HASLEMERE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

12TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
4:00 pm Sunday 19 April 2026
Searchlight Trading Hut, 84a Haslemere Avenue, London W7 2AU

Attendees

Cornelia Perquin (H7A, Chair), Julia Sarson (H62A, Secretary), Mike Scott (H39B, Vice-Chair), Ann Tierney (H58A, Treasurer), Sara Constable (H30B. Committee), Dagmar Gauweiler (H19A, Committee), Colin Hewson (H42A, Committee), Letizia Tiley (H50A, Committee), Lara Ward (Gardening Club, Assists Committee) Stuart Alexander (H42B), Richard Bourchier (H70B), Gillian Brown (H34A), Nigel Carn (H58A), Debbie Coates (H47A), Helen de Jiminez (H28B), Johan Ditmar (H36A), Gail Freeman (H45A), Len Harding (H23B), Harold Henry (H16), Tony Hurle (H29A), Justin Johnson (H37B), Chie Katsurai (H51A), John McArthur (H14A), Julie Perkins (H33B), Kiki Roberts (H37A), Mike Reeves (H43, Helper), Vinka Reeves (H43), Rachel Walkowiak (H62B)

Apologies for absence No apologies

Meeting opened at 4:08 pm

1 Minutes of the AGM on 28 April 2024
The 2024 Minutes were approved with no alterations.

Minutes of the previous AGM on 13 April 2025
The 2025 Minutes were approved with no alterations.

2 Report of the Committee on the previous year's activity and results

Chair's Report - Cornelia Perquin

Our landlord, Pathways, agreed that the Haslemere Allotment Association will oversee their site. The smooth operation of our Association—covering project management, site maintenance, and organising events and workdays—relies on the time and dedication of the committee members, supported by fellow plot holders. After the last AGM, you might remember that a group of mainly fairly new committee members started here with good intentions, little experience, and big shoes to fill, as the previous committees had achieved so much. Among us, we still needed to appoint a new Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Now, we work together as a cohesive team. We trust and value each other, and everything is going well. I am proud to stand here as the Chair of that committee. I'll begin by reviewing the past year, but I will hand over to some other committee members to fill you in, so you can see a bit more from us, as we will all stand for re-election. Colin, the membership secretary, arranged for you all to sign a register on arrival. The Secretary, Julia, will take minutes. The topics related to site management and maintenance will be presented by the Site Manager, Vice-Chair Mike. Letizia will inform you about the plot letting. Some questions you might have after my report could be answered in their reports or later in the meeting's agenda. Therefore, I suggest we invite your questions and remarks at the end of all these reports.

A lot can happen in a year, not only the passing of seasons. We received and shared the sad news of Steven Embleton's passing on 14th February. Steve (Plot 50A) had been a plot holder since 2020 and will have been a familiar face around the site to many of you. He is very much missed. We followed the family's guidance regarding donations to two charities. Steve's wife, Bernie, will continue gardening on their plot.

Winners, and a wake-up call

Haslemere entered the Cultivating Ealing Allotments competition again last summer. Their committee was pleased to inform us that Haslemere has been highly commended in Cultivating Ealing's 2025 Allotments competition for Large Sites. The judges were impressed by the high productivity and variety of crops across the site, the use of the communal buildings for spare plants, and site-wide awareness of biodiversity. They also noted uncultivated plots. A few individual plot holders competed in the Small Allotments category. They achieved good results, from being Commended and Highly Commended to our star plot holder, Al Mohammadi (5B), who secured third place. Congratulations to all our prize-winning plot holders!

That the overall site has been Highly Commended is, of course, not a bad result at all, but as we think it's wonderful, we aim for a higher ranking. After I asked the Cultivating Ealing committee for further advice on how we could improve the site, I received a more specific response, comparing our score to that of the winning large site, Framfield. The big difference that stands out (other than the uncultivated plots) is biodiversity. Many sites are leading plotholders on this by adding pollinating flowers, dead hedges, log piles, ponds and wildlife hedges/corridors in communal spaces. Ascott has a dedicated wildlife plot, Brentham has a wildlife area with a big pond (making use of an area that floods.)

This was a wake-up call for our wildlife project! I'll come back to that under projects and achievements, and again in Future Plans.

The mentioned 'uncultivated plots' is a bigger issue to tackle, as with a long waiting list and the renewed agreement with Pathways, we simply cannot tolerate this. OUr management agreement with Pathways stipulates that:

'Haslemere Allotments Association (the Association) agree to act on behalf of Housing Pathways (Pathways) in the management and maintenance of Haslemere Allotments. The Association will adopt a "three strikes and you are out" policy. Any plotholder who has received two prior written warnings for non-cultivation, and whose plot, upon subsequent inspection, is still found not to meet the required standards—thus warranting a third non-cultivation notice within a five-year period—will instead be issued a termination letter upon the third infraction.'

