

Camberwell and District Allotment Society (CDAS Ltd)
Grange Lane Allotments AGM

Sunday 9th November 2025, 10.00-12.00

in the Ismay Room, the Scout Hut, Grange Lane, London SE21. A two minute silence was observed at 11.00am for Remembrance Sunday.

M I N U T E S

1. Welcome and Apologies

Tyrrell Evans welcomed everyone to the AGM. Apologies were received from: Meng Neo Sim, Kimberley Mears, Sarah Knight, Sarah Thurman, Sarah Lyness, Fiona Wells, Penny Hicks, David Langley, Frank Kunna, Bridget Lane, Bridget Britton

2. Minutes of previous AGM

These were approved.

3. Reports:

Report from the Chair, Tyrrell Evans

We welcome today Andy Whittingham, Chair of our sister allotments the Grove and a member of the CDAS Ltd committee, who will manage our committee election. My report will focus on the achievements of your committee over the last year and some of the challenges that remain.

The actions undertaken by CDAS Ltd since its establishment:

As we are now part of a limited company with the Grove and Gunsite allotments, it is important you are aware that every year in June we must supply all our members' details by law to the Financial Conduct Authority, including your name, address, and contact details - email and mobile - and provide those for six years after you have left. We were all sent copies of the CDAS Ltd AGM minutes in March of this year. The CDAS Ltd committee has Sarah Thurman as Chair, Julie Vickers as Secretary and Tony Robertson-Jonas as Treasurer, and is made up of a minimum of three representatives from each site. CDAS Ltd are calculating their financial position from June 17th 2024, to September 30th 2025. We have two of our CDAS Ltd members who will kindly audit these figures for us for free. The CDAS Ltd next AGM will be in March 2026.

The lease with Dulwich Estate: I am delighted to be able to say that we believe the lease with Dulwich Estate is, at last, agreed between our solicitors. Not yet signed as the core of our lease will be used for the other two sites, and we understand we will all have to sign together. But after over two years, when we agreed the heads of terms within a couple of months, it is a huge relief. So important as this lease is for 25 years, not 15 - so I won't see it expire!!

We are very grateful to Martin Beard for his ceaseless work to get this done! I guess one of the key issues in it for us all is the requirement for 75% cultivation of each allotment - we have been using this as our guide this year.

Total number of plots: We have 231 allotments. We have let 12 plots this year and our waiting list is now down to 48. There are eight empty full plots and two half plots, which are not let mainly because of the work we must do to clear them before we can let them.

The numbers with more than one plot: the only significant change is one of the people with three plots has given up one. So, a decrease in the number with three by one to two and an increase by one of those with two plots. Many more half plots are being requested by new allotmenters now and that number is now 25.

Inspections: We try to be consistent with how our rules are applied, and our inspections are undertaken by a committee member and a line manager for each line in May.

As you all know we use a traffic light grading system; green, amber and red. Greens are fine and not checked again for a year. Amber plots have until the end of September to improve, when they are checked again, and can get a second amber with a following January check.

Those marked as red are then checked again by me with a second committee member and have a month to make a significant improvement.

We inform everyone of their results. If no improvement in the red ones after a month and no extenuating circumstances, we sadly must evict them.

The key issues for us are levels of cultivation (needs 75%) and levels of weeds.

Relevant paths' grass kept short, and plots labelled top and bottom.

Results so far this year: two evicted after the May checks; 51 ambers listed in May.

Of those 51 rechecked in September, there were 38 greens, nine repeat ambers and four reds.

Excessive hoarding of potentially useful materials on plots can be a major problem to us! Huge costs to us all in time and money to clear them as you have seen in our accounts in cases of sudden illness or death of the plot holder.

Site management:

There have been several improvements to our site since our last AGM. We have a new roof to our brick hut as the old one was leaking badly.

We have a new lower gate with improved adjacent fencing to try to reduce the numbers of intruders.

We have been focusing on Health and Safety issues trying to keep paths clear and safe, and avoiding structures leaning into the paths. We are also seeing several prickly bushes, roses and blackberries, and others growing over the paths making it difficult for plot holders to get by with wheelbarrows. Please keep them pruned back well away from the path.

Please also check and make safe short wooden or metal stakes around the edges of your plot; let us know if you have a pond; and remove any glass from the edges of your plot.

We have installed bicycle racks at the top of our site.

Access to Scout Site lavatories for those unable to use our Eco-loos is under review as there is new management of the site. We will keep you informed.

Plant sales: many thanks to Emma Rowley-Conwy for picking up and managing the plant sales for us. We sell the plants basically at cost.

Trees: We reviewed all bay trees this year and will review all fruit trees next year. If fruit trees are shading your plot, let your line manager know. There have been

concerns expressed about willows being grown on our site and we think we need a policy.

