



## **Wellow & District Horticultural Society**

Annual General Meeting 2025

## **Retirement of Alex Martin as President, and Election of Duncan Hammerton as President**



Alex has been a longstanding member, then Vice President and President since 2018. Prolific entrant into the Flower Show, often winning the Banksian Medal – which as you all know, is the most prestigious prize of the Show, awarded for the most points in the horticultural classes in the Vegetables, Fruit and Flowers Sections.

Duncan Hammerton has accepted our invitation to become President – subject to approval at the AGM.

## Annual report from the Chair

**Lousie Nicolai**  
**Chair**

It gives me great pleasure to present the Chairman's Report for the Wellow and District Horticultural Society for the year 2025. Following some uncertainty at the end of 2024, the committee began the new year with enthusiasm, dedication, and community spirit to plan a varied programme of events. As the demographics of Wellow continue to shift, the committee decided to embrace this change by introducing more family-oriented activities.

## Kapunda Plants – hellebore nursery & garden



The year began with a visit to Kapunda Plants in nearby Southstoke — a specialist nursery set within a beautiful and varied two-acre natural garden. We were privileged to enjoy a personal talk and guided walk with the owner, \*\*Juliet Davis\*\*, who explained in detail how she propagates and maintains her hellebores. The highlight, of course, was seeing the masses of exquisite hellebores that Juliet grows and nurtures with such dedication and love.

## Pesto for pasta!



In late March, members took part in a pesto-making workshop, which included both sustainable foraging for wild garlic and learning to make your own wild garlic pesto. The event was well attended and enjoyed by both young and old. A big thank you to Stef Meigh for sharing his award-winning recipe and teaching everyone the technique to achieve perfect pesto! Great fun had by all

## Plant Sale



In May, the HortSoc held another successful Plant Sale. A big thank you to Mari, Lynn, Pam, and Hugh for their superb organisation — and, of course, to everyone who grew, nurtured, and donated plants and seedlings. Without your contributions, the plant sale would not be possible. We hope that all who bought plants enjoyed a productive, flower and veggie-filled summer!

## Garden Party



The Garden Party took on a new twist this year, as the Wylds opened their garden for the last time for a relaxed village picnic. In true picnic style — with a BBQ, sunshine, and even a pool — it was a wonderful afternoon enjoyed by all. Thank you to everyone who helped organise the day, and especially to the Wylds for their generous hospitality. We wish them all the best as they settle into their new home.

## Homewood Park Kitchen Garden



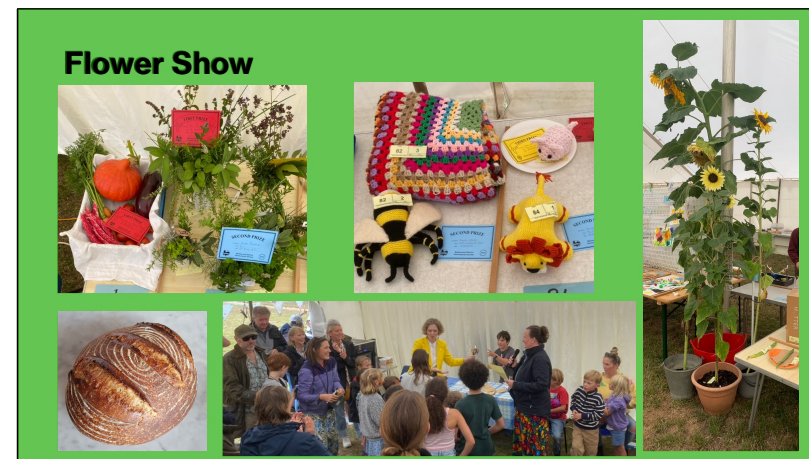
The sweetest  
beetroot ever!



Thank you to Hugh for arranging a fascinating visit to the Homewood Kitchen Garden in July. The group enjoyed a personal tour with the head gardener and learned more about the no-dig approach, as well as useful sowing timetable to help maximise harvests throughout the year.



