbits and a mole above ground. If you see a mole above ground, please put it under a hedge. They only come above ground for finding a new territory, finding a mate but more likely this year, looking for food.
	Kay thanked those who attended and closed the meeting at just after 3pm	



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Minutes of the meeting held on Sunday, September 14th at 2pm

Community shed on allotment site

	Present	Kay West, chair, Jane Thorley-Watkins deputy chair, Heidi Batt treasurer & membership secretary, Sue Morris secretary, Hilary Tuite, Heather Davies, Mary Locock, Penny Fear
1.	Apologies & Minutes	Stuart Sidebotham, Jane Lacey Minutes were read and accepted.
2.	Matters arising	See below.
3.	Membership & Treasurer	There are currently 11 paid up members of the Association. Please pay membership either in cash or bank transfer to avoid the charge of 42p per transaction incurred when paying in cheques. Heidi still does not have access to the bank account despite going in person with Kay and Hilary to the bank. They were told to do the change of signatories online but that has proved impossible to do. Kay and Hilary to follow up. The current balance is about £1447.95 though there have been outgoings of about £50.
4.	Site Matters	17 on waiting list. One vacant plot awaiting strimming by the Council team. Plot 2 is vacant while remedial action for the mare's tail weed infestation is attempted. Bonfires are now allowed. The hedges will be trimmed as part of the winter maintenance and the brash used to fill in gaps in the perimeter hedge. The water will be turned off when there is a frost warning. The gates will be locked soon to avoid damage to the tracks after the wet weather. Stuart will arrange for the track to be smoothed out. We are hoping to get a notice to say what should and should not be put on the swap table.
5.	Summer Fun Day	Held on Saturday August 16 th . Not many people attended and no children. The produce show had a few entries. The results have been posted up on the notice boards. Jane suggested holding the event on a Friday evening before the school break up as more people come to work on their plots after work.
6.	Plot Award judging visit	David and Lesley visited in July to assess the site for the It's Your Neighbourhood award and visited again in August to select plots for the Allotment Awards. The awards will be presented at the Allotment Harvest Supper on October 10 th .
7.	Site security	Several times recently, the gates have been left wide open when no one was present at the allotment site. Please remember to



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		check if you are the last person at the site and lock the gates before driving away. Stuart is looking into buying a new lock for the cube. Several items stored in the cube have disappeared. The Council will install cameras showing activity along the main tracks before the winter holiday season.
8	Helpful plot holder nominations	One nomination for the "Helpful plot holder" has been received. Please nominate anyone who has been a special help to you. Awards to be presented at the Harvest Supper
9	Plant Fair	It was decided that it was too late to take on a stall at the Leominster in Bloom Plant Fair on September 20th. We no longer have a gazebo for shelter and most produce has already finished. Instead, there will be a produce stall at the Harvest Supper where jams, chutneys and other items can be sold to raise funds for the association. Please bring cash!
10.	Manure delivery	Sue Morris to arrange with the farmer.
11	Next Meeting	Wednesday November 12 th 7pm Town Council Art Gallery.
12	Harvest Supper	Friday October 10th at 7 pm in the Forbury. This is an enjoyable bring and share meal for all plot holders arranged by the Council and administered by the association. There will be a quiz and presentation of awards. Holders of even numbered plots to bring savoury dishes and odd numbered plots to bring sweet dishes. Pleaser also donate raffle prizes.
13	King's Seed Catalogue	Heidi has the new catalogues which she and Kay will take to Jane Lacey who will process the orders. Orders will need to be given to Jane in early November.
13	AOB	Diane Eames of the Leominster branch of Herefordshire Wildlife Trust notified us of a forthcoming event in November (TBC) where local community groups are invited to share presentations of their work to promote wildlife and the environment. The Wildlife Trust are also holding an Autumn Walk at Queenswood on 25th October at 10 am.
	Kay thanked those who attended and closed the meeting at 3.30 pm	