We do log on a site map where **thefts or damage** on our allotments occur. So far, we cannot see any pattern.

Bee keeping update: we now have only one set of active hives, as the bees in the ones at the top of our site have all perished. We have had a bee compliance audit, as requested by CDAS Ltd, undertaken by Bob Jackman of the Bromley Beekeepers Association and our apiary passed all the necessary tests. We have had all the hives at the top of our site cleared and cleaned.

We have had a **Nature habitat survey** undertaken by Emily Eales, consultant ecologist for Southwark Council, and we await her report. I should mention here our delight at seeing two hedgehogs lower down on our site in the last few months.

Sustainability group: We have set up a new subgroup to look at how we can function more sustainably. So far, we have collected around 200 bags of manure from the Dulwich Stables for you all and have revamped and reopened our community compost heap. Please note the guidance on what to put in the community compost. If you are interested to join this sustainability group, please let us know. We need more volunteers...

Dogs: please remember if you bring dogs on to the site that you must always have them under control. If your children wish to play with any of the dogs, please ensure you have the dog owner's permission for them to do so.

Foodbank donations: we continue to take any excess vegetables or fruit that you give to us to the local foodbank on a Thursday.

Filming/Television work: Thank you all for your help in allowing us to accommodate some film and photoshoot agencies. We charge them a location and facilities management fee which all goes into the Grange Lane Allotments account, and this helps cover our site expenses.

Working parties: We have valued our working party sessions, and this helps us keep our costs down. We thought it would be helpful to have two a year with fixed dates: they will be the second Sunday in May and in September. Please make a note in your diary as you are all expected to help us function better!!

Help from cubs/scouts, Dulwich College annual community day/now regular weekly session: We have developed our connections with several local groups. This year we have had sessions from a cub group, are a regular part of the Dulwich College community support day, and from now will have a small group of older boys coming weekly for an hour or so to help us in any way we wish.

Socials: plant sales, tool sharpener: Our socials remain busy and a fun and easy way to get advice on issues and challenges and to meet your committee members. We have recently had Paul Richens join us, who will sharpen your cutting tools for a fiver.

On a sad note, may we also remember those associated with our allotments who have died in the past year:

Roderick Hole

Joy Henderson

John Sleat

Maria Casciano

I must give thanks to: Our neighbouring allotment sites and CDAS Ltd for all their advice and help throughout the year.

To Gordon Carr, who has run this Scout Centre for many, many years and has enabled us to use this space for our AGMs. He retired this year. Thank you - and we will miss you, Gordon.

To our line Managers: We are grateful to all our line managers for their help and support through the year. Details of line managers are on the website and on the notice boards, and they all now have grangelane.org email addresses. If you have any plot or site issues or anything that is preventing you from managing your plot as you wish, then in the first instance, please contact your line manager.

Some specific people we would like to thank are:

Vic Neal for all the mowing of common grass areas, for keeping our water supplies running efficiently, attending to leaks and damage very quickly, and many other helpful tasks.

Tiger Tempest, Tristram Linsley, Steve Smith, Paul Widdecombe, Mike Mellor, and Paul Shrubshall who help us manage practical problems around our site in various ways.

Emma Rowley-Conwy for taking on the plant sales.

Rohani Mustapha and **Paul Widdecombe** for heroically keeping the two eco toilets clean, well-stocked and functioning well. Thank you SO much.

Antonia Da Silva Ferreira and **Manual Perdigao** for the fitting of the bicycle racks at the top of our site.

Decio Quinta for the paving at the bottom of our site.

Keith Irvine for helping with plumbing issues.

Katherine Holmes and **Liz Osborne** for tidying the bin area on Mondays and for general tidying.

Dan Shepherd, who is our contact with Buckingham Palace re our stable manure deliveries which, as you all realise, have greatly diminished, as there are now very few horses at the Palace, the rest being at Windsor. We are looking for other sources. But you will have noticed the increase in chippings as we have extra deliveries from additional tree surgeons thanks to **Laura Orsini's** work.

Carol Britton, who has helped some of our plot holders who are ill or incapacitated maintain their plots and has now tidied up our notice boards.

The **Volcano/coffee bean chaff rota team Jo Scott, Paul Widdicombe, Sarah Knight, Jan and Steve Davidson, Don and Isabel Marshall, and Sophie Sarr** who, regardless of weather, collect heavy, wet sacks of the chaff, which is excellent for weed suppression.

I should add here that we always need volunteers who might be able to offer an hour or two a week for specific tasks. One at the moment is wheelbarrow repairs. If you could offer us a bit of time, please email me.

Thank you all so much.