At the end of August came the highlight of our calendar — the Annual Wellow Village Show. The Show Team organised a large variety of stalls, activities and entertainments for young and old – including the popular dog show and ferret racing, disco dome, face painting. The threat of rain hung over the day, which reduced the number of visitors slightly and sadly cut the afternoon short.



This year's Flower Show attracted 684 entries, 30% more than in 2024, and a 60% increase in the number of people entering. Exhibits ranged from towering sunflowers and impressive courgettes to delicious cakes, preserves, and imaginative works of art and floral arrangements.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who entered, helped, or simply came along to enjoy the day.

A particular thank you goes to the Flower Show Secretaries, the Village Show team, and the enormous tireless band of volunteers who ensured everything ran smoothly.

## Apple Day



The year would not be complete without the Annual Apple Day. Our thanks go to Janet for allowing access to the orchards for picking, and to Rob Lancaster for all the organisation, and Orchardshare for loaning us the juicing-kit. It was a great success, with flowing apple juice, delicious hog-roast baps, and — of course — the best apple cake!

Invite Rob to say something and promote 2026 event

## Wrapping up and looking forward

Membership – 51 families and 15 singles ~120 members

We're in sound financial state – with over £4,000 available to use

In 2026 we hope to expand our range of activities, for young and old!

My sincere thanks go to the committee, who continue to give their time and energy so generously throughout the year. Their commitment and good humour ensure the smooth running of all our activities. I would also like to thank the many members who volunteered to help at events — your willingness to step forward and lend a hand truly makes a difference.

Looking forward now ...

In 2025 we had 51 family members and 15 single members – making about 120 members. We'd like to increase the numbers. Our Treasurer's Report will show that the Society remains in a sound financial position, which puts us in good stead going forward.

As we look ahead to 2026, we hope to expand our range of events to engage the varying interests across both the young and old, new and old members on the topic of gardening, growing vegetable and promoting biodiversity. More on this later.

Now over to Rick for the detail on the finances.

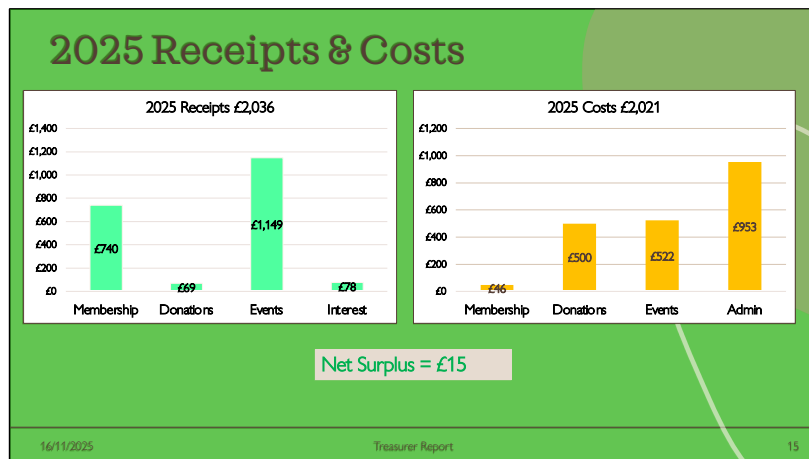


### Why me?

- (a) Supporting a good cause! Love Wellow!
- (b) Run our own Company for 15 years.
- (c) Retiring in 3-5 years so will have more time!
- (d) Strong interest in growing own plants/vegetables
- (e) Believe in benefiting the Environment
- (f) Want more activities & events for Wellow residents!
- (g) Educate Children/Adults in Horticulture as well as Quantum Computing & Augmented Reality ☺!

A collage of various potted plants. Labels include: "Canna", "Canna spp.", "Argentinian vervain", "Verbena bonariensis", and "Euonymus". There is also a small icon of a plus sign inside a circle.

