

+Walthamstow Spade Husbandry Association
Annual General Meeting
Sunday 18 May 2025 12.00pm to 2pm.

Nineteen full members and one associate member completed the register: Graeme Andrews (20); Francis Atkinson (26 & 28); Ron Baldwin (Honorary Member/Raised Beds); Helen Brett (50); Aileen Barrie (27b/30); Beatrice Campbell (23); Peter Carey (Associate) (17) Terry Day (41); Mary Ellison (16/22); Gillian Goodchild (57); Gabriel Gottlieb (91a); Marian Head (66); Toby Jury-Morgan (48); Francis Keegan (70 & 72B) Ian Lamont (50); Peter Prowse (86); Scott Rodgers (84a); Don Spargo (57); Susan Spence (85); Angie Vizard (88).

Introductions:

Eight committee members were present – Angie Vizard (AV) (Chairperson), Terry Day (TD) (Treasurer), Ian Lamont (IL) (Secretary), Beatrice Campbell (BC) (Seed Order), Marian Head (MH) (Membership Secretary); Toby Jury-Morgan (TJM); Gabriel Gottlieb (GG); Graeme Andrews (GA)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from, Bob Baker (41); Mike Lanchin (18); Minaxi Patel (17); Paul Walker (62/64); Makeila Estelle (88); Shelagh Todd (83); Ian Phillips (66)

2. Chairperson's Report and election of new Chair

All Committee members stepped down as the meeting began.

AV gave the Chairperson's Report. AV welcomed the members to the AGM and reminded the meeting that only Ordinary Members of the Association are allowed to vote or stand for office. The Ordinary Members are those named on a tenancy agreement with the charity. There was 1 Associate Member present.

AV reflected on the year. Key points;

- The growing season was wet, got off to a slow start and there were lots of snails and slugs.
- There seem to have been less break-ins, none to the committee's knowledge during the year since the last AGM, with nothing valuable taken.
- Please notify the committee if you have a break-in or are aware of any holes in the fence.
- If your plot adjoins the site boundary, please allow brambles to grow up the fence.
- Asbestos: Aileen arranged for City of London to come and get some asbestos from her plot. They will take small amounts. You need to double bag it yourself.
- Please notify the committee if you have any asbestos on your plot.
- The Sunflower Competition was a really good idea, but it didn't quite work.

- AV stated that she was interested in competitions and social events to foster a sense of community.
- There will be an Apple Day (provisionally scheduled for 14 September 2025).
- At the last Apple Day we made 3 gallons of cider.
- The cider was drunk at the Fireworks night.
- The Fireworks night was also a great success and included a sing-song around the fire.
- The 2025 Fireworks night is scheduled for Saturday 8 November 2025.
- City of London cut back the verges along the lane in January.
- The mains water tanks were all cleaned by members of the committee.
- Mains water tank No.6 (the one nearest the bottom gate) had a leak. AV announced that she fixed this herself yesterday (Saturday 17 May).
- There was a manure delivery in February. It was quite dry, so the truck got down the lane without difficulty.
- AV will try to schedule a further delivery for later in the year.
- Woodchip deliveries are coming regularly.
- BC managed to dig a channel by the top gate to divert rain away from the gate. This, the dry weather and the attempts to expose the drop-pinhole or make a better one have made it easier to use the drop pin. The area around the gate has been better.
- Please take care with the padlocks.
- The site WhatsApp chat has been a great success. The committee will try to put relevant messages through the chat. We will continue to follow up via email as well.
- There were thank-yous to the Committee, to Paul Gasson for helping with the water, to Francis Atkinson for mowing the grass and to Aileen Barrie for her continuing help on a variety of matters.

Election of Chair: **Angie Vizard**
 Nominated by: Gabriel Gottlieb
 Seconded by: Aileen Barrie

Unopposed

In Favour: 19, Abstentions: 0, Against: 0. Unanimous. **Angie Vizard** was elected Chairperson.

