

Draft Minutes of BPCG's Annual General Meeting (AGM)



Brockwell Park
Community
Greenhouses

Registered Charity no. 1140590

Date: 30 November 2025
Place and Time: BPCG Barn, 1500hrs – 1700hrs

Attendees:

- *Trustees:* Carla Clarke, Deborah Ajia, Georges Mikhael, Ian Brotherston, Jamie Laing, Samantha Faulkner
- *Prospective: Trustees:* Gam Jhutti, Lauren Brownlow
- *Staff:* Jody Gillett, Rebecca Thomson, Steph Prior
- *Members:* Azadeh Arman, Catherine Stevens, David Robinson, Hilary Joyce, Imogen Ward, Jo Dubiel, Jonathan Chrispin, Kate Newman, Katy Turrell, Liz Day, Marco Windham, Samantha Faulkner, Tony Smith, Ursula Allen, Victoria Johns

Apologies:

- Anne Phillips, Janet Worth, Omar Alghali, Rachel Warner, Sue Fabian, Sue Wates, Verena Kotonski, Charlene Duncan

Quorum announced at 1500hrs

It was confirmed that we have 20 voting members present at the start of the meeting, including zero proxies, which exceeds the requirement of 14 members, which is 10% of membership.

A. Welcome from the Chair

The Chair (Georges Mikhael) called the meeting to order and welcomed all attendees.

B. Approval of previous AGM minutes

The minutes of the AGM held on 10 November 2024 were reviewed and approved. The approval was unanimous, with three abstentions recorded.

C. 2025 Highlights, Challenges and 2026 Plans

Event and Hires by Steph Prior, Operations and Programme Manager

Hire activity in 2024/25 was focused on evening events, which generate higher margins and provide unrestricted income to support core costs. A total of 66 hires were delivered, averaging just over £1,000 per event, with July to September being the strongest months. By prioritising evening hires, the organisation reduced daytime bookings, ensuring space remained available for charitable aims. Strong partnerships were maintained with local organisations and Brockwell Park stakeholders, supported by a team of five Freelance Duty Managers. Looking ahead, twenty evening hires are already confirmed for next year, alongside continued community engagement.

Workshops were a success, with 32 sessions delivered across a range of creative and practical topics. Wreath making was the standout, with eight sold-out workshops generating nearly £5,500 in income. Overall attendance averaged eighty-six percent of tickets sold, and plans are in place to expand the programme further in 2025/26.

In-house events also performed strongly, with 18 delivered across music, talks, community gatherings, and an art exhibition. Highlights included the Art in the Garden exhibition and the summer gig series with Mambista, which nearly all sold out. Despite hosting fewer events than the previous year, income matched 2023/24 thanks to strong attendance and increased bar sales. Average attendance was 87%, with the Harvest Festival attracting 430 people. Volunteers were celebrated with a January wassailing party, and another is scheduled for 25 January. The organisation will continue monthly gigs and community events, with plans to expand the Mambista series and programme the spring season in the coming weeks.

Children and families programmes; Rebecca Thomson, General Manager read a statement on behalf of Charlene Duncan Children and Families Programme Manager, summarised as follows:

Over the last few years, we've developed our C&F programme to provide meaningful experiences that give the next generation a positive relationship with gardens and green spaces. We now have a solid offering that adapts to all seasons, weather conditions and age groups, attracting 40+ schools annually, 4 weekly SEND groups, plus kids workshops, holiday clubs and special events. With skilled freelancers and staff delivering high-quality sessions, we've received very positive feedback.

However, we noticed most participating schools had below-average numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals. To address this, we secured funding from the Julia Rausing Trust to work with 10 schools with very high FSM eligibility over three years, combining outreach and garden visits. Since January 2025, we've engaged six schools, welcomed over 1,000 children to our garden and reached more than 1,800 through school sessions. We've also expanded our SEND offer through Ironmongers Guild funding, adding regular weekly sessions with new schools. Now that we've engaged these audiences, our next step is consulting the families themselves to understand what would attract more people from low-income households and those with SEND children to our garden.

Jody Gillett, Community Garden Manager

Jody opened with thanks to everyone involved, with particular appreciation expressed to the community gardener whose work is visibly reflected in the garden.

The annual plant sale event was highlighted as a continuing success.

Volunteer engagement has been strong, with 135 new volunteers inducted during the period, bringing fresh energy and interest into the space. Collectively, volunteers contributed over 4,000 hours, a level of support that directly reflects the needs of the site.

