

BROOKFIELD ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION
COMMITTEE MEETING - 13 July 2026

Present: Adrian Harrison (Chair), Dave Hawkins (Treasurer), Sue Bowell, Linda Bondy, Peter Rowe, Orla Flood, Alastair Thomas (Secretary)

Agenda Item 1 - Welcome and apologies from Margaret Almond and Christine Ludlow

1. Good progress has been made together since our last meeting in April, and the agenda for this meeting has been set to review progress of specific areas of work and agree next steps where necessary.

Agenda Item 2 - Minutes from 20 April 2026 and matters arising

2. Agreed, with various issues to be updated and discussed at this meeting. Further review after the meeting found that a date had been recorded incorrectly in para 14; this has now been corrected. **Action - Adrian to put agreed minutes on the Info Hub.**

Agenda Item 3 - Treasurer's Report

3. Dave tabled a report setting out the accounts for the period 1/10/2025 to 12/07/2026. This showed year to date expenditure (YTD) exceeded income by £1130.52. Most rental income comes in the last month of the year. Total financial assets on 12 July were £11859.28, of which £2754.20 were in the current account for general purposes and £432.86 ringfenced for redevelopment of the old trading hut site.

4. YTD expenditure now includes £579.08 for water; this reflects irregular invoicing and is not indicative of annual spend.

5. Income includes £431.63 to date from the Trading Hut, and £155 from the Arts Trail.

6. The Lottery Grant is identified separately within the accounts, along with expenditure against it, and must be spent by 31st March 2028. A total of £1,029.08 has been spent, leaving a balance of £5280.92

7. There was some discussion about whether rents for 2026/27 should be increased. However, given the 40% increase in rents last year from £50 to £70, it was agreed that rents will be unchanged in the forthcoming year. Half of last year's rent increase (£10) was ringfenced for redevelopment of the old trading hut site; the same ringfence will be applied in 2026/27.

Agenda Item 4 – Date and preparation for Annual General Meeting

8. The AGM will be held on Sunday, 11 October 2026 in the new trading hut. Details will be circulated to ploholders nearer the time, along with an invitation to stand for Officer and Committee posts. Communications about the AGM will be kept separate from Rent Notices. Preparations will be made in line with the Constitution, seeking views from the full Committee where necessary. **Action - Adrian and Alastair to take forward planning for AGM and elections in line with the Constitution**

9. All Committee members present indicated a willingness to continue next year. **Action - Alastair to check on the intentions of absent members.**

Agenda Item 5 - Membership and Plot Inspection Update

10. A delayed plot inspection was done by three plotholders on 5th July. There were two advisory emails requesting improvement sent by Adrian; as yet there have been no responses. Several plotholders had requested exemption from the inspection due to personal circumstances. On the same day, the SMT reduced two large bay laurel trees that exceeded the 8ft height limit in the Rules and Regulations. There are several fruit trees on plots which also exceed this limit, and these have more specific time periods for pruning. The SMT is willing to help with pruning when requested, and to help plotholders prune their fruit trees at the most appropriate time; advice will be put on the Info Hub with an alert by email and WhatsApp. **Action - Adrian to research fruit tree pruning advice and share with plotholders.**

11. Peter reported that there are 10 (?) names on the Waiting List, some of which have asked to be deferred until next year. It was agreed that the Waiting List should remain open.

Agenda Item 6 - Site Maintenance Team update

12. Since the last meeting, the SMT has cut back overgrown areas on the far side, and sprayed the Japanese Knotweed on Plot 49B. A work party in June was cancelled due to an extreme weather warning. The most recent work party tidied up around the front gate and the slope leading to the new trading hut. Paths and communal areas have been strimmed to keep the grass and weeds at bay, and some overhanging trees and shrubs have been cut back too.

13. Following a leak during the June heatwave, there was an issue over the maintenance of the hose which feeds water across the Ching to the far side. The SMT repaired the leak and restored the water supply promptly. There was some doubt over the origins of this hose and responsibility for its maintenance. However, following enquiries of previous site managers, and given that plotholders on the far side pay the same rent and can therefore expect similar amenities to those on the main site, it was confirmed that maintenance is a SMT responsibility and this must be reflected in the Rules and Regulations. **Action: Alastair to draft amendment to Rule and Regulations, and notify far side plotholders about this arrangement.**

14. The future use of the old trading hut site was discussed under A.O.B (see below), although the SMT's intention to incur the cost of hiring a skip for clearing the contents of the hut was noted.

