

BROOKFIELD ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION
COMMITTEE MEETING - 20 April 2026

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

Agenda Item 1 - Welcome and apologies from Christine Ludlow

1. Good progress has been made together since our last meeting in January, 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 21 January 2026 and matters arising

2. Agreed, with a request that Alastair circulates details of the Association's insurance cover that Dave had previously provided to the Committee **Actions - Adrian to put agreed minutes on the Info Hub, and Alastair to circulate a summary of the insurance policy.**

Agenda Item 3 - Treasurer's Report

3. Dave tabled a report setting out the accounts for the period 1/10/2025 to 20/04/2026. This showed year to date expenditure exceeded income by £698. Total financial assets on 20 April were £13097.94, of which £2960.79 were in the current account for general purposes and £432.86 ringfenced for redevelopment of the old trading hut site. The Lottery Grant of £6280.00 is sitting in the current account; this is because there is a 35 day notice period on the savings account with only 2% interest, which is insufficient to compensate for any difficulties in making prompt payments to our suppliers.

4. Expenditure in this period does not include any payments for water; the invoicing for water is irregular and none has been received to date.

5. Income included £212.00 for manure and £219.29 from the first two weeks of Trading Hut opening.

6. The Lottery Grant will be identified separately within the accounts, along with expenditure against it. It must be spent by 31st March 2028. A Partnership Agreement with HPPG and the Ching Action Group (CAG) will set out procedures for approving expenditure with a requirement to be signed off by Adrian and Margaret. Further detail is set out below under Item 5.

Agenda Item 4 – Membership and Plot Inspection Update

7. Peter reported that following a review, there were 15 names on the Waiting List. Sharing the site Rules with people interested in joining the waiting list had helped them better understand the regular commitment required to maintain a plot. As a result, some have asked to defer their place on the list due to their circumstances. There is a potential for confusion over eligibility because of the long thin shape of LBWF. The bottom end of Leytonstone High Road is within the borough and yet a considerable distance from our site, yet someone living quite close by on the other side of Woodford New Road would be a Redbridge resident. We agreed to take a pragmatic case by case approach to applications.

The Google form is rather clunky and needs review to make it more user friendly. The Waiting List should remain open, and any inquiries made during the Arts Trail Open Day on 2nd May should have their expectations managed and given an email address to which they can apply.

8. Following the plot inspection, there were five requests to improve plots emailed by Adrian. These led to discussions about Plots 12A, 15A and 36B where these plotholders decided to give up their plots. In discussion, it was noted that plotholders were not pre-notified of the exact time of the plot inspection, where previously there had been an open invitation to join the inspection party. This was regrettable and a more precise time will be notified in future. **Action: Peter to ensure future notifications allow for others to join the inspection if they wish.**

9. With Olaf and Sue's recent decision to leave the site and release Plots 14B and 15B, five half plots have become available. One half plot has already been let (15B), and those at the top of the waiting list are being shown the other four with a view to speedy lettings. **Action: Peter to notify changes to plot lettings so that rents can be collected and contact lists updated.**

Agenda Item 5 - Site Maintenance Team update

10. Peter reported that there had been one work party since the last Committee meeting, this had seen about ten plotholders tidy up the community area on Plot 7 and the memorial orchard on Plot 3. In addition, the SMT had cut back excessive ivy growing on trees against the top path, and pruned back trees overhanging sheds and the path itself.

11. Further work is planned to treat the Japanese Knotweed on Plot 49B, cut back the bramble and nettle growth beyond that area, and possibly help rehome the excessive leaf fall on plot 47. The SMT will also be considering further work to restore the pond, and a plan for the safe demolition of the old trading hut and subsequent use of the site. It was agreed that, to support any fundraising for future use of that area, we need to have a clear vision of what improvements we want to make and why they are a good idea. **Action: SMT to develop ideas for discussion at next meeting**

Agenda item 6 - Wilder About Highams Park

11. Margaret reported the successful bid to the National Lottery Community Fund for grant funding, and was thanked for her hard work to build the project. She explained the background to the project name. Previous funding to the HPPG for community sculptures etc had been known as Wild About Highams Park; this funding is building on that foundation, hence it is to be known as Wilder About Highams Park.

12. We have met our partners HPPG and the CAG to confirm distribution of the £6280 across our agreed activities, and to agree management and financial arrangements. We will hold partnership meetings every six months to review progress. A draft Partnership Agreement is being finalised to document these arrangements; as Treasurer, Dave has been consulted. Gordon Turpin of HPPG will lead on publicity, using the HP Portal, and tag the Community Fund as required. Gordon will also use his experience to commission work and secure suitable local timber for the project. LBWF has decided to leave more of our veteran oaks in situ, rather than reduce them to monoliths, and Alastair is in regular contact with the

tree officers over the timing of this work. Janet Laban of the Ching Action Group is leading on the bat and owl boxes and monitoring (to be known as Nocturnal Monitoring) and has convened an initial meeting for volunteers. Alastair will lead on the impact assessment.

13. We now have publicity materials, including banners, and will use these to promote the project and acknowledge the support of the Community Fund. They will be used at the Art Trail Open Day (2nd May), Listen to the Ching (6th May) and the Spring Festival (17th May). If the Association is not able to field a representative for the Spring Festival, the CAG will promote the project from its stall.

14. The first installation using this grant happened on 16th May, when the HP Snedders installed five wooden toadstools carved by Marshall Lambert in Brookfield Meadow.

Action - Margaret to finalise the Partnership Agreement following comments from the partnership members.

Agenda item 7 - Events and Fundraising

15. Orla reported that the survey of ploholders had received about 30 responses which were submitted on an anonymous basis. There were offers to volunteer help with events from 12 people. The greatest interest was shown in the Autumn BBQ and the Arts Trail, with some interest expressed for informal talks and/or coffee mornings. We could test out having an allotment related talk at the BBQ, either alongside or as an alternative to a quiz. With the recent success in securing a Community Fund grant, if our events are intended to be fundraisers we need some clarity over why we are fundraising. For example, is it to install solar power capability or for development of the old trading hut area. In discussion, there was no clear position that emerged. There is, however, an expectation that the SMT will develop a clear vision for replacement of the old trading hut and the Committee can then return to the bigger questions related to our fundraising.

16. Plans for our participation in the Art Trail on 2nd May are well advanced, with several exhibitors and volunteers ready to help with set up and on the day when the site will be open to the public between 12:00 and 16:00. It has already been decided not to approach neighbours in Armstrong Ave to use their electric supply, and we agreed to purchase two 3L flasks at £16.99 each to provide hot water for teas and coffees. Several ploholders were happy to bake cakes for sale with the drinks, and to bring seedlings etc for sale on the day. Ploholders will be reminded by email and WhatsApp of the event and asked to bring contributions if they wish. Trading hut stock will be covered with dust sheets, which can also provide a backdrop for exhibits, and no stock will be sold on the day. Proceeds from refreshments and sale of seedlings etc will go into Association funds, and from any sale of exhibits will go to their makers. With no facility for card payments, it will be cash only on the day, unless a payment can be made online into a personal bank account for reallocation to the Association or the maker. We will not be using this event to grow the waiting list, so any requests will be handled with an email address to register interest. Thanks were expressed to Orla for her hard work to organise, and she will take forward the rest of the arrangements and ask for support where necessary. **Action - Orla to take forward, seeking support from others as necessary, and Alastair to message all ploholders with a reminder about the event.**

Agenda Item 8 - Any Other Business

17. Manure is still available from the stables next to West Essex Golf Club, although the deliveries have been less frequent. This arrangement is expected to continue, and some plotholders have been driving to the stables to collect for themselves.

Agenda Item 9 - Date and venue of next meeting

Monday, 13th July 2026 at 12:30pm. Venue to be confirmed

Alastair Thomas

Secretary

27 April 2026