



Management Committee Annual Report 2025/26

Purpose

This report outlines the activities undertaken by the Management Committee over the past year. It is a collaborative effort by different members of the committee and is presented by the Chair and Vice Chair.

Introduction

The Management Committee is responsible for the operation and oversight of the allotment sites that make up the Horfield and District Allotments Association (HDAA). The Committee includes all field representatives, the co-secretaries, treasurer, and plot manager. All members are plot holders who volunteer their time to support the running of the Association.

It has been a busy but rewarding year for HDAA. As well as tackling challenges, we have welcomed new tenants, strengthened our management processes, improved our fields, and continued to thrive as a community.

HDAA in the wider context

HDAA operates on allotment land owned by Bristol City Council (BCC), but the Association itself is independent. Bristol has around 4,000 allotment plots, with approximately 1,500 administered by allotment associations; roughly a third of these fall within HDAA.

Across the country, councils are reviewing how allotments are funded, with many increasing rents or exploring partnerships with independent associations to reduce administrative costs. Thanks to the commitment of our volunteers, we are currently able to maintain lower operational costs. We have no plans to increase HDAA rents in the immediate future, though we will continue to keep this under review.

HDAA – priorities for the Management Committee over the past year

Over the past year, the Management Committee has focused on a combination of planned improvements and responses to unforeseen challenges. The following sections summarise our main areas of activity.

New Plot Manager:

Pete Bill took on the role of Plot Manager in June 2025. The Plot Manager is responsible for maintaining and managing tenant, associate, and plot records. Since June, Pete has processed around 70 new tenants and associates and completed more than 160 administrative updates, alongside organising the annual rent and membership fee collection.

A key priority has been modernising and automating parts of our administrative systems to reduce the manual workload in future years. Pete has also been working on ensuring compliance with current water regulations, particularly following Bristol Water inspections. This includes simplifying the pipework and addressing issues with water troughs.



Horfield & District Allotments Association

This work is ongoing, especially on larger and more complex sites such as Golden Hill. Please continue to report any water related problems via your Field Reps or the website.

New Field Reps at Golden Hill:

We have welcomed new field reps at Golden Hill who are already making a huge difference to life on the field. These new reps are: Tim, Lesley, and Ed on St Agnes, Shannon on Davies, and Nick on Baptist.

Security Issues at Golden Hill:

Golden Hill has faced a series of distressing incidents involving an individual entering the site, breaking into sheds, sleeping in them, and leaving considerable mess, including rubbish, and human waste. These situations have required unpleasant and time-consuming cleanup by plot holders and committee members.

We sought advice and attempted to signpost the individual to appropriate support, but the behaviour persisted and escalated. In February, the intruder was discovered inside a shed and was removed from the site by two Field Reps. On a previous occasion, entry was gained by climbing the fence opposite the prison wall; this section has since been reinforced with barbed wire.

Further actions taken include:

- Changing all gate padlock codes,
- Increased monitoring by Field Reps,
- Identifying repeated instances of gates left open or unsecured, and
- Employing a security guard to patrol the site each evening for a week.

The patrol period saw no new break-ins or rough sleeping. However, the entry gates remain our main vulnerability. We have requested a quote for self-locking gates with keycode entry pads to improve long-term security.

Alongside these more demanding issues, the Committee continues to manage the day-to-day running of the Association, including plot management, responding to tenancy concerns, organising maintenance, and planning capital improvements.



Field Reports

Birchall Field

Field Reps: Tony, Kirsten, Joe and Jan.

Plots on field: 114

Current occupancy: Full

Number on waiting list: 46

Brief description:

Birchall Field includes a mix of sloping and level plots and is a well-established site with an active community of plot holders.

Highlights of the year:

- Regular site checks resulted in 17 plot holders being contacted about required improvements.
- A successful working party pruned communal areas, repainted the communal shed, and organised a communal bonfire.
- Improvements to the top path were carried out to reduce trip hazards.
- A field WhatsApp group now includes around 60% of plot holders, improving communication and support.
- Mentors were introduced to help new plot holders settle in.

Volunteers are always welcome to help with communal tasks.

Grahams Field – Highbury

Field Reps: Jamie and Jez

Plots on field: 30

Current occupancy: Full

Number on waiting list: 38

Brief description:

A small, tucked-away site behind Wessex Avenue and Highbury Road, offering an intimate and friendly community atmosphere. The field benefits from an easterly aspect with morning sunshine and views towards Purdown Tower.

Highlights of the year

- Jez joined as a second field rep.
- A strong, supportive community of gardeners with a broad range of experience.
- The site remains badger-free, though foxes are regular and welcome visitors.