Please note that the 3rd notice does not offer an opportunity to improve the plot; the termination is effective immediately. Also: We'll be held to a 14-day notice period (reduced from 28 days).

Communication/ Events/ Community engagements

We've continued the previous committee's work to secure ACV (Asset of Community Value) status for our site. This needs to be completed every 5 years. Our application has been sent by Ealing Council to Pathways for comments and it has been renewed. We thank Wendy for her work, which included securing this protected status. Wendy (Plot 8B) has unfortunately resigned at the end of September, due to overload. Dagmar took charge of the clever MailChimp emails from then on.

An example of an activity that is not only heartwarming, welcoming, and inspiring, but also counts towards such an ACV status; on a lovely evening in June, a group of Beavers visited the site. They were accompanied by their leaders, committee members, and three parents, who showed the children their three plots, where they did a little gardening-related activity, and the Anderson Shelter.

As neighbours, HAA and EHAA enjoy a fruitful collaboration. Haslemere Allotment members are automatically members of the Ealing and Hanwell Allotment Association (EHAA)/Searchlight Trading Hut this year, as we were last year. The HAA costs are now £1.00 per member, reduced from £2.00 last year. We can now use this space for committee meetings, including this one, free of charge, and for other horticultural needs.

The plant sale we organised on our allotment site in previous years was held by EHAA here at Searchlight last year. This successful event was supported by generous donations from plot holders, who contributed surplus plants, helped grow plants for sale, and bought their plants here. This year's Community Plant Sale is scheduled for Saturday, 16 May.

The EHAA hosts its Annual Show in the autumn, showcasing vegetables, fruit, flowers, plants, arrangements, and home-baked goods. Congratulations to all our plot holders who entered and won prizes at the 2025 show.

Last July, instead of our usual summer barbecue, HAA organised a 'Bring Your Own' sharing picnic lunch near the communal greenhouse, which was very successful. There was good attendance, and all of you brought plenty of delicious food.

The plotholders' WhatsApp group is expanding and appears to be an effective communication tool.

Communal Projects- Workdays

We had several successful community workdays this year. Much was achieved during those days: The woodchip area has been successfully renewed and widened, partly with a dead hedge, to prevent woodchips from spilling onto the path. We are creating more dead hedges where you can dispose of prunings without burning them. This is not only better for the environment but also minimises the impact of bonfires on the surrounding households. We started clearing/weeding some areas along the main path between the Haslemere gate and the beehotel curve, preparing them for wildlife areas.

An extremely neglected plot was on workdays cleared of the worst of waste and junk to make the tasks for the new plot holder less monumental. Mike will tell more about this.

A big thank you to all plot holders who came to recent work days - you've made a massive difference! Thanks as well for the support with cake and tea here in the Trading hut.

And because there is nothing better than regular activity, we reinstated our monthly community work days! As Saturdays may not suit everyone who wants to take part, we are alternating between Saturday and Sunday from April onwards. You can find these dates and others in our yearly allotment calendar. If every plotholder joins us for one workday a year, we would always have 10 people. We hope to see you on one or more of these days!

The composting toilet on 61B is well organised and operates smoothly. Since Dagmar's remarks at last year's AGM, it is now fully under her control. And yes, you can have the access number if you are willing to take your turn on the rota to keep it clean and tidy.

Plot Letting report - Letizia Tiley

There are 134 MAIN PLOTS, all of which are currently rented.

We have 10 GARDENING CLUB plots of which 9 rented. 1 has just been vacated with the Gardening Club member becoming a plot holder. Three of the beds at Midhurst entrance Gardening Club are smaller than the others. In order to have a fair share, one of the small plots has been divided into two and assigned to each of the two small remaining ones. Due to the reduced number of half plots available this year, Gardening Club members have been offered the possibility of renting their trial bed until they are offered a half plot. The Cardiac group continues to rent a bed on Plot 1B.

There are 4 RAISED BEDS on 48A - 2 rented/ 2 waiting to be let. Communal Greenhouse - all benches rented. Greenhouse tenants should open and shut the windows as appropriate and sweep up any mess.

There are 51 on the waiting list (including 9 gardening club members). The waiting list has decreased due to:
1) the large number of persons that obtained a plot by September 2025.
2) The first 20 people at the top of the waiting list were asked to confirm if they wanted to remain on the list. 9 requested to be removed.
8 new people joined the waiting list this year. The current wait for a plot is around 4 to 5 years approximately.