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Minutes of the meeting

Wednesday November 12th 7.00pm

	Present	Kay West, chair, Jane Thorley-Watkins, assistant Chair, Hilary Tuite, treasurer and membership secretary, Sue Morris, secretary, Andy Watkins, Penny Fear, Heather Davies, Jane Lacey, Mary Locock, Sam Cox, Stuart Sidebotham , Leominster Grounds supervisor.
1	Apologies	Charley Crosse
2	Matters Arising	Mini plot H is vacant. Can people on waiting list be encouraged to take them on? Harvest Supper was an enjoyable occasion. Raffle raised £30.
3	Membership & Treasurer's report	Membership Paid up membership stands at 20 with 2 membership forms missing due to having been paid by BACS. Please can these members let Hilary have the forms for our records. There are 19 members who have not yet rejoined and they will be contacted soon. The current copies of the winter National Allotment magazines are available in the Community Shed. Hilary will be contacting Association members soon to update them on our current situation and changes. A cheque has been sent to National to pay for 20 members, other people that join will be added on Treasurer's report The current balance at the bank is £1569.94. The online banking is still not functioning properly but should be fixed by next Monday after yet another mandate is filled in and posted. Hilary would like to propose that we open a savings account as even the small amount of interest earned will offset our monthly bank charges. A cheque has been issued for £70 for our membership to National and one other has been signed for the Kings Seed order and Hilary is awaiting confirmation of the amount. Correspondence received from Lloyds Bank is about changes to our online banking terms and conditions on 28th November, and updates to our account terms and conditions for the 10th December. Hilary will read through these to see what is relevant to us. Hilary has spent hours at the bank trying to arrange the correct signatures and details for the bank and was thanked for her continuing efforts.
4	Site Matters	22 people on waiting list with 1 half and 1 full plot available. Hedge cutting complete but Stuart will organise his team to trim the trees overhanging the path leading up from the first car park. He will also check plots for trees that have grown too high.



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		Stuart has ordered cameras with SIM cards to monitor the tracks. There is progress on the lease renewal. The 2 sections of the site will both be covered by a new 25 year lease. Council funding is being sought for renewal of the external blue pipework on the water tanks, laying a concrete pad to eliminate potholes by the entrance gate and improved perimeter fencing.
5	Association Committee	Hilary Tuite has taken the role of treasurer/membership secretary back temporarily as Heidi stepped down for personal reasons. At the next AGM in May 2026, we will be needing a new secretary, as well as people with IT and practical skills to help run the association. Please give it some thought! All the association have served more than the statutory 3 years. We would love people to come forward for these roles now so they can work alongside the current committee.
6	Future Events	A list of possible future events is below. Please could plot holders let us know what they think and please make other suggestions. We will decorate the Christmas tree at the TIC when they have one. Hilary suggested forming a "growing group" to produce plants to sell at stalls in the Farmers' Markets, possibly one or two. If we pay about £80 for public liability insurance for the year, the amount per event seems more reasonable if we do several events. David Griffiths is the council contact for Farmers markets. Some people could make jam and chutney. Friday June 6th suggested for an early evening family BBQ. Early August, (possibly 15th) for a Fun Day with events for children and produce show. Harvest Supper early October Dates for future business meetings discussed. The next meeting will be 7pm Jan 7th in Council art gallery.
7	Seed catalogue arrangements	This year was chaotic, our apologies. The procedure should be that the membership secretary gives out the catalogues to association members when the catalogues arrive. An information flier should be attached to the front covers so people know when and where to return their order forms and money. Jane Lacey is still willing to collect the orders and money, send off the orders and supervise distribution of the seeds when they come. Her address is available in the community shed if you want to put in a late order.



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8	Allotment Association info sheet	These should be distributed by Sarah at the Council when she issues contracts.
9	Association Web-site	Concern raised that only two people know how to upload material to the site . In view of the reduced number of association members the annual cost of £85 is more difficult to afford. Could the Town Council web-site host more allotment information? Various people said that they had found it a useful point of contact.
10	Padlock problems	If your padlock key does not work, take it back to the Council Offices in office hours and ask for a new one. There may be a faulty batch. Do not use normal WD40 on the padlock. It requires a specialist lock lubricant. The lock to the pedestrian gate has been placed on the inside of the gate so it will be easier for people who have been locked in by mistake to get out.
11	Feedback from Leominster in Bloom "It's your neighbourhood" awards	Hilary & Kay attended the award ceremony in September. We were awarded 83 points, "Thriving" level. Only 3 points short of "outstanding". Areas for development: • Shorten the time allowed for neglected plots to be reallocated to welfare call, letter 1 then letter 2 would be termination of contract. This change would need to be approved by the Council. • Install cameras to deter thieves – in hand. • Improve flower tubs by painting them and possible stacking to give height to the display. • Paint a mural on the cube. (Penny, Kay, and others) • Add a notice to the swap table so people know what they should and should not put there. Stuart is working on this. The feedback from the "In Bloom" judges is available in the community shed.
12	Manure delivery	Delivered today, thanks to Charley Crosse, Mr Gareth Davies who delivered it and Sophie Small who donated it from her stables. The cost of collecting and delivering was £190. Cost to plot holders same as last year, £2 per barrow load, £15 for 10 loads. Put the money in the shed or pay by BACS.
		Kay thanked the participants for attending and closed the meeting at 8.30pm.