16/11/2025 Treasurer Report 14



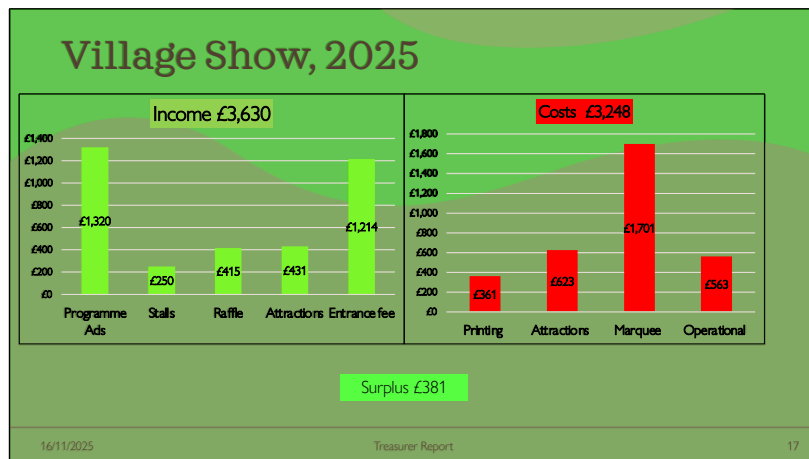
- (1) Detailed accounts have been circulated to Members
- (2) Membership Fees down by 18% on 2024 – for discussion later on
- (3) Events Revenue up on 2024, and costs were down. The net effect is a £627 surplus vs a £411 loss in 2024.
- (4) Admin Costs = Leavers Gifts, Insurances, Container Storage Racking, Sum Up Readers, Pavilion, Village Hall Rental etc
- (5) Donated £500 to the school gardening club.

## 2025 Events

| Event               | Income        | Costs       | Profit      |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| AGM                 |               | £30         | -£30        |
| Garden Party        | £468          | £336        | £132        |
| Homewood Hotel      | £5            | £0          | £5          |
| Plant Sale          | £580          | £45         | £535        |
| Pesto Event         | £96           | £111        | -£15        |
| <b>Event Totals</b> | <b>£1,149</b> | <b>£522</b> | <b>£627</b> |

16/11/2025      Treasurer Report      16

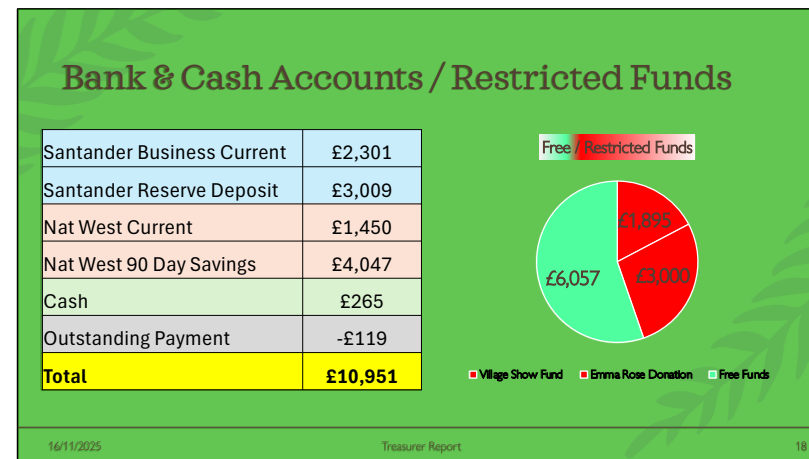
Thanks to everyone who helped with these events which were all successful.



The Village Show is managed by the Hort Soc as a “restricted fund”.

The Village show great success considering the weather and Sum up closing down our service @ 13:00 on the day!!!

The Show Team are planning to donate £100 each to Urban Farm; to help with replacing the notice board at the bottom of the village-hall drive; and £100 to pay for the annual charge for the wellow.org domain. The remainder will be retained – making the reserve carried forward £1,595. This is a buffer for the occasion when we have a washout and lose money.



Prior to my time we were using the Santander Bank. After 12 months of trying, we have still not been able to transfer the management of these accounts to Hugh's & my name. This is due to them having no UK employees for a Business Account that you can actually talk to! We plan on closing the Santander accounts.

We opened an Account with the Nat West which again was not easy but we managed it after 3 months and providing them with every possible proof document available to man.