Site Manager's Report - Mike Scott

When I walk around the site, I am always so impressed by the standard of the plots and I think that overall, we have a great allotment site that is not over officiously managed, is friendly, welcoming and has a sense of

community that is steadily growing. Ever since taking on the role of "Site Manager", I can't help thinking that it is far too grand a title. The reality is that I do what I can, when I can, to try to make sure that plot holders can do what they want to do, which is to grow stuff on their plots. By and large that is not too onerous a task because the vast majority of plot holders do an excellent job and have well managed and productive plots. True we are a mixed ability bunch so the standard of plots ranges from the fantastic, immaculate and pleasing to the eye, to the more disorderly and maybe on the shabby side but maybe equally productive. But everybody has an allotment in order to grow produce. I have come to see my role more as facilitator than manager.

Locks and security

Much of my time over the last 12 months has been spent dealing with padlock and gate issues. I think that we are getting to the point now where without spending too much money, most plot holders can get in and out without too much stress. I am familiar with the key (no pun intended) issues and have strategies in place to ensure that problems are dealt with before they escalate. I do not see any need to change locks and keys in the medium term and hence there should not be any need for major expenditure. The padlock barrels do become worn over time and need replacing occasionally but this is not a major expenditure (maybe £100 over 3 years, far less than the cost of new padlocks and a complete re-issue of keys). The other issues are; ensuring that the padlocks are regularly lubricated using the specialist oil (Letizia and Cornelia are now honorary padlock lubricators) and making sure that the padlocks do not become detached from the bolts and stolen or lost.

Many thanks to Michael Lyons for his help in securing the fixed ground bolt on the midhurst gate.

Please do not use WD40 or other non-specialist oils on the padlocks and please take care when returning the padlocks to the bolt (There is a "right"way.)

Another issue is the state of the boundary fences. We recently were obliged to upgrade a section of fence near the Haslemere gate near the wood chip pile. This has improved the look of the area and helped with both security and Health and Safety.

We have a sinking fund held by Pathways to cover the cost of upgrading the boundary as it is clearly insecure in several places. Deciding how, when and where we upgrade our boundary fence is an issue the committee will be looking at in the coming year. I remind plot holders that the tenancy agreement states that all plot holders should only use the main gates.

Water

Twice a year the water has to be turned on and off - on in April then off again in October. My thanks to Ian Hayes for his assistance in assuring that this gets done. As far as I am aware, there are no major issues with the dip tanks functionality though I acknowledge that close proximity to a dip tank is a real bonus whereas some are unfortunate and have a bit of a trek to make. Unfortunately, this is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future as there are no plans to extend the pipe network. We should all be making strenuous efforts to minimise the amount of watering we do and also to avoid situations where the dip tanks overflow i.e. be vigilant. I would be very surprised if the charge for water doesn't rise in the near future and economy is the only way we can minimise the impact.

Trees

We have as usual used a local tree surgeon to take care of our communal trees i.e.. those which are not the responsibility of individual plot holders. This is an ongoing process and there will be more work done in the coming months. We have put tenants in need of tree pruning services in direct contact with the tree surgeon rather than acting as agents so as to avoid complications.

Several trees were noted to have been too stressed by the summer drought for pruning so this has been postponed. There was also quite a large infestation of apple tree moths last spring. Attempts were made to limit this. Plot holders are advised to be vigilant and remove caterpillars at an early stage.

Reminder that it is the responsibility of each plot holder to ensure that their trees are well managed i.e. kept to 2.5 metres max height, thinned and pruned regularly and kept disease free.

Paths

An ongoing issue. I would start by reminding everybody that anybody using the site whether tenant, helper family or visitor should be aware that it is an agricultural site and as such there are potential H&S risks including trip hazards. We all use the site at our own risk.

Reminder It is the responsibility of every plot holder to keep their plot as safe as possible, and this includes the paths between plots. They need to be kept passable so that others may use them with a barrow if required. Although the tenancy agreement stipulates 40cms we feel that 60cms. minimum is more practical. This will be included as part of plot inspections.

The committee tries to manage the 3 main East West paths and thanks as usual to John McArthur for his ceaseless efforts with the mower and strimmer. There are areas which do need attention and we will be looking at ways to improve them including the increasingly irregular central East-West path.

Skips and Rubbish Clearance

Many hours of effort this year have been spent transforming one plot that was left vacant following eviction, into a workable plot that could be re-let. The plot was left in a totally un-cultivatable state.

It is not my role to comment on how the situation was allowed to develop over many years or what circumstances led to the tenants allowing it to reach the state it did. I merely report on the work which had to be done to clear it back to a reasonable state.