3. Treasurer's Report

TD made her report:

Income and Expenditure

- The Association's income was very similar to 2023. However, income exceeded expenditure by £1,266.33 at the end of our 2024 financial year, as opposed to a small deficit of £2.19 in 2023. The financial year coincides with the calendar year.
- This was mainly because we had a very small water bill in 2024. This is felt to be a bit of an anomaly which stems from Castle Water balancing the bills. The Water Bill works off an estimate and our estimate tends to be high because of our seasonal use. 2024 was also relatively wet.
- TD stated that the unit price for water was rising generally. She would expect the bill in a normal year to be about £1,500. We can expect a larger bill in 2025.
- The main source of income was subscriptions (£1,972). The seed order (£154.25) and the trading hut (£451.53) make important contributions.
- The main expenses (apart from water) are keys and locks.
- We are members of the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and the National Allotment Society (NAS). We get our public liability insurance through RHS, which makes that membership worthwhile. TD also feels it's important to support the NAS which campaigns on behalf of allotments. TD said that she will try to circulate details of the benefits available to our Association members including the website log ins.

Balance Sheet

- The Association has total assets of £11,154.75. This includes cash at bank of £10,500.
- TD invited the meeting to note the value put on the lawnmower, which depreciates at 25% per year.
- TD told the meeting that our strategy generally is to build up a reserve year on year in case something goes wrong with the water.
- TD made clear that the committee wanted to make the Charity responsible for security. We can put up panels, but they should be paying for them.

Approval

- TD thanked BC who had audited the accounts.
- The meeting voted unanimously in favour of the motion to accept the accounts (19 in favour, none against, no abstentions).

The accounts were approved.

Actions: TD to look at publicising what might be available to Association members via RHS and NAS and to see if the site login could be made available more widely.

4. Matters Arising from 2024 AGM

- **Skip Hire**

We did hire a skip in August 2025. This was organised by TJM. This was aimed at helping plottolders who have inherited and/or historic waste on their plots. This was a great success and despite turning up three and a half hours late it was filled very quickly. The plan is to hire another skip on 7 June 2025. It will be on the same lines, which TJM feels worked well; a wait and load service; first come, first served; when it's done, it's done; no organic waste, nothing compostable or burnable; don't leave waste by the gate.

There was question about where the waste goes. It is sorted. They are a licensed contractor. Members are encouraged to take for themselves things they can use that may otherwise go in the skip.

There was also comment about the area by the trading hut which has become a dumping ground for unwanted items. A notice has been put up asking plottolders to take items back if they are not claimed. TD wanted to stress that this area should be used for items of horticultural relevance. TD felt that WhatsApp might be a better way to swap items.

- **Committee Vacancies**

After last year's AGM, the committee was still missing a site officer. The hope is that the post will be filled in this AGM. If it is not, a further communication will follow with a job description.

- **The Lane**

The lane has been better during 2024 and into early 2025. The committee have continued to fill in holes with gravel where we can and when we have it. There has been a further delivery of gravel which will be added to the worst bits of the lane when it is a bit wetter. We also have some rubble to act as a base-layer. That may need to be broken up with a sledgehammer. The weather had also been a bit dryer and City of London have kept up with maintaining the verges and have evened out the surface. There seem to have been some small improvements in the ditches. Aileen has also been cutting the verges every few weeks. Overall the meeting agreed the condition on of the lane was improved.

- **The Lawn Mower**

There was a question about the lawn mower. It was stressed that the mower was not communal. Using the mower on your own plot was a perk of doing the communal mowing. The mower is due a service. Francis is due to take it in shortly.

- **Water Conservation**

GG spoke about his plans for the water conservation role.

