



Roehampton Garden Society

AGM 2025

Chair's Report

Activities from November 2024 to now:

New Lease: In February 2024 the Council approved the principle of our taking on a full repairing lease which would be funded by our keeping almost all the rent we collect. Currently we hand over 80% of the rent to Enable but the Council are responsible for carrying out all major repairs needed. Thanks to Patrick Crawford recently we have had some repairs funded by the Council - resurfaced asphalt path at the Dover House Road entrance on site 3, replacing guttering on the store with higher capacity gutters to manage heavy rainfalls and stop rain entering the store. Negotiations for the lease have to be done with the Council's legal department and with a solicitor representing RGS. This was a rather alarming prospect as costs to RGS might become uncontrollable. Fortunately one of our plot holders had contacts in a law firm who were prepared to do the negotiating pro-bono. Although our solicitors have been chasing the Council's lawyers no real progress has been made yet. Many thanks for Patrick Crawford who managed to negotiate the Council repairs and is continuing to keep our new lease on the agenda.

Summer Show and National Garden Scheme (NGS) 21st June 2025: For the last few years we have held the RGS Summer Show on site 2. In the summer of 2024 we opened site 3 to NGS visitors which was a great success so we decided this year to combine the Summer Show with an NGS open garden event on site 2. It was very successful as visitors enjoyed seeing the exhibits in the Show as well as being able to look around the allotments and have the opportunity to chat with plot holders. Vivien Fowler managed the NGS side of the afternoon and we raised about £900 for good UK charities that NGS support.

Review of Store: Greg Willcox, Gill Tamsett and Jackie Savage formed a sub-committee to review the store layout. Some new racking was bought and installed so goods for sale, particularly the loose items were more visible to customers and convenient to deal with for store volunteers working behind the counter.

Confidence in current committee: The committee have had a very difficult plot holder issue to deal with this year. We have been subjected to many very long emails from a plot holder who feels the committee and certain individual committee members are not governing the RGS properly. In one of their emails we were asked to circulate to the membership the following: (accusations are printed in red-RGS replies in blue). I feel it is appropriate to send it to you now so that the issues may be debated openly at the AGM.

1. The RGS committee is not transparent.

RGS reply: [A link to the monthly committee minutes is sent to all plotholders on the monthly email Update. The link remains active for 6 months. The minutes from the AGM are available on the RGS website for one month after the AGM. Plot inspections are advertised at least 2 weekends before](#)

the inspection. The RGS constitution, allotment rules and policies are all available on the RGS website.

2. **RGS do not run the AGM according to the RGS Constitution -correct notice is not given and the committee is not elected properly.**

RGS reply: We give about 4 weeks notice but the constitution says at least 2 weeks notice is needed (para. 5.5.2). Election of the committee is done in accordance with the RGS constitution. Committee candidates are nominated and seconded at least a week before the AGM (para. 5.5.3). Having nominations on the night would not be desirable as we need to be sure the committee roles can be covered properly and it would be very slow. It also has the potential of being very embarrassing for an individual.

3. **The accounts are not presented at the AGM.**

RGS reply: They always are presented at the AGM.

At the AGM I will ask if there are any questions or suggestions from the floor on any of these points. As the author of these many emails clearly has no confidence in the current committee, I will also ask members for a vote of confidence or no confidence in the current committee with a show of hands. The result of this ballot will determine the steps we take to elect a new committee for the coming year.

You can find a copy of our Constitution in 'About RGS' at the top of the RGS website. [Here is a direct link.](#)

Plans for next year:

Succession Planning: Last year I mentioned that several of us had been serving on the committee for many years and would like to stand down or take less responsibility. We now have a total of 17 members prepared to serve on the committee, two of whom are new and hopefully we will be able to hand over to newer, fresher committee members.

New RGS Website: The current RGS website is creaking. It has been going for a very long time in IT terms and is due for a complete overhaul. We hope to make it more contemporary and simpler to update and are investigating currently available options.

Thank You

As a Society we are very fortunate having so many willing and able members whose contributions make everything happen. In particular we have an excellent committee who give so much time and commitment to RGS. Jackie Savage as Vice-Chair continues to be very supportive and provides an excellent sounding board for me. She also manages the waiting list and the RGS email - both tasks done very efficiently. Carol Martinez continues to keep RGS accounts in her role as Treasurer as well as making sure both the summer and autumn show run smoothly as always. The 3 site secretaries, Susan Bennett for site 2, Richard Standen and Caroline Alexander for site 3 do a admirable job ensuring plots are let promptly and are cultivated well enough. Ali Linton as Site Manager has been very supportive with tricky situations that the site secretaries have to deal with. Gill Tamsett and Greg Willcox keep the stores stocked and running smoothly with Annie Hardinge ensuring the seeds stands are well stocked. We are fortunate that Jean Crawford keeps our website running as well as publishing the very interesting monthly Updates. Cameron de Buck has been very helpful with IT and social media questions too. The database is kept meticulously by

Robert Linton from which the annual rent invoices are sent out to you all. The lease and on site repairs are looked after by Patrick Crawford. Fortunately he is a very patient man who doesn't lose heart trying to get things done. Shan Karwatowska ensures there is woodchip supplied to both sites and has been fantastic organising teas for the shows and the NGS event. Vivien Fowler, as always, has got the plant sales going and is always there to help with catering as well as keeping the Potting Shed area so attractive on site 3. Other members of the committee who don't have a specific role are always willing helpers with anything that needs doing. We hope that they will feel able to take on a specific role in time. All in all we owe a huge thank you to all the committee for their commitment and amazing contribution over the last year.

Not only do we have a very active committee we also have many other members who give time and skill to the Society. All these tasks are done by volunteer RGS members:

- Serving in the main store on site 2 and the trading sheds on site 3
- Ensuring there is tea and coffee in the main store
- Cleaning the toilets and tidying the social areas on both sites
- Making cakes for events
- Manning the bars
- Organising food for events such as the AGM
- Helping at the shows
- Shredder training
- Maintaining areas on site that is not any specific person's responsibility
- Bits of plumbing
- Turning off the water for winter and reading the water meter
- Ensuring the locks work and other equipment is maintained

These are the people who give their time: Raj Patel, Danuta Grabda-Ferreira, Mariangela Renshaw, George Casley, Dorcas Johnson, Jeremy Cole, Sue Hodgson, Marianna Pencharz, Sue MacDonald, Jo Eskdale, Maria Sforza, Bill Pencharz, Sylvia Willcox, Mary Jane Ireland, John Ireland, Jane Quayle, Georgina O'Reilly, Sue Illingworth, Harriet Hobson, Carolyn Singer, Julia Millette, Adele Stebbings, Bella Stebbings, Matt Price, Albert Tuin, Ian Finch, Charles Gillbe, Artan Deliallisi, Mark Sutcliffe. Many, many thanks to you all too.

Helen Finch
Chair