Sincere thanks was extended to all volunteers. Feedback from the volunteer survey was overwhelmingly positive, confirming the value of their contributions.

The focus areas of horticulture, wellbeing support, fresh produce and the ongoing development of the spaces was reinforced.

Recognition was also given to awards received during the year.

It was noted that the garden area continues to balance four core aims: wellbeing, horticultural learning, food production and maintaining and developing the space. Meeting all of these goals can be challenging with a small team.

Looking ahead, two themes will guide future work: sustainability and outreach. These will support the expansion of the ecosystem and help the BPCG reach more people within the community.

The Shop and Kitchen; Rebecca Thomson, General Manager

The shop and kitchen have benefited from the support of twenty regular volunteers, with special thanks given to Janet Worth and Tom Smith for their contributions in the kitchen and Anne Phillips, Rachel Warner and Hilary Joyce in the shop.

Over the past year, a number of achievements were highlighted, including the sharing of recipes and the development of cooking skills reflecting the collaborative spirit of the shop and kitchen. The donation of fridges and new equipment has also been warmly welcomed and has enhanced operations.

There are, however, ongoing challenges. The shop requires additional resources and recruitment, and consideration is being given to how the space can be made more comfortable during the winter months.

The kitchen is in need of refurbishment and improvements to its layout, with solutions currently being explored.

Looking ahead, there is a strong focus on expanding cooking activities and outreach, growing the volunteer base, and further developing both the shop and kitchen to strengthen their role in the community.

D. BPCG's 2026 – 2030 Strategy

The strategy provides a high-level framework for 2026–2030, reviewed annually, guiding priorities and resource allocation. This is a flexible and live strategy, supported by annual action plans with timelines, budgets and measurable targets.

Vision: A welcoming, restorative, vibrant community where sustainable horticulture fosters learning, friendship, and wellbeing.

Mission: Use sustainable horticulture to create diverse, evolving, nature-based learning activities.

Values: Welcoming, Community, Nurturing, Sustainable.

Strategic Priorities:

1. Strengthen financial sustainability and resilience.
2. Build deeper, more inclusive community relationships.
3. Expand and improve learning opportunities.
4. Enhance environmental sustainability.
5. Maintain a restorative, well-managed working environment.

Each priority includes milestones such as developing a volunteer engagement plan, expanding outreach, creating a sustainability plan, improving coordination, and strengthening governance. Progress will be tracked through annual action plans, measurable targets, and regular feedback.

E. BPCG's 2026 Volunteer Engagement Plan

The Volunteer Engagement Plan, developed through three rounds of feedback and presented at the 2025 AGM, sets out how Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses will support and grow its volunteer community.

Since 2017, around 900 volunteers have contributed across diverse activities including gardening, food growing, kitchen, shop, events, and governance. In 2024/25 alone, over 5,000 volunteer hours were logged. Volunteers participate for a range of reasons—skills, wellbeing, community, and enjoyment—and all contributions are valued.

The plan's objectives are to Grow, Celebrate, and Nurture the volunteer base. Key actions include outreach to broaden diversity, faster inductions, developing a Volunteer Handbook, creating clear pathways to leadership, enhancing sessions with learning and fun, celebrating contributions, hosting cultural and festive events, and offering deeper learning opportunities.

Success will be measured through annual review and feedback, with targets set for 2026–2027.

F. Q&A on Strategy and Volunteer Engagement Plan

Questions were raised regarding the financial report. It was noted that retail activity has not grown, although efficiencies have improved. Further discussion on this point will be picked up in the finance section.

Azadeh Arman, a new volunteer, expressed appreciation for BCPG, saying they had “fallen in love with it” and wished to continue volunteering. Azadeh asked whether there had been consideration of developing an online presence for the shop to reach wider retail communities.

Rebecca responded that a business plan is being developed, but as the BPCG relies heavily on volunteers, it is important that the skills available match the work required. She added that an online retail presence has not yet been explored, and that refurbishment of the social media space may be needed before this can be pursued.

It was noted that advertising and online payment systems, trialled during the Covid period, had been positive experiences.

There was agreement that the awards received are valuable; members requested further detail, including access to the report and better communication channels with feedback to better understand the outcomes.

G. Introducing & approving 2024/25 Annual Report

BPCG had a year of transition and growth, marked by new trustee leadership, major site improvements and expanded outreach to underserved communities.

Volunteers contributed over 4,000 hours, supporting gardening, food production, and events. The charity engaged 45 schools, including those with high free school meal eligibility, and strengthened its SEND programme. Events, workshops, and hires remained strong, while retail sales dipped.