Agenda item 7 - Wilder About Highams Park

15. In Margaret's absence, Alastair reported that:

- The Partnership Agreement with HPPG and the Ching Action Group has now been signed.
- Grant funding has been spent on the installation of wooden toadstool seating and the purchase of a bat detector.

- The Nocturnal Monitoring Group has met twice and carried out one sunset bat monitoring survey, which recorded 14 bat sightings. Sunset bat monitoring surveys are planned for the last Thursday of each month until October; the June survey was cancelled due to an extreme weather warning.
- LBWF is still unable to provide any indication of when its contractors might reduce our veteran oaks and provide some felled timber to use in line with project goals.
- HPPG has just become aware of Corporation of London intentions to fell some local oak trees, with the potential to supply timber for use in place of that we expect from LBWF activity.

16. It was agreed that, with a deadline to spend grant funding by March 2028, we should pursue the option of using local felled oak from the Corporation rather than simply waiting for LBWF to clarify its own plans for the trees on our site. **Action - Alastair to explore the Corporation of London option via Gordon Turpin of HPPG and advise LBW that we are doing so, and keep Margaret informed.**

Agenda item 8 - Events and Fundraising

17. The Autumn BBQ was set for Sunday, 13th September. This date avoids a clash with the weekend of the Picnic in the Park (6th September).

18. Following discussion about the potential of a summer family day picnic and of winter gatherings which might be both social and educational, it was agreed that a short survey of plotholder interest would help us plan better for further events. These could incorporate speakers provided through OrganicLea (see A.O.B. below), and need not be held on site. The survey could also help shape plans for the Autumn BBQ. **Action - Orla to prepare a draft to circulate for review before sending out to plotholders.**

Agenda Item 9 - Any Other Business

19. The leak from Armstrong Ave which pools water onto Plot 21 has reappeared. A home test kit has indicated the presence of chemicals associated with a hot tub or jacuzzi; these can be hazardous for crops. Investigations last summer found no conclusive source of this water, and we remain unsure about which property may be the source. Further investigations are necessary: **Action - Adrian to draft a letter to neighbours in Armstrong Ave to make them aware and seek information and/or action; Alastair to ask Ching Action Group for advice on further water testing.**

20. OrganicLea and WildWays collaboration Adrian reported on his meeting with Greg Frey from OrganicLea about the local Wildways Initiative, which has funding from the Mayor of London for a series of workshops with food growers along the River Ching to promote connections with the river, healthy food growing and wellbeing. There is potential for collaboration with other local allotment sites. There was agreement that our site could benefit from being involved. **Action - Adrian and Orla to develop plans so all plotholders can get involved.**

21. Membership of the Thompson & Morgan seeds discount scheme has been arranged by Katy Langley. This is up for annual renewal, having been used by about 10 plotholders in the past year. It was agreed that the Association would renew its membership, keep a small

stock of catalogues in the new trading hut and the greenhouse, and promote awareness amongst ploholders. **Action - Adrian/Peter to take this forward**

22. Padlocks on New Trading Hut - These are sometimes left with the code number tumblers facing upwards, with risk of water damage and seizing up. **Action: Adrian to send polite reminder to all ploholders including trading hut sales force members.**

23. Along with the annual rent notices, there is an annual data protection renewal exercise to protect personal data. The existing google forms based process is clunky and needs improvement. **Action - Adrian and Dave to review processes and design a compliant and more user friendly process and data storage system.**

24. Options for future use of the Trading Hut site were set out in a short paper prepared by Alastair on behalf of the SMT. The intention was to get a steer from the Committee on future use to help build momentum in the project and give a focus for any fundraising. After discussion, the preferred option was a pergola type structure for social events along with a wooden shed for storage of equipment and tools (these might include awnings to use with the pergola). Feasibility of this option cannot be tested until after removal of the existing building. A safety rail is very likely to be necessary, and we need to decide what to do with the exposed vertical Rolled Steel Joists (RSJ). The mini shipping container option was ruled out because of cost and access issues, as was the toilet option. The cost and benefit of having a porta loo on site for events (probably in the car park) should be explored separately. **Action: Alastair to brief SMT and initiate next steps, and to research costs of porta loo hire for events.**

25. Aerial images of the site could be collected through a drone survey. These could be useful in getting a better understanding of the site for promotional, educational and maintenance purposes. It was agreed that this could be useful, but should we proceed we must be compliant with any drone licensing and data protection requirements. Any costs associated with such a survey must be cleared with the Chairman and Treasurer. **Action: Alastair to research and report back to Adrian and David before proceeding.**

Agenda Item 10 - Date and venue of next meeting

Monday, 19th October 2026 at 12:30pm. Venue to be confirmed

Alastair Thomas

Secretary

21 July 2026