

**BROOKFIELD ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION**  
**COMMITTEE MEETING - 21 January 2026**

**Present:** Adrian Harrison (Chair), Sue Bowell, Margaret Almond, Linda Bondy, Peter Rowe, Orla Flood, Alastair Thomas (Secretary)

**Agenda Item 1 - Welcome and apologies** from Dave Hawkins and Christine Ludlow

1. Good progress has been made together since our meeting in October, and the agenda for this meeting has been set to take forward some of the actions we agreed then. Dave has prepared a quarterly report to be tabled at the meeting, and Christine has requested that Alastair put the next edition of the newsletter together on her behalf.

**Agenda Item 2 - Minutes from 21st October 2025 and matters arising**

2. Agreed without further discussion **Action - Adrian to put agreed minutes on the Info Hub**

**Agenda Item 3 - Treasurer's Report**

3. In Dave's absence, his quarterly report was tabled by Alastair. This showed quarterly expenditure exceeded income by £659. Total financial assets on 18 January were £7045.59, of which £3174.84 were in the current account for general purposes and £432.86 ringfenced for redevelopment of the old trading hut site.

4. Expenditure included an annual insurance premium of £577.24 (6.5% increase).

**Action - Dave to let the Committee know the extent of cover under this policy.**

5. Income included £132.50 in rents. These reflect the increase agreed for 2025/26, of which 50% was to be placed within the old trading hut ringfence. **Action - Dave to confirm that this has been done.**

6. Income also came from plotholders' payments for manure bags supplied and delivered by stables next to West Essex Golf Club, and facilitated by Martin Rabenau at no cost to the society. We understand these deliveries will continue, and therefore will not be pursuing any further deliveries from Bywaters (with whom we had some issues last year). With ongoing supply anticipated under these arrangements, we agreed to set charges at 50p a bag with a maximum of ten bags per plot from any delivery. Payment to be made on an honesty basis, with charging to be reviewed at the AGM. **Action - Alastair to let members know of this arrangement through the Newsletter.**

**Agenda Item 4 – Review of Rules for Plotholder and introduction of a Constitution**

7. The Rules for Plotholders are to be reviewed annually. Proposed changes had been circulated with the agenda, with amendments to Rules 6, 10 and 13 and some tidying up of contact details. These proposals were agreed, along with the following additions:

- Rule 13 to include examples of alternative activities to participation in work parties.
- Rule 14 to actively encourage the use of organic and nature friendly feeds and fertilisers. This is intended to promote biodiversity.

- Rule 20 to prohibit bringing bathtubs, sinks and other sanitary fittings on the site. This is intended to reduce health and safety risks to current and future plot holders.

**Action - Adrian to further amend the draft Rules circulated with the agenda, place these on the Info Hub and alert all members through the Newsletter.**

8. The introduction of a Constitution as good practice and as a safeguard for the Committee was agreed. This sets objectives for the society, a transparent approach to management and decision making, and should provide support for any funding applications. The draft Constitution circulated with the agenda is intended to complement the Rules for Plotolders, which are required under its Section 7.

9. Following discussion, the Committee agreed there was no need to consult LBWF over the Constitution and that it was content with the draft subject to one amendment as follows:

- Section 3.10 sets out conditions under which a member's tenancy can be terminated, and how any such decision by the Committee must be communicated. The right of appeal via the next AGM was seen as disproportionate given the potential for significant delay in decision making, with a negative impact on relationships and cultivation of the site whilst the reason for termination remained unresolved. Therefore, the sentence allowing for such an appeal is to be removed.

10. It was agreed that the Constitution is to be adopted, subject to the amendment in Section 3.10, and shared with members for information not for comment or review. **Action - Adrian to further amend the draft Constitution circulated with the agenda, place it on the Info Hub and alert all members through the Newsletter.**

### **Agenda Item 5 - Update Fundraising and Socials**

11. Margaret reported that the bid to the National Lottery funding had been submitted on 11 December 2025, and we can expect to know the outcome within 12 weeks of that date. The bid was made in partnership with the Highams Park Planning Group and the Ching Action Group, and allows for the use of wood from trees both within the site and in the wider community. We still await clear information from LBWF on when our veteran oaks are to be reduced in size.