The charity ended the year broadly breakeven, with a small deficit of £4,300. Income from workshops and events increased by 22% to £39,294, while income from children and families declined by 11% to £33,921. Site hire rose slightly by 4% to £49,953. Retail sales fell by 25% to £39,012. A question was raised about this decrease, and after consulting the accounts we can confirm that 2023/24 was a particularly strong year. When comparing the 2024/25 figures to 2021/22 and 2022/23, the sales levels appear more consistent. At year end, reserves stood at £432,552 restricted and £90,216 unrestricted, meeting the thresholds set by the reserves policy.

Partnerships & Financial Support include funds from Julia Rausing Trust, Brockwell Live Community Fund, Elliot Wyse Trust, and public donations. BPCG has worked in collaboration with Lambeth Landscapes and local organisations.

Overall, BPCG continues to thrive as a vital hub for education, wellbeing, and ecological engagement in the community.

H. Election and Reappointments of Trustees

Resignations and Vacancies

- Larry Osei-Kwaku resigned as Secretary on 20 October 2025.
- Vacancy in the Secretary position; job Description prepared and promoted in the newsletter.
- Ian Brotherson and Verena Kotonski are not seeking reappointment – thanks was expressed by the group for their contributions.
- Omar Alghali plans to step down, with his resignation planned early in the new year.

Existing Trustees reappointed.

New Appointments: Two new Trustees Gam Jhutti and Lauren Brownlow elected by a majority show of hands.

I. AOB

Volunteer Communications / Newsletter: A member noted that the newsletter is currently the main way volunteers receive updates, but today's meeting revealed information that had not been shared previously. Jody explained that the newsletter is written for a broad audience, not only volunteers. Volunteer-specific updates are instead shared through internal communications and during volunteer sessions.

Action: Staff will explore how more partnership and programme updates can be included in newsletters. Consider producing two separate newsletters (general + volunteer-focused).

Deep Learning Sessions: A question was raised about the purpose of "Deep Learning", as presented in the VEP. It was clarified that these sessions are more formal, provide detailed information, and allow volunteers to reflect and take material away afterwards.

Sustainable Horticulture Vision: A question was asked about how the vision statement on sustainable horticulture aligns with current activities. It was noted that the mission statement sets this out clearly. A suggestion was made to create a visual map of activities to help volunteers understand sustainable horticulture and other practices.

Monitoring Progress of the VEP: Members asked how progress on the Volunteer Engagement Plan (VEP) will be monitored. It was confirmed that **Section 7** of the strategy outlines this.

Board Diversity: A question was raised about whether the strategy includes opportunities to diversify the Board to better reflect the community.

Action: Georges will ensure that as part of our annual plan for 2026/2027, diversifying the board is included.

Volunteer Engagement and Follow-Up from last AGM: It was noted that last year's AGM included a commitment to reinstate regular all-volunteer meetings, but these have not yet taken place.

Action: Georges to review this and update the group. This will be included under AOB in future meetings.

Current Volunteer Meetings: Georges acknowledged the volume of activity across the organisation and emphasised that the strategy focuses on the key priority areas. Lead volunteer meetings have now begun.

Action: Consider establishing regular garden volunteer meetings to improve communication and create space for volunteers to connect. A three-week deadline was set to review this.

Garden Support / Resourcing: A question was raised about long-term plans to increase support for the garden. There is currently no plan or budget to expand staffing, but as highlighted in the strategy, we will be working more with lead volunteers to help us extend our reach.

Volunteer Christmas Event: Tony Smith expressed disappointment that there was no Christmas event for volunteers this year, noting the significant commitment volunteers make. Georges agreed to consider this for next year and will report back to the group. Rebecca noted that an event is already planned for 25 January (Wassailing), and highlighted that volunteer-led social events can also be organised, as these can be especially valuable for volunteers who may feel isolated.

Suggestions included incorporating carols or other festive elements in future years.

Trustee Roles & Responsibilities: A question was raised about the roles and responsibilities of Trustees.

Action: Update the website to clearly outline Trustee roles. It was clarified that volunteers should normally raise issues through staff, then Rebecca, and finally Trustees if escalation is needed.

Trustee Skills and Experience: It was suggested that Trustees could bring more hands-on experience, such as gardening skills, to support the organisation's practical work. No other business.

J. Summarising and thank yous

Deborah Ajia formally closed the AGM and thanked all attendees, volunteers, staff, and Trustees for their hard work and commitment throughout the year.

K. Close AGM

The meeting closed at 17.00hrs.