So we are gradually transferring everything over to Nat West and close down the Santander Accounts. This will mean transferring your direct debits for Membership payment to the Nat West Account. The details for this account are on the website.

Emma Rose donated £3K to the Hort Soc but does want control on how this money is spent so it is a restricted fund.

So we have a balance of £6K of free funds.

## Changes to our Constitution

**Hugh Prentice**  
**Secretary**

What is a constitution?

A guide book – a rule book - on WHAT we will do, HOW we will govern ourselves. It defines how people can become members, how the members get elected to become “committee members” and the basic requirements of the roles of Chair, Secretary, Treasurer.

We’re proposing updates to improve the way we operate.

## Changes to our Constitution

- Clarification of our “Objectives”
- Executive committee needs a minimum of 4 members (not 12) – and quorum is minimum of 4
- Elect committee members for a 3 year term (not 1) , maximum of 2 terms (not unlimited)
- Creation of a new defined role on the committee – “Membership Secretary”
- Various other tweaks to administrative process, including allowing communications by email, and tidying up the definitions of the duties of the President, Chair, Secretary, Treasurer

The Executive Committee is proposing changes to the Society’s constitution. The notes here outline the main changes, with the rationale for the changes. The numbers below refer to the Clause in the proposed revision.

**2. Objects of the Organisation/Society** – a clarification of the purpose of the Society

**New clause 5. Termination of membership.** Currently the Constitution does not enable any action to be taken against those who do not comply with the Constitution. This is a new clause enables the termination of membership if members do not comply with the constitution, while allowing the Committee the ability to re-admit members, if for example, the non-compliance was inadvertent, or if the member agrees to comply in the future.

### **6. Appointment of Executive Committee**

6.1 Currently the Constitution expects that the Committee is made up of 12 members.

The proposed change allows for **up to** 12 members on the Executive committee, with a **minimum** of 4.

**6.2 Term** We have all experienced the “lull” as one group of Committee members stands down at the AGM, and another group of people are elected for the following year. There is a lack of continuity, effectively preventing planning

beyond the current year. The proposal is to elect members for 3 year term (not 1), so that the Committee can make plans that extend beyond the current year.

**6.3 Maximum Term** Currently people can stand for election repeatedly, for any number of years. It is common practice for Charites to limit the length of time people can be Committee members – usually between 5 and 9 years. The proposal is to limit the maximum term to 6 years. This ensures a regular turnover of committee members – regular new energy, aspiration and connection to a changing demographic.

**6.4** The proposal is to change CHAIRPERSON to CHAIR throughout, reflecting the verb rather than the gender of the person.

**6.4 Membership Secretary** The Society has members, and the Society has a responsibility to account for Membership fees and to manage voting at AGMs and SGMs. We have always a “membership secretary”, but this role has not been stipulated, nor has the role been defined. This clause stipulates the need for a “Membership Secretary”. Clause 18 defines the role.

**7. Co-option by the Committee** This clause was included in the “Appointment of Executive Committee” clause above. The clause refers to co-opting people with special qualifications to advise the Committee, but not become a Committee member – so the proposal is to move the clause in a more appropriate place.

**8. Voting quorums** The current constitution defines the minimum number of committee members who must be present at a meeting is 6, with the proviso that there are less than 6, the Chair can override this and make decisions with a lesser number – without a lower limit. The proposal is to reduce the quorum down to 4, and no lower, and allows proxy voting for those who cannot attend the meeting.

**10 & 11. Annual and Special General meetings** The proposals tighten up the process for calling an AGM and a SGM, and include communicating by email.

**14, 15, and 18 Duties of the President, Chair, and Membership Secretary** Proposed new clauses, defining the duties.

**16. Duties of the Secretary** Proposed new duty – to maintain a register of committee members, and to stand-in if there is no Chair

**17. Duties of the Treasurer** Proposed new duty, to assume the duties of the Membership Secretary if the Membership Secretary is indisposed.

