

HAZLEMERE GARDENING ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting

1st December 2025 14:15 hrs

There were 19 Members and Committee present; a signed attendance list is available.

1. APOLOGIES

Anita Reed, Carole Robinson, Phil Clapham, Ann Davidson, David Gantzel, Bal Chauhan, Peter Hayes, John Payne, Gill Alexander

2. APPROVAL OF 2024 MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting were approved by Joy Payne and seconded by Peter Pearman

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None

4. CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS – Jack Schwarz

Jack said: On behalf of the committee welcome to the 2025 Annual General Meeting of Hazlemere Gardening Association.

It is a pleasure to see the enthusiasm and sense of community that has continued to thrive within our gardening association over the last 50 years. The dedication and passion for gardening shown by our members have been the foundation of our ongoing success, and it is always inspiring to see both longstanding and new members taking part in our activities.

It was lovely to see some of our new members exhibiting at our shows and winning awards. I hope they will continue to exhibit.

Our store has had another very successful year due to the great range of products that we have available to our members thanks to the hard work carried out by Phil, Carole and Andrea. Phil, our Store Manager, has decided it is time to retire and the committee thank him for all the hard work he has done for the association over the last eight years

We are currently seeking a new Store Manager to take over from Phil.

May I also take this opportunity to thank the rest of committee, who give so much of their time to help with the store and to arrange all the events we hold over the year and to keep our website and Facebook page up to date.

We look forward to seeing all our members when we reopen The Store on the first Sunday in February 2026.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT 2024-2025 – Joy Payne

Trading Account

Sales at £42,918 were much the same as in the previous year but purchases were down by approximately £4,500.

Building consumables (which are the expenses incurred running the Barn and conforming to Health & Safety requirements) have increased as the service/repair to the pallet truck cost more this year and we paid for new fire extinguishers. Also, Lloyds introduced bank charges in 2025. Closing stock is approximately £5,000 less this year.

Profit & Loss Account

On the income side, we received more money from the May plant sale this year. The donations figure is in respect of commission from Gordon's monthly plant sales. Hazlemere Parish Council ordered more bulbs from us this year.

On the expenditure side, depreciation has increased as we made three purchases this year (a printer, a banner and a tarpaulin). The cost of printing the membership cards increased and we also paid for the printing and laminating of new product pictures for display in the Store. We were able to send £850 to Cancer Research UK in memory of Bob Atkinson who had been on the Committee for several years. Again, there was no paid advertising this year as HGA activities are published on Facebook and in two local village magazines which are free. For the first time since 2018, we are having to use a professional accountant for the audit which has incurred fees, but these are very reasonable as they are similar to the fee paid in 2018. The Autumn Show costs have increased as they include the engraving from both 2024 & 2025.

Balance Sheet

Stock at the end of the year is £33,793 and all paid for.

The 'Debtors' figure is in respect of unused credit from the return of the 2024 out-of-date seeds. The figure shown as 'Creditors' is in respect of the sale of the Wisley Lights tickets for the trip in the next financial year and the accountancy fee.

The Prepayments figure includes the amount of commercial and stock insurance premiums paid this year but which cover part of next year, the cost of entry forms purchased this year for next year's shows and the unused wine purchased for the social evening.

The bank balance plus cash in hand totals £37,914.19

Finally, Joy wanted to thank the cashiers and her fellow committee members for dealing with the money each Sunday.

Proposed by Andrea Dean and seconded by Jack Schwarz and unanimously accepted.

Question: *Are there any banks that do not charge?* Joy replied that she knew Nat West did not charge but there was quite a delay in opening an account. All three signatories had other business accounts with Lloyds which made it easy to switch between them. She wondered if Nat West would eventually introduce charges. She also said that, as we were charged for depositing cash, she would now aim to pay Committee members' expenses out of the cash collected from store sales rather than by bank transfer.

6. STORE MANAGER'S REPORT – Phil Clapham

2025 was another successful trading year in which sales continued at a good level and matched last year's sales. However, looking towards 2026, I have had some requests to find an alternative supplier. The problem is that we need a lorry with a forklift in order to bring it from the road into the yard. Durstons do this without a problem and the drivers are quite happy to do so. They even put the pallets into the coal bunkers which saves me a lot of angst. Westlands new haulage company only wanted to deliver to the garden centres and other big stores as they usually had their own forklifts and unloading was easy. They had already refused to deliver to small garden associations such as Holmer Green and Amersham and the new missive was to stop deliveries to all garden associations and small shops everywhere. In big organisations some decisions are blanket and tend to make no sense on the ground. This was one of them. I have been trying to get Westlands back again as last year I learnt they had returned to shipping in via Bristol docks, and the Durstons haulage company were doing work for them as well.

