Douglas Crescent Gardens Association (DCGA) Committee Meeting Minutes
Date of Meeting: 28 June 2026
Time: 19:08 – 21:36
Attendance: Alan Sibbald, Lucas Nightingale, Trevor Fenton, Jean Hamilton, Robin Maclachlan, Anne Sibbald

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1. Welcome and Introductions

- Committee members introduced themselves as this was the Committee's inaugural meeting.

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2. Committee Roles and Responsibilities

Discussion Summary

- Need for updated Rules & Regulations (R&Rs) and a Committee Governance document discussed.
- Lack of clarity on formal and informal committee roles' responsibilities was identified.
- Agree interim clarity on roles pending finalised governance documentation with key operational responsibilities also outlined.
- Co-opting additional members from the community on an ad hoc basis to leverage local expertise was considered; concerns about maintaining a manageable committee size was noted.

Agreed (unanimous)

- Committee Working Group to propose new DCGA R&Rs / Committee Governance Guidance documents that will define:
    - Committee structure and function
    - Roles and responsibilities of Committee members
    - Garden usage rules for all users

- Committee to share proposed documents with Proprietors ahead of a future General Meeting for discussion and a vote to endorse.
- Interim clarity on roles:
    - Secretary: Membership, keys, communications, agenda management
    - Treasurer: Financial control, budgeting, liaison with bookkeeper, debt management
    - Chair: Meeting leadership and external representation
    - Vice Chair role recognised as beneficial but deferred for future discussion
    - Chair and Secretary will act as primary contacts ("Garden Convenors") liaising with: Gardener, Volunteers, Contractors

Actions

- **[2.1]** Form Governance Working Group:
    - Jean & Anne (1st/2nd reviewers)
    - Robin & Trevor (3rd/4th reviewers)
- **[2.2]** Alan to identify relevant external garden/community associations
- **[2.3]** Alan to liaise with Nick regarding DCGA website ownership and updates
- **[2.4]** Alan/Lucas to implement generic email contact addresses for committee roles on website and to use in future comms
- **[2.5]** Trevor to transfer ICO contact point ownership to Lucas

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3. AGM 2026 Minutes

Discussion Summary

- What are best practices for managing minutes produced from a previous AGM.

Agreed (unanimous)

- 2026 AGM minutes to be carried forward unedited and labelled as "DRAFT" wherever shared or published until 2027 AGM.
- Objections may be logged up to their formal approval at the 2027 AGM.

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4. Annual fees past due

Discussion Summary

- Outstanding dues from proprietors and associate members noted.
- Need for structured and consistent approach to recoup fees and establish a precedent.

Agreed (unanimous)

- Treasurer to lead on debtor strategy, supported by historical research and analysis.

Actions

- **[4.1]** Trevor to review past correspondence and historic accounts with Alan W
- **[4.2]** Trevor to visit archives, review historical DCGA minutes, and collect evidence on what precedents there have been over the years, not just on debt collection, but also general decision-making and "gentleman's agreements" about how things are run.

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5. Committee Handover & Financial Governance

Discussion Summary

- Updates from all re: the transition from previous committee (ongoing).
- Priority item is the need for clear banking and financial controls.

Agreed (unanimous)

- **Bank signatories x4:** Trevor, Robin, Alan, Jean
- **Approval process:** Initially Committee will trial requiring any 2 signatories, then reevaluate +/- finesse the approach as required.
- **Receipts mandatory for all reimbursements.**

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6. Meeting Management

Discussion Summary

- Practicalities of meetings and general communications with garden users.

Agreed (unanimous)

- Publish minutes and newsletters on website (with redactions where required).

- Consider using social media (eg: private Facebook group) to encourage community awareness of and engagement with garden events and issues.
- Committee meeting frequency: Monthly preferred, minimum quarterly

Next Committee Meetings

- 23 Aug 2026 – 26/3 Douglas Crescent
- 14 Sep 2026 – 28 Douglas Crescent

Actions

- **[6.1]** Once website access is granted, Lucas to update with new contacts and published communications.
- **[6.2]** Lucas will also investigate social media options.

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7. Annual Accounts (2025) & Budget (2026)

Discussion Summary

- Tax liability (Corporation Tax, VAT, rates) for the garden is unclear.
- Ownership and legal/financial status requires further investigation.

Agreed (unanimous)

- Adopt previous committee's proposed budget during the transition period.
- Demonstrate evidence-based position on tax/legal matters.

Actions

- **[7.1]** Trevor to liaise with Simon on tax matters.
- **[7.2]** Alan to raise tax issues with Gardens Association Chairs for advice.

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8. Communication to Proprietors

Actions

- **[8.1]** Alan to draft initial communication/welcome letter to garden users.
- **[8.2]** Lucas to distribute to all garden users asap following Committee members' endorsements.

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9. Governance and Deeds

Discussion Summary

- Modern-standard governance documents will underpin future decision-making for the Committee.
- External reference materials available which could be used to interpret the title deeds which are the foundation of governance.

Actions

- **[9.1]** Jean to share governance flowcharts provided to her by Andy Ellis with the Committee.

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10. Associate Membership

Preamble

- "Associate Member" means a person who does not have the legal right to access the gardens under any title deeds but is granted access to the gardens by the Committee in exchange for an annual fee.

Discussion Summary

- Significant growth in associate membership is well documented.
- Proprietors' concerns about this increase, different interpretations of title deeds and access rights also well documented.
- The R&R Working Group will make clarifying the governance of Associate Membership a priority in their proposal to Proprietors (see Section 2).

Agreed (unanimous)

- In the interim, while the R&R Working Group prepare their proposal, place a temporary pause on granting any new Associate Memberships.

Actions

- **[10.1]** Trevor to investigate historic committee records to establish precedent of Associate membership and past decisions made about Associates Member access.

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11. Engagement & Polling

Discussion Summary

- The importance of improving communications and opportunities to engage with all garden users is recognised.

Actions

- **[11.1]** Lucas to review communication methods and user preferences
- **[11.2]** Governance Working Group to define the condition(s)/material change that would require the need to poll proprietors.

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12. Chair's Welcome Letter & Projects

Discussion Summary

- Potential projects to include in welcome letter: railings, paths, gate access, water supply, wildflower meadow

Agreed (unanimous)

- Include community input and project suggestions in welcome letter.

Actions

- **[12.1]** Alan to draft letter.
- **[12.2]** Lucas to distribute by 29 June 2026 with Committee's endorsement.
- **[12.3]** Alan to consult on water supply costs and usage.

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13. Reimbursements

Agreed (unanimous)

- Reimbursement to Jean for personally buying the tent/gazebo for the Doggie Bonanza event will be processed once the banking transition is complete.

Actions

- **[13.1]** Jean and Trevor to coordinate on reimbursement.

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14. Any Other Business (AOB)

- **None**

Meeting Close

- **By Chair:** Alan Sibbald

Prepared by: Lucas Nightingale
Endorsed by Committee: 06 July 2026