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- A peaceful, neighbourly field highly valued by its plot holders.

Volunteers are always welcome to help with communal tasks.

Grahams Field – Telecom

Field Reps: Alice and Sian

Plots on field: 35 (including the communal plot)

Current occupancy: Full

Number on waiting list: 38

Brief description:

A compact, active field with a strong focus on sustainability and plot holder voice.

Highlights of the year:

- Over 50 native hedging whips planted (including hawthorn, crab apple, dog rose, and dogwood).
- Six communal compost deliveries organised, reducing number of individual car journeys, and plastic packaging.
- Two ponds created on the communal plot to increase biodiversity.
- Introduction of the first “*Puller of the Year*” award for exceptional commitment to weed management.
- Fox cubs born under a shed last spring — with hopes for more this year!
- A visit from Durham University Geography students who spoke with plot holders about their experiences with allotments.

Volunteers needed with supporting hedging work and pathway maintenance.

Golden Hill – Baptist, Davies & St Agnes Fields

Plots on fields: 290

Current occupancy: 94%

Number on waiting list: TBA

Brief description:

These three adjoining fields form part of the largest of the HDAA sites and share many of the same developments, volunteers, and challenges. Field reps have worked together this year to bring neglected plots back into use and reduce waiting times.

Highlights of the year:

St Agnes (Field Reps: Tim, Lesley, and Ed)

- New field representatives appointed.
- Significant hedging work completed.



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- A green woodpecker spotted on site!

Volunteers are always welcome to help with communal tasks.

Davies (Field Reps: Sarah and Shannon)

- Volunteer hedging team completed extensive trimming on the north, east, and accessible areas of the west boundary along Donkey Lane.
- Three successful working parties helped clear overgrown plots.
- Increased number of plots using plot markers

Volunteers are always welcome to help with communal tasks. Support with managing field WhatsApp group.

Baptist (Field Rep: Nick, Joe, and Pete)

- We welcomed our new Field Rep, Nick, who has made an excellent start.
- The overall condition of the plots has improved noticeably. Thank you to all plot holders for your hard work and care.
- A considerable amount of time this year has been spent managing the issues arising from the rough sleeper and the necessary clean-up that followed.
- Essential fence reinforcements have been carried out on the northern boundary. Larger tree-related work is currently on hold.
- The future of Plot 1 remains under discussion. We would welcome support from tenants on the three adjoining fields to help maintain this area and ensure it does not become a dumping ground.

Volunteers are always welcome to help with communal tasks.

Golden Hill – Longs Field

Field Reps: Dominic, Steve and Helen.

Plots on field: 70

Current occupancy: Full

Number on waiting list: TBA

Brief description:

Located south of Kellaway Avenue and north of the other Golden Hill fields, Longs field is a large, active site.

Highlights of the year:

- Monthly walk-arounds and proactive engagement with tenants of under-used plots led to substantial turnover and improved cultivation standards.
- Clear communication with prospective tenants emphasising the time and commitment needed for allotment gardening.



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- Launch of a field WhatsApp group, now widely used for sharing advice, surplus produce, and updates.
- Contractor maintenance carried out including tree pruning and stump removal along boundaries.
- Ongoing work to balance biodiversity with maintaining productive growing spaces.
- Full occupancy achieved, with plans to create an additional plot from unused boundary land.

Responding to plot holder feedback from last year's AGM:

You Said: Create or expand WhatsApp groups

We Did:

- A new WhatsApp group launched on Longs Field.
- Birchall Field now has 60% of plot holders active on their group.
- Both Graham's fields have a WhatsApp group
- Groups being made for Davies Field.

You Said: Organise more working parties

We Did:

- Multiple working parties held on Golden Hill, Birchall, and Telecom Fields.
- Tasks included hedging, plot clearance, shed painting, path improvements, and communal maintenance.

You Said: Improve support for new tenants

We Did:

- Mentoring for new tenants introduced on Birchall.
- Field reps across Golden Hill prioritised welcoming new tenants and improving early support.
- Plot conditions improved before letting in many areas.

Partner organisations:

Four partner organisations rent growing space at Golden Hill. Each has a named link person from the Management Committee to support communication. Our partners are:

- The Golden Hill Community Garden
- The Horfield Organic Community Orchard
- Second Step

- Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership

More information about their work is available on their websites.

Conclusion:

Whilst the year did have its challenges, it was a relief to have such good growing weather. Across all our fields, the sunshine helped bring out the best in our plots and our community.

What really keeps HDAA thriving is the community that we have created. We look forward to growing with you for another year.

Thank you,

Tony Jones - Chair of the Management Committee

Sian Hampson - Vice Chair of the Management Committee