- Encourage more water collection on site. It will be closer to your plot and rainwater is better for plants.
- Encourage structures off which water can be collected. A cover on a compost heap was mentioned.
- Looking out for material including containers, for example retired wheelie bins.
- Looking for free or discounted water butts.
- Aileen has guttering, brackets, downpipes and connectors.
- Will be investigating the possibility of council funding.
- Members should report items that are of use that they see on the streets using WhatsApp. GG can arrange to pick them up. TJM mentioned seeing the occasional galvanised tank being thrown out.
- Looking at collecting rainwater off the trading hut with some sort of slanted roof. Work parties may be needed.
- The thousand litre tank at the Greenwood Avenue Garden was mentioned as an example of what can be done with water funding.
- There is a councillor who is a plotholder.

- **Gate**

Some members mentioned struggling with the padlock on the top gate. It was noted that the gate was not aligned as it has a bent bolt. To unlock that gate it needs to be pushed or pulled past true to unfasten and then pushed back to true to secure the drop pin. It was agreed to consider compiling some sort of instructions for the gate. Aileen pointed out that one of the reasons the gate is distorted is because it is not secured with the pin

Actions:

- **Confirm arrangements for the Skip.**
- **Email on the site officer vacancy with Job description.**
- **Further work on the lane incl. gravel spreading.**
- **Mower service.**
- **Monitor Progress, Actions and work parties related to Water Conservation**
- **Gate - Instructions**

5. Election of Officers

Treasurer: **Terry Day**

Nominated by: Marian Head
Seconded by: Francis Atkinson

Unopposed

In Favour: 19, Abstentions: 0, Against: 0 - Unanimous. **Terry Day was elected Treasurer.**

Secretary: **Ian Lamont**

Nominated by: Angie Vizard
Seconded by: Aileen Barrie

Unopposed

In Favour: 19, Abstention: 0, Against: 0 – Unanimous. **Ian Lamont was elected Secretary.**

Site Officer: **Vacant**

There were no nominations for site officer. The post was left vacant.

Trading Hut: **Paul Walker**

Nominated by: Terry Day
Seconded by: Graeme Andrews

Unopposed

In Favour: 19, Abstention: 0, Against: 0 – Unanimous. **Paul Walker was elected as the officer in charge of the Trading Hut.**

Seed Order: **Beatrice Campbell**

Nominated by: Aileen Barrie
Seconded by: Graeme Andrews

Unopposed

In Favour: 19, Abstention: 0, Against: 0 – Unanimous. **Beatrice Campbell was elected as the officer in charge of the Seed Order**

Social Secretary: **Makeila Estelle**

Nominated by: Angie Vizard
Seconded by: Toby Jury Morgan

Unopposed

In Favour: 19, Abstention: 0, Against: 0 – Unanimous. **Makeila Estelle was elected Social Secretary.**

Membership Secretary: **Marian Head**

Nominated by: Gabriel Gottlieb
Seconded by: Toby Jury-Morgan

Unopposed

In Favour: 19, Abstention: 0, Against: 0 – Unanimous. **Marian Head was elected Membership Secretary.**

Conservation Officer: **Angie Vizard**

Nominated by: Graeme Andrews
Seconded by: Aileen Barrie

Unopposed

In Favour: 19, Abstention: 0, Against: 0 – Unanimous. **Angie Vizard was elected Conservation Officer.**

IT Officer: **Mina Patel**

Nominated by: Toby Jury-Morgan
Seconded by: Terry Day

Unopposed

In Favour: 19, Abstention: 0, Against: 0 – Unanimous. **Mina Patel was elected IT Officer.**

Water Conservation Officer: **Gabriel Gottlieb**

Nominated by: Graeme Andrews
Seconded by: Toby Jury-Morgan

Unopposed

In Favour: 19, Abstention: 0, Against: 0 – Unanimous. **Gabriel Gottlieb was elected Water Conservation Officer.**

Committee Member without Portfolio: **Toby Jury-Morgan**

Nominated by: Aileen Barrie
Seconded by: Angie Vizard

Unopposed

In Favour: 19, Abstention: 0, Against: 0 – Unanimous. **Toby Jury-Morgan was elected as a Committee Member Without Portfolio.**