12. Orla outlined ideas for Events in 2026, including an Open Day as part of the Highams Park Art Trail (1st-17th May), a Trading Hut Opening Day and Coffee Drop (March) and a BBQ & Quiz in September. This was informed by discussions with Sue and Linda about previous years' experience.

- Art Trail - we noted that one of the organisers is also a plotholder and agreed that Orla approach them to co-ordinate planning and seek the most suitable date for the open day. We will also approach neighbours in Armstrong Ave (Kathy and Dave) to ask if we can use their electric supply to support activities in the trading shed. Once a date is agreed, the Newsletter will be used to promote the event with plotholders and to encourage participation. We will not be using this event to grow the waiting list

**Action - Orla to take forward, seeking support from others as necessary**

- Trading Hut Opening Day - this will be subject to discussion with Lauren (Trading Hut manager) about the plan for the coming season. The lack of electricity in the trading hut may mean that refreshments involve cold rather than hot drinks. **Action - Adrian to finalise trading hut plans with Lauren, and report key date back to Orla**
- BBQ and Quiz date in September to be agreed. We don't really know the appetite amongst plotholders for other socials, and wondered about a summer family picnic or educational talks. **Action - Orla to seek views through a short survey and report back with recommendations.**

#### **Agenda Item 6- Membership and Plot Inspection Update**

13. Peter reported that he has audited the waiting list and has contacted all 15 on the list to check their interest and manage expectations about when a plot may become available. The waiting times are likely to be quite long, so in line with the LBWF we propose to close the list to any new additions. The Google forms format had proved problematic, so he proposed migrating the waiting list and associated personal data to an Excel spreadsheet, with a six monthly check of continued interest in remaining on the list. There was some discussion about whether people on the waiting list should complete some kind of questionnaire to assess the likelihood of them being a good plotholder, but no agreement on what criteria might be valid; it seemed more appropriate to discuss the necessary commitment when at the point of viewing a plot. **Action — Peter to manage the waiting list within these guidelines.**

14. Adrian reported that following the October plot inspection there remained one plotholder who had not responded to email requests to improve the cultivation of their plot in line with the required standards in the Rules for Plotholders. The Committee agreed in principle that this tenancy could be terminated, subject to checking with Dave for any additional details for making contact in case the email address was no longer correct. **Action - Adrian to follow up with plotholder and report on outcome**

#### **Agenda Item 7 - Site Maintenance Team update**

15. There had been one work party since the last Committee meeting, which concentrated on improving the surface of the main paths in advance of winter. The SMT has identified a series of tasks, including doing a sweep of all parts of the site clearing any overhanging branches, debris and hazards to plotholders. There will also be some discussion with the Ching Action Group about doing a river bank clear up and wildlife survey. Details of work parties will be shared with plotholders in due course.

#### **Agenda Item 8 - Any Other Business**

16. Linda raised concerns that a plotholder may have been written to in error following the last plot inspections. It seems that no offence has been taken by that individual, but to minimise the risk of any future misunderstandings the outcome of plot inspections will be documented and shared with the Committee.

17. Adrian reported that LBWF has been doing a survey of garages in its ownership, and requested access to the site to search for five "missing" garages. These turned out to be two which stand at the back of houses on Armstrong Avenue, alongside the footprint of three

others which were demolished when the new trading shed was built and the adjoining car park was created.

**Agenda Item 9 - Date and venue of next meeting**

Monday, 20th April 2026 at 12:30pm. 22 Beech Hall Road, London E4 9NX.

**Alastair Thomas**

**Secretary**

**24 October 2026**