**The proposed new Constitution is available to view in two formats –**

+ one with the changes highlighted – see [here](#)

+ and the other in it's final form – see [here](#)

## Objectives of the Society

- To support, educate, and inspire both novice and experienced gardeners in the village.
- To strengthen social connections and promote a sense of community through shared gardening activities.
- To encourage the exchange of knowledge, plants, seeds, and gardening resources among members.
- To promote sustainable, environmentally-friendly gardening practices that benefit local biodiversity.
- To organise social gatherings, workshops, educational talks, and group visits to gardens of interest.
- To foster a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment for members of all ages.

We want to offer “horticulture” ie to some degree scientific and academic, as well as “gardening” as something fun

## Village Show

### Discussions :

- Change to late July
- Change to a Sunday
- Change the format to reduce the number of volunteers needed
- Change to a biennial Show

Hinton Charterhouse have their fete first weekend in July.

Could we use the marquee on the Saturday – ie before the Show?

What would we replace the Show with in September?

## Membership fees

Currently £7 single and £12 for family. Since ??

Winsley & District £25 ; Freshford & District £10 ; Claverton & District £5;

Batheaston Gardening Group £26 ; Box Gardening Club £20 ; Timsbury Gardening Club £10

Should we aim for low membership fee, and pay-as-you-go for events and activities,

or higher membership fee, with events and activities discounted or free?

And should families get a discounted rate?

We've changed bank accounts – so please change your standing order details.

<https://www.winsley.org.uk/clubs/gardening-club-winsley-district>

<https://www.freshford-pc.gov.uk/community/activities/freshford-horticultural-society/>

<https://www.freshford-pc.gov.uk/community/activities/freshford-horticultural-society/events-in-2025/>

<https://www.clavertonhortsoc.org>

<https://www.clavertonhortsoc.org> only plant sale, flower show and fish and chips

<https://www.batheastongardengroup.co.uk/pages/join/>

<https://www.batheastongardengroup.co.uk/pages/events/>

<https://www.boxgardeningclub.co.uk>

<https://www.boxgardeningclub.co.uk/2025-provisional-programme/>

<https://www.timsbury.org.uk/activities/environment/gardening-club/>

## Garden Party format

**WELLOW & DISTRICT  
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**

**Community Garden Picnic**

**27th June - 6-9pm**  
At the Wyld's lovely garden  
white Ox Mead Farm  
Children welcome  
games, swimming, and tennis  
**Bring your own picnic**  
BBQ burgers will be available

£5 entry per person  
free to members  
one free drink on entry  
secretary@hortsoc.wellow.org

We had a new format in 2025 – feelings for/against?

What format for 2026 – and onwards?

The garden party in June this year was in a new format – courtesy of the Wylds and their lovely garden, with swimming pool. We had children for the first time, which brought a new dimension, and a paid-for BBQ and drinks for those who didn't bring their own picnic.

The potential format of garden parties is largely determined by the garden. But we'd like to know how members felt about this year's format, and what is desired in the future.

Anyone like to offer to host in 2026?

## Activities and events for 2026

**Talks, walks, films, zooms, activities, collaborative ventures, visits to gardens**

|                                                           |                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Wassail in Jan                                            | Ideas ...                                           |
| Quiz in February                                          | <a href="#">"Pocket Meadow" in our gardens</a>      |
| Film "1000 bees in my garden" ? Pesto-for-pasta? In March | <a href="#">Citizen Science with Garden Organic</a> |
| April – celebrity talker?                                 | <a href="#">Seed saving</a>                         |
| Plant Sale in May                                         | Mushroom growing                                    |
| Garden Party in June / Open gardens? / Visit              | DOE awards                                          |
| Village/Flower Show in July or September                  | Joint project with the school                       |
| August ?                                                  | Methods of veg/fruit preservation                   |
| Apple day 1 <sup>st</sup> weekend in October              |                                                     |
| November Pressed flowers workshop?                        |                                                     |
| December – ? mocktails workshop using garden botanicals ? |                                                     |

Shared / Bulk buying of composts, seeds etc

See also <https://tendershoots.uk> eg

- Election of Committee
- Presentation of Awards
- AOB

Time for tea and cake!