Committee Member without Portfolio: Graeme Andrews

Nominated by: Angie Vizard

Seconded by: Marian Head

Unopposed

In Favour: 19, Abstention: 0, Against: 0 – Unanimous. **Graeme Andrews was elected as a Committee Member Without Portfolio.**

6. 2025 Proposals

Fencing Issues: “To prevent accident and injury for those entering the site without permission, the committee should pursue fencing issues with the allotment manager as soon as a new allotment manager is in place”

Proposer: Layla Raina

IL started out by explaining that in response to a request for proposals, Layla had responded with this subject to discuss. IL said that he had altered the original to turn it into a proposal that could be voted on. He had tried to keep the sense of the original. He had asked Layla whether she was happy with the proposal but had not received a reply.

Layla was not present to talk about the proposal but near neighbours of hers were present to express similar concerns.

The original email read as follows:

“I would like to express my concern regarding the safety of the children from the flats coming into Allotment. They continue to use the same point of entry, plot 87b behind the yellow shed. They mainly come over to retrieve their ball but start to have a wander and a nosy around while they’re here. I’m concerned for the safety as climb over tall brambles to get in then when wonders there are many potential hazards like tools in undergrowth, holes and uneven ground hidden by undergrowth. And many more potential hazards.

It was first reported by plot 83 on WhatsApp group on 12th May 2024. Plot 85 has mentioned it to a committee member around the same time. On 12th May 2024 holes in fences were fixed by volunteers and committee members. Unfortunately, the one at the end of 87b behind the yellow fence was breached again within a months the children were coming over again. I mentioned it WhatsApp at the beginning of October.

On 17 October Graham Andrews did a whole perimeter check before reporting to site manager. Would it be possible to know the outcome?

From early 2025, the children have been coming in again. A few plot holders surround that area have seen them coming a few times.

We are very concerned for their safety and hope that part of them fence can be fixed permanently.”

Susan Spence stated that following the repairs last year, bolts had been taken. An adult has clearly bent and pushed the wire aside. A doorway has effectively been cut in the block and mesh.

Ideas for dealing with the situation.

- Rebolt and Glue the bolts.
- Contact the Council – would they repair the palisade fence.
- A work party could use the fence that is behind the trading hut.
- A notice on the fence

It was pointed out how dangerous the site is for children. There is the possibility of the association being held liable for any accident.

It was felt that it was up to charity to secure the site. There is no allotment manager at the moment, but there is a widespread feeling that when there is, we should be writing to them to make these points.

The vote: In Favour: 19, Abstention: 0, Against: 0 – Unanimous. **The proposal was passed.**

7. Any Other Business

- **Mains Water Tanks** – It was pointed out that some members were unhappy with the rate that the top mains water tanks refilled. Aileen stated that was a feature of how the system worked. It fills from the bottom up. This means that during periods of heavy use it can take time for the top tanks to refill. This is unfortunate, but there is nothing to be done. It is a lot better than it was. We should consider a WhatsApp/email message to explain and ask members not to mess around with the mains water tanks.
- **Muntjac Deer** - Some meeting attendees expressed frustration that deer were nibbling young plants. They can be aggressive and have attacked dogs. They carry ticks that spread Lyme's disease. Improvements to the perimeter may make access to the site more difficult, but it may be impossible to keep them out.
- **Problem Tree** – Aileen mentioned a large problem tree adjacent to her plot. It is casting a shadow. The plotholder does not want it. It is too large to remove. The committee agreed that it was something that could be taken up with the charity when there was a new Allotment Manager. AV agreed to get a quote for the removal of the tree.

Actions:

Mains Water Tanks – Consider an information email/WhatsApp on the water tanks.
Tree Quote - Pursue the tree with the new allotment manager.

8. The meeting broke up at 13.52

9. The 2025 subs day is scheduled provisionally for Sunday 1 February 2026.

10. The 2025 AGM is scheduled provisionally for Sunday 17 May 2026.