Westland wholesale prices, in some instances, are quite expensive and as yet I do not know what they would add for delivery with a forklift. When we had Westland previously, they were charging £1000 which might push them too expensive for us. The only other alternative we might have is Clover peat products, an Irish company that has now opened a depot in Dungannon in Northern Ireland.

I have purchased a small selection of four of their products for people to evaluate. I had to buy this from a wholesaler so the prices are quite high but direct delivery from Clover would bring the prices down.

Westland have the better range of products but if they won't deliver to us, we can't sell them. This is why Durstons products will be our main compost supplier come opening time.

7. SEEDS – Carole Robinson

Carole has sent a report saying that: As in the last couple of years, 2025 has been an exceptional year for seed sales. So many varieties had completely sold out by the time we closed in October with a lot of the racks virtually empty. This obviously made seed stocktake a lot easier!

Vegetable seeds were extremely popular which isn't surprising, we had managed to keep the cost much lower than standard retailers and garden centres can sell their seeds for. All tomato varieties sold incredibly fast with just a couple of packets left. We sold out of courgettes, cucumbers, beetroot, carrots, herbs, chillies and runner and climbing beans plus nearly all of the peas and although Carole ordered a huge amount of broad beans most sold out as well.

Flower seeds have also sold well with all the different varieties of cosmos, sweet peas, marigolds, nasturtium and petunias all selling out very fast with sunflowers and wallflowers only leaving a couple of packets. Carole highlighted everything that sold out this year and will purchase even more for 2026. She had increased the number of seeds of specific varieties intending for that stock to carry over to 2026 as the price had been very good when she purchased them. However apart from just two types they also all sold out.

Having now greatly reduced the Unwin seed order through Westlands and instead increased the Dobies ones even more, the prices have lowered considerably. Although Dobies are in plain packaging, the introduction of picture and information sheets at the front of each packet variety has helped members see what they will actually look like. There are also hanging cards giving more information about the Dobies seeds and production generally.

There are just a few Unwins seed packets for return which we will receive a credit note for at some point. This will go towards the cost of next year's seeds from Westlands.

Unfortunately, those due for return had all been received in our January order this year but with sell by dates as the end of 2025. In the past we have sent the credited seeds to different schools and charities but as there are so few this year that won't be possible. The few packets we have are not easy grow types so would be best given to somewhere larger like Lindengate in Wendover who have propagators and would be able to care for and transplant them when appropriate. Lindengate are a mental health and gardening charity serving the Aylesbury and South Bucks area. They use therapeutic gardening, conservation, and other nature-based activities to support the mental health and wellbeing of adults and young people.

If there are any specific varieties of seeds you would like Carole to try and get, please do let her know. Orders are placed right at the beginning of January. Through Westlands, the Unwins seed suppliers, there is a minimum of six packets of any variety but through Dobies there is no minimum so she can order just one or two packets if they have them. Her email address is robinsoncarole12@gmail.com so please email with heading of HGA Seed request.

8. POTATOES/ONIONS/SHALLOTS/FLOWERING BULBS – Andrea Dean
Early Spring Delivery 2025

As in 2024, this order consisted of Golden Gourmet Shallots, Red Baron and Sturon Onion sets, 9 varieties of seed Potatoes and 24 varieties of summer-flowering bulbs. The potato order for 2025 was increased by 25% from 2024, and still sold well so this amount has been ordered again for 2026. This order includes some varieties suggested by members at the 2024 AGM.

Summer Delivery 2025

Again, as in 2024, this order consisted of Radar Onion sets and 36 varieties of spring-flowering bulbs. Jack again produced a guide of which narcissus and tulip varieties could be entered in which of our Spring Show classes, and members find this helpful.

After two successful years, 5 bulk bags of narcissus and a small bag of tulips were purchased for Hazlemere Council. These have been planted on local verges.

Taylor’s Bulbs is our supplier for the bulbs, potatoes and onions. The deliveries were on time, and the quality was generally very good with only a few rejects, except for the bulk bags for the Council which were poor this year. HGA receives a prompt refund for any items rejected. If any members have a particular request for bulb varieties, or are planning a large project, please contact me and I can try and include these (orders placed in May and October).

I have had help from many Committee members during the year, which has been much appreciated - thanks to Joy and Anita for weighing potatoes, Muriel and Barbara M for pricing bulbs, Peter H for updating the web pages, Jack for the spring show bulbs guide and Phil for displaying everything for sale.