I estimate about 50 hours of volunteer labour time, possibly more. The removal of 10-15 jumbo bags of green waste to the Greenford site. The best part of 3 skips full of junk. I could list it but won't. Happily, the plot in question has been merged with an adjacent plot to create two new plots which have been re-let.

The lessons for the committee are that we should take steps to ensure that no plot is ever allowed to reach such a state again. This may mean intervention at an earlier stage and will definitely mean that inspections of plots should be more rigorous as has been referred to by the chair. But there is also a lesson for all of us as plot holders. Every time we consider bringing an item that "might just be useful" onto our plot. Think again. 5 years in the future, it may cause a problem. Junk builds up. Don't let your plot become a hoarding site.

These plots are not "ours" no matter how long we have held them for. At some point in the future, we will have to return them to the community for re-letting and we must ensure that what we hand back will not need hours of work returning it to good working condition.

Reminder No bonfires between March 31st and October 1st

Finally… My thanks to all the volunteers who have given up their time to help improve the state of the site in one way or another. I would urge all our plot holders to consider giving up a bit of time in the coming months and years to help improve this wonderful allotment site. Keep an eye open for Volunteer and Community sessions.

3 Accounts for the previous year

The Association's accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024 have been uploaded to the HAA website. These were approved by those who had been present at the meeting.

Accounts for the last year

The Association's accounts for the year ended 31 December 2025 have been uploaded to the HAA website and a paper copy was circulated. The accounts were approved by those present.

4 Motions submitted by members

No motions had been submitted for discussion.

5 Plans for the coming year

Inspired by a plotholder who held a gathering for friends last year, we are planning a Midsummer Social for plotholders on Saturday 20 June. More information about that to follow.

We would like to continue to increase Biodiversity through our communal areas and on plots so that we can apply for status as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

Questions and Comments from the Floor

At the end of her report, Cornelia invited questions and comments from the floor about the committee's presentation.

Julie Perkins requested that the jobs lined up for workdays be publicised beforehand, so people would know if they had the necessary skills/strength to help. Answer - there is usually a range of jobs to suit all ages/abilities but the committee could include a list of the planned jobs when we send out the notification of the workday via email and the plotholders' Whatsapp group.

Richard Bourchier asked if the Plotholders Whatsapp group could be better advertised to ensure all plotholders are aware. Answer - all plotholders (other than those who have unsubscribed) receive emails via Mailchimp, and our next communication will invite anyone not yet in the plotholders' whatsapp group to join.

Helen asked who pays for water. Answer- Pathways takes payment out of the rent money from Haslemere. If the cost of water goes up, Pathways may increase our plot rent.

Vinka suggested that with the increasing challenges of climate change, everyone should be encouraged to store rainwater by connecting guttering to their sheds, and having water storage on their plots..

Rachel suggested encouraging hedgehogs by working with neighbours to cut holes in the perimeter fences to allow hedgehogs to travel round. Cornelia responded that this could be done in the future as part of our work to increase biodiversity. No one present had seen a hedgehog on the site recently.

Chie asked whether there are plans to replace communal trolleys. Answer - due to the misuse of trolleys and the expense of replacing them, the committee has decided not to replace any more trolleys. It is possible to borrow a trolley from the Searchlight hut when open.

Debbie asked why the inspection criteria have become stricter. Answer - it is due to the renegotiation of the management agreement with Pathways.

Chie asked how to volunteer on site/at workdays etc. Answer - we send out emails about workdays, but offers of help at other times are always welcome. People wanting to volunteer should email enquiries@haslemereallotments.org.uk

Stuart pointed out that the sinking fund payment from Pathways has remained the same for the last 3 years i.e. £5488. Pathways has advised us that the balance in the sinking fund is £19,000. Stuart proposed that the committee request that Pathways transfers this money to the HAA bank account to be used for the renewal of fencing as required.

6 Committee members

Debbie Anjorin and Wendy Nayyar have left the committee. Cornelia thanked them for their much-appreciated help.

The following were standing for re-election to represent the Association for the coming year 2026-2027:

- Cornelia Perquin, Chair (Plot 7A)
- Mike Scott, Vice Chair (Plot 39B)
- Ann Tierney, Treasurer (Plot 58A).
- Julia Sarson, Secretary (Plot 62A)
- Sara Constable, Member (Plot 30B)
- Dagmar Gauweiler, Member (Plot 19A)
- Colin Hewson, Member (Plot 42A)
- Letizia Tiley, Member (Plot 50B)

Johan nominated the candidates, seconded by Vinka. All were approved.

Lara and Hania will continue as co-opted committee members (as gardening club members they cannot be full committee members).

Cornelia thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was closed at 5:16pm