Nearly finally, and most importantly, a huge thank you to Sarah Thurman our previous Deputy Chair now leading CDAS Ltd, and to our committee team: Maureen Erny, Sarah Knight, Sarah Lyness, Mark Aaron-Thomas, Susan Miles, Don Marshall, Alex MacGillivray, Emma Rowley-Conwy, Stuart Redfern and Laura Orsini for all their help and wonderful work in getting us through this year.

But really, a Thank You to you all for making this such a unique, special and peaceful place where we can all unwind, relax, and contemplate and resolve our challenges. Enjoy 2026 on your allotments...

Priorities for 2025-2026:

Security: top gate, fencing along Grange Lane

Paths and drainage

Sustainability and biodiversity

Tyrrell was thanked for all his good work.

Report on our financial position – Alex MacGillivray

The committee treasurer, Sarah Lyness, sent her apologies. Accounts and budget were circulated. Alex explained that last year we overspent our income by 9%. This year the over spend is down to 3.5%. Our budgeted income was accurate; expenditure is looked at by the committee bi-monthly. We have a very low deficit of £900. We have about nine month reserves. Main income is rent and membership fees. Tyrrell identifies other forms of donations, eg filming. Clearing abandoned plots is very expensive. In the last year we have needed several skips to clear away junk. We have had less manure during the year. The re-roofing of the brick shed was unexpected. It is a listed building. It was a guard house during the war with searchlights. We were able to replace the lower gate through good budgeting and a filming donation. The water bill was higher than expected due to the drought and previous wrong invoicing.

4. Election of Committee

This was overseen by Andy Whittingham, Chair of the Grove Allotments and member of the CDAS Ltd committee.

Standing for re-election: Mark Aeron-Thomas (Communications), Maureen Erny (Secretary), Sarah Knight (Lettings), Sarah Lyness (Treasurer), Don Marshall and Susan Miles (Membership – joint), Alex McGillivray (Line Manager Co-ordinator), Laura Orsini (Site Manager), Stuart Redfern, Sarah Thurman

Tyrrell Evans – Chair

Emma Rowley-Conwy - Vice Chair

New committee member: Eleanor Brown

All were elected unanimously.

5. Priorities for the year

Top gate; fence along Grange Lane; sustainability and increasing biodiversity; to consider what to do with paths and drainage. Discussion followed.

- Plot holders expressed how pleased they were that more hedgehogs were being seen on the site. It was wondered whether this might be due to the use of different slug pellets?
- A suggestion was made that there should be a rule about what is brought onto the site, especially plastic, and this enforced through the inspection process.
- A request was made for the committee to act more quickly to prevent plots getting into such a bad stage.

- It was noted that 80% of Mailchimps sent out are opened. The question of electronic voting was raised but some people expressed a preference for calling an EGM or waiting until the AGM. The electronic voting could be used for a survey or poll.
- A request for workshops to share best practice was made. Various workshops have been held but this was noted.
- A suggestion for a card system for the gates was made but others thought the current lock system is robust and good.
- One plot holder recounted that in an area visited in America, the allotment holders sign up to volunteering once or twice a year. Volunteering is mentioned in our tenancy agreement. However, if plot holders felt obliged to volunteer, they could be put to good use, eg helping with the communal composting.
- Rohani expressed concern about the current eco toilets as they rely on Paul's strength to empty them.

Refreshment break

6. Questions, suggestions – workshop

- The matter of fair enforcement of the rules was raised. The committee responded that they were undertaking a review of the content of the website to ensure consistency. This might identify gaps. It was noted there is uniculture on certain plots and use of harmful chemicals; we will or have followed up on these.
- Guardians Worldwide have a plot at the bottom of the site and are growing on oak saplings.
- There was a request to get more logs split. This is being done by Tiger at present. There was a request to turn some into woodchip. Laura will investigate. It was noted that vertical logs of any height are good for stag beetles. This could be made known in a Mailchimp.
- A suggestion was made to have a small bowl of water on plots for wildlife as they are now unable to access the water tanks due to the metal covers.
- One plot holder advised that in Sweden, wildflowers are grown next to broad beans to attract blackfly away from them. The tips of the plants are edible. The suggestion was made to have areas of wildflowers on our site to encourage biodiversity and reduce pests.
- It was asked whether the London Wildlife Trust could be asked to release hedgehogs on our site, but the problem of foxes was raised.
- If we buy bulk bags of manure, would plot holders want to buy wheelbarrow loads to avoid the use of plastic bags? The response was positive.
- The fencing along Grange Lane, which is our responsibility, needs to be replaced with the same split fencing and spiky anti-intruder shrubs planted all the way along it. Yasmin said she would investigate getting mixed hedge whips from the Tree Conservation Trust.
- Emma will explore getting smaller builder's bags in which to collect manure from Dulwich Stable to avoid the use of plastic bags.

- What to do about really bad paths on the site was explored. Steve explained how he had made a satisfactory path repair using subsoil.