9. MEMBERSHIP REPORT – Peter Pearman

Peter reported that at the year-end there were 462 members. This figure includes 110 new members and 7 life members. Last year’s membership was 448 so we continue to increase our membership base, year on year.

We continue to regularly update our membership via email and hard copy on upcoming events and changes to our product range at the barn store.

Peter thanked the members who had assisted us through the past year with cashier, handling and gate duties, in particular those stalwarts who volunteered multiple times during the year, without those people we would be unable to run our Barn store.

The recommendation of the committee is that the annual membership fee remains unchanged at £7 and £5 for those 60 and over.

Proposed by Ray Podbury and seconded by Diana Podbury, carried unanimously.

10. SHOW REPORT – Barbara Marks

The number of entrants in the Spring Show was the highest for 10 years, although the overall number of entries was the lowest for several years. With unpredictable weather this spring, those who found suitable daffodils in flower are to be commended. The show’s organisers were also delighted with the number of entries in the Art and Craft division, but a bit disappointed with the number of entries in the domestic classes. We will, however, continue to include the latter in both the spring and autumn shows, to compensate for the effects of climate change on plants. There was a magnificent display of entries in the photography division, which took a long time to judge, and were appreciated by visitors in the afternoon. New photography classes for 2026 will be posted on our website in the New Year.

Spring	Entrants	Entries	Entries/ entrant	Autumn	Entrants	Entries	Entries/ entrant
2025	31	161	5	2025	30	241	8
2024	28	185	7	2024	22	171	8
2023	27	169	6	2023	27	299	11
2022	12	93	8	2022	27	202	7
2021	...	...		2021	18	146	8
2020	...	...		2020	...	...
2019	19	143	8	2019	25	252	10
2018	17	124	7	2018	20	204	10
2017	19	179	9	2017	23	195	8
2016	30	193	6	2016	24	215	9
Average	23	156	7	Average	24	214	9

As can be seen from the figures, there was a big increase in the number of entrants and entries in the Autumn Show. Barbara congratulated entrants who were able to grow fruit, vegetables or flowers that were in peak condition at the time of the show, after such a warm summer,

which brought on many crops earlier than usual. There was a huge array of edible crops, including some colorful plates of tomatoes and fruits. The vegetable collections displayed in trugs were the envy of many of us, and the floral arrangements, especially the ones celebrating the 80th anniversary of the end of World War 2, were equally stunning and took a long time to judge. There were more autumnal domestic goddesses this year than last, but we hope to keep attracting new entrants with a revised schedule each year. Lastly, we must congratulate Daniela Spasova who displayed her produce in the show for the first time, with entries in many different classes, and was rewarded by being presented with both Noel's Trug Shield and the coveted RHS Banksian medal.

Question: *Is it possible for entrants in the shows to label their fruit and vegetables?* Barbara replied that this could be investigated for 2026

11. TECHNOLOGY REPORT – Peter Hayes

Website

HGA's website continues to be managed in-house which means that members can find current information about products on sale in the Barn Store, the spring and autumns shows, visits and social events.

Managing HGA's website over the past year has focused on keeping information timely, relevant, and easy for members to access. Regular updates were made to pages to show what is on sale in the Barn Store, Spring & Autumn Shows, social events and news about key events such as plant sales and community projects.

Efforts have been taken to simplify navigation so that members can quickly find minutes, newsletters, and membership details without difficulty. Improvements have also been to the website to optimise viewing on mobile phone devices.

The winter months provide a perfect opportunity for HGA to update its website, ensuring it's ready to meet the needs of members and visitors as the new gardening season approaches. This will include updates to the Barn Store products, events, shows and membership pages as well as new pictures to refresh the website pages.

The website's usage is monitored using Google Analytics to evaluate the effectiveness of content and ensure that users can easily find the information they need. Between 1st January and 31st October 2025, the website has been viewed 28,179 (15,100 in 2024) times with 3109 (1,790 in 2024) first time viewings. Viewings increased again compared with a similar period last year, with peaks in spring and late summer. This coincides with the Barn Store busy periods.

This year the most popular pages are;

Home page (viewed 6,275 times), Barn Store (5,754 times), Membership (2,049 times), Events (1,867 times) and Composts (1,340).

Card Readers

The card readers continue to be very popular, most payments in the Barn Store are taken using these devices. At the start of this year two further SumUp credit/debit card readers were donated to HGA so we had five machines capable of operating in the Barn Store. Unfortunately, there were problems with three machines and they have been replaced with updated machines. This year card readers have been used at three external events, Penn & Tylers Green Expo, Hazlemere fete and at the Penn & Tylers Summer show.

