

EPSOM GARDEN SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 19 November 2025

Present

Committee	Eileen Dann	Felicity Peatfield	Peter Townsend	Jane Hoddy
Cathy Flitter	Mary Wood	Marian Oliver	Barbara Warwick	Britt Marie de Chassiron
Kim Shrosbree	Debbie Turner	Brian Oliver	Pat Roebuck	Peter Tomlyn
Pam Davies	Sarah Mitchell	Britt-Marie	Jan Schapiro	Carolyn Page
Steve Roebuck	Margaