

Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses

Minutes of Board Meeting



Date:	20 November 2025
Location:	BPCG Barn
Present:	Carla Clarke (Acting Chair), Samantha Faulkner, Ian Brotherston, Gam Jhutti, Deborah Ajja, Omar Alghali, Rebecca Thomson (Observer)
Apologies:	Georges Mikhal, Jamie Laing, Lauren Brownlow, Verena Kotonski

Blue text - Action items

1. GM Report

- a. Rebecca delivered the General Manager's report, presenting a centralised action plan across all four BPCG programmes, with all staff contributing:
 - i. Note that EDI goals will be benchmarked around Lambeth census info. Evaluating this data from the current BPCG CRM is a challenge as it has to be extracted manually.
 - ii. The board discussed the difference between each programme's gross profit and operating profit, with the latter including a central costs contribution. [Rebecca will work to make sure this is clearer in the reporting for the next quarter.](#)
- b. Finance and Fundraising:
 - i. Fundraising efforts are ongoing, with a target set for January 2026 to establish clear goals.
 - ii. Financially sustainability will be a key focus for Rebecca to make sure the organisation not only becomes sustainable, but resilient.
 - iii. The impact of Brockwell Live on BPCG, both financially and culturally, was discussed, and efforts are being made to establish a productive relationship with them.
 - iv. Financial transparency and regular reporting were emphasised, and [Sam will review trustee expenses which have been added to the financial policy.](#)
- c. HR:
 - i. HR matters are moving in a positive direction, with Lauren praised for her work.
 - ii. The recruitment for the Children and Families Programme Manager is underway, with the position advertised on several platforms with some interest already received. Social media engagement has been strong, with the recent job advert receiving 200 likes and 1,300 views. The recruitment process has been generally positive thus far. Carla advised that she is available to support Rebecca in the recruitment process.
 - iii. Rebecca raised the issue of winter hours and personal safety in the park, with recent physical / verbal abuse incidents in the park. The consensus among trustees was that staff cannot be expected to be leaving in the dark and instead they should be leaving at 4pm with the remaining hour of work being completed at home. Rebecca to convey this to staff and that it would be operated on a trust basis.
 - iv. Carla asked Rebecca to thank the staff for their commitment and hard work.
- d. Volunteering

- i. Rebecca and Carla discussed the need to streamline kitchen volunteering, and Rebecca is working to employ a freelance chef with experience volunteering in the kitchen to improve operating procedures. Shop volunteering remains an area where more support is needed, and an advert has been placed to attract more volunteers. Omar suggested that shorter shifts might help attract volunteers, particularly during the winter months.

2. Trustee Recruitment and Interim Plans

- a. Trustee (Secretary) recruitment and interim plans were discussed, with [everyone requested to provide feedback on the draft JD by Sunday this week \(23 November 2025\)](#). [Rebecca will advertise the position and liaise with Georges](#).
- b. Omar confirmed he is not stepping down at the forthcoming AGM but will wait until the next board meeting (January 2026) to provide some time for the board to decide how best to cover his role. He provided background on the evolution of his role with volunteers, progress to date, and the importance of the role.
- c. There was a discussion about the need for all members to complete a basic DBS check - this was actually not needed since trustees are not engaging directly with children or vulnerable adults.
- d. Gam reported that she had completed the handover with Verena on H&S issues, and would now be working with Rebecca for ongoing support.
- e. It was confirmed that Verena will remain in post up until the AGM.
- f. There was a discussion about Trustee term limits and reappointment, with a five-year maximum term. Sam confirmed that Trustees on the board for a five-year term can be re-elected after a one-year break.

3. AGM and Annual Report

- a. The annual report is complete, and [Rebecca will ask Georges to sign this](#).
- b. The AGM agenda has been publicly released.
- c. For the AGM, a visual presentation/material of strategy goals has been created, led by Deborah.
- d. There are 150 members on the list this year. According to our articles of association, quorum constitutes 10%, or 15 members.
- e. Co-opted trustees will be voted in at the AGM. Given that there is no contestation of the positions, a brief introduction from Gam and Lauren will suffice with a request for a show of hands for electing them.

4. Q2 2025/2026 Financial Report

- a. Quarterly report for Q2 (Jul to Sep 2026) were reviewed and discussed.
- b. The cash position of the charity vs the start of the year is ~£3k worse which is positive considering the additional costs, including hiring of the GM
- c. Shop revenue was lower than forecast and site hire above forecast, though below the same period the prior year, we should be maximising the site hire in the summer months, though there are some good forward bookings coming through already for the rest of the year and next .
- d. Sam emphasised the importance of individual department's spending their allocated budget for planning purposes. Departmental spending is under budget in some areas, it is important that the teams review their budget needs (both higher and lower) when planning so we can allocate funds appropriately across the gardens. In certain areas, such as community events, income and expenses are currently balanced. [Rebecca will review this to ensure expenses are appropriate and identify any opportunities for improvement](#).

- e. During the winter months, Ian suggested that further thought is given to more events, such as internal events, as these are usually more popular in the winter months.

5. AOB

- a. The risk register has been updated, with an [action for Rebecca to remove duplication and merge common themes](#).

6. Next Board Meeting: Proposed schedule for next board meetings:

- a. AGM: Sunday, November 30th 15:00-17:00
- b. Thursday, January 29th 18:30-20:30 (location TBC)

Due to recent concerns regarding personal safety in the park, and with staff working hours adjusted during winter to reduce risk, Gam suggested that consideration be given to selecting an alternative location for future board meetings during winter hours (i.e., Nov and Jan).

[Rebecca to look into the possibility of using a room in South London Botanical Institute for the January board meeting. The alternatives are the room upstairs in Prince Regent which is usually empty or Carla's](#) (albeit up the hill in West Norwood so not the greatest for Gam).

It was noted that future board meetings will be scheduled to align with the timing of the management accounts, ensuring that the latest information is available for discussion.

Annex A - General Manager Board Update

20th November 2025

1. PROGRESS MADE:

1.1 Team Management and Action Plans

Action Plans for 25/26 are now in place for each programme manager. Moving forward, a summary of the main KPIs from each Action Plan (volunteering, activities delivered, finances and feedback), will be collated and shared each quarter for the board to review. Feedback on the presentation and usability of this summary from the board is welcome. I have had several conversations with staff about the attainability of their targets in order to address their concerns over burnout.

Action Plans for 26/27 will be finalised around the end of Jan 2026, with KPIs aligned with the new 2026-2030 strategy. This will inform the budget for the year ahead.

I would like to set a target of the April board meeting to have all the missing financial accounts in the Action Plans to date, for them to be ready in time for reporting each quarter.

1.2 HR

A Staff Handbook has now been published, containing all of BPCG's policies relevant to employees. The response to this was largely positive, staff seem happy to have increased clarity around workplace policies and procedures.

A recruitment timeline has been drawn up for the new [Children and Families Programme Manager](#). First-stage interviews are planned for mid-December, with second-round interviews scheduled for early-mid January. The target start date is March 2026. I am working with Charlene on what cover is required during the interim period.

1.3 Fundraising pipeline

Before attempting any significantly time consuming applications, by the end of Jan 26 I plan to clarify fundraising goals from BPCG programmes (hires, events) vs institutional fundraising, by:

- (a) setting a target for the value of applications submitted in a year (e.g., £100k)
- (b) setting a value for the amount to fundraise (e.g., £30k from successful applications)
- (c) re-allocating budgets internally to ensure restricted grants are used to cover as much overheads as possible

This will be reported back to the board.

In the meantime, smaller grant applications will still be underway. I have struggled with applications recently due to lack of data about volunteering engagement and EDI goals (now addressed in Action Plan reporting). Unfortunately our Brockwell Live Community Fund application of £5k was unsuccessful. After following up with BL about this, and explaining in direct terms the impact that the four week closure of most of the park has on BPCG (losing £9.5k of income and preventing up to 30% of volunteers from accessing the space), myself and Steph met with the Events Director of Brockwell Live. We are working on a plan to mitigate the impact of the festivals on BPCG with active support from Brockwell Live.

1.4 Governance, Policies and Procedures

Please refer to the [Policy and Procedure Matrix](#) for the most up to date list of what's been developed so far. Since the last board meeting, a Financial Controls Policy and Procedure, Kitchen Standard Operating Procedure, Adverse Weather Policy and Data Protection Policy have been drafted. The first draft of a Volunteer Handbook is due for internal review on 21st November.

1.5 Kitchen and Shop

The Kitchen and Shop business plan presentation has been rescheduled to early 2026. I'm now cooking with the kitchen team once monthly, which helps me understand the operations of this programme from both a commercial and volunteering perspective. Alongside this, monthly meetings with the Jam team are now in place to maintain communication with them as well. Christmas plans are underway with a craft evening lined up to prepare gifts and cards before we have a stall at the Herne Hill Market on the 14th December.

2. CHALLENGES

1. Shop volunteering
2. Winter hours onsite
3. Delays on quarterly management account reports

3. LOOKING AHEAD:

1. Shop and kitchen business plan
2. Organisational culture and volunteer engagement (ongoing)
3. Support staff on developing partnerships such (e.g. Community Garden Symposium for early 2026)
4. New partnerships: Black Growth CIC collaboration (event info linked [here](#)), [Mosaic Clubhouse](#) visit and possible kid's cooking session with [Pizzarova](#).
5. Reports to current funders due at the end of this month
6. Working with the accountants to strengthen our financial reporting to allow myself and the board to get more up to date information on financials to support decision-making