12. PUBLICITY: Andrea Dean

Facebook

HGA has been using Facebook for publicity for 3 years, and it is proving a very effective way of maintaining awareness in our local community. Content is posted in the Hazlemere, Widmer and Penn local Facebook groups, and also appears on Instagram. A link to our website is always included on the post to encourage readers to visit the website. HGA events that are open to the public are promoted via a Facebook "event" and reminder posts, i.e. Spring Show, Charity Plant

Sale, Autumn Show. In between these events, posts are made periodically covering special offers, members plant sales, local open gardens or just encouraging people to visit the Barn Store and join HGA. We now have 225 “followers” in the local area, which is great progress from less than 10 at the start of 2023!

Village Newsletters

Andrea has taken over providing HGA contributions to the village magazines in Widmer End (Widmer End News, published 4 times per year) and Penn & Tyler’s Green (Village Voice, published 6 times per year). This is typically a short article reminding readers about the Barn Store and membership, and a description of forthcoming events.

She welcomes any input and improvement suggestions from members for any of the publicity activities.

Question: *Have you considered contributing to the monthly Hazlemere & Great Missenden magazine?* Andrea said that she could not do monthly entries but would investigate if it was possible to submit articles irregularly.

13. SOCIAL REPORT – Carole Last

Coach trip to Great Dixter – Sunday 13th July (originally 21st June)

All was going well with the booked trip until we were told that the garden would be unfortunately closed from midday on our visit day due to a planned power cut.

A rearranged date for the 13th July was booked. However 17 people dropped out and by re-advertising eventually we had 47 people on the trip. We had a good journey down arriving just ahead of our estimated arrival time and with lovely warm weather the trip was enjoyed by all who came.

Coach trip to RHS Hyde Hall – Sunday 14th September

This was a new trip to an RHS garden for the HGA and Carole was pleased to report we had a full coach of 53. We had a new younger coach driver who again got us to the garden in the agreed time (1½ hours). A good day was had with a lot of plant purchases. Unfortunately, rain had just started at departure time and despite this we were returned home in 1¾ hours.

Social Evening – 24th October “The Changing Wildlife of the Chilterns”

We returned an almost full house of 92 for this illustrated talk given by John Tyler and again we decided to have brought in fish & chips which worked well and was well received despite a delay in the 2nd batch of food arriving. The evening was well enjoyed with John attracting considerable interest in some exhibits and excellent photo cards he had brought along and of course thanks go to everyone who arranged the supper, served the drinks and sold raffle tickets.

14. ELECTION OF OFFICIALS FOR 2026

NOMINATIONS

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT Peter Pearman *proposed Stuart Astin, seconded Graham Williams*

CHAIRMAN Jack Schwarz *proposed Andrea Dean, seconded Barbara Hughes*

VICE-CHAIRMAN John Chandler *proposed Peter Pearman, seconded Barbara Marks*

TREASURER Joy Payne *proposed Jack Schwarz, seconded Andrea Dean*

SECRETARY Anita Reed *proposed Barbara Marks, seconded Jack Schwarz*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS STANDING FOR RE-ELECTION

DRAFT

Barbara Marks, Andrea Dean, Peter Hayes, Carole Last, Muriel Cross, Barbara Hughes, Carole Robinson, Stuart Astin, Diana Podbury and Ray Podbury.

All nominations for the ex-officio Committee members were proposed by John Chandler, seconded by Joy Payne and approved unanimously.

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR:

Richard Hartshorn, Seer Green Accountancy - *proposed Jack Schwarz, seconded John Chandler*

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Coach trip to RHS Wisley Glow – Sunday 7th December

Carole Last reported that this is due after the AGM and disappointingly there were only have 41 people booked for the trip when she confirmed the numbers with Wisley and it may be decided to not book a Christmas lights trip for 2026. Then five more people contacted her making 46, leaving a few places if anyone still wanted to go (the coach is a 53-seater). The late-comers would need to pay for their entry on the door and pay HGA for the coach.

2026 Coach Trips

Carole also announced that, looking ahead to 2026, we are hoping to run a Spring trip to RHS Wisley and a Summer trip to possibly Leonardslee, Painshill Park, Stourhead, but would welcome any other suggestions.

There were no further questions and Jack thanked everyone for attending and invited them to stay for refreshments.

The meeting ended at 15:05 p.m.

Next Committee meeting Monday 5th January 2026 at 20:00 p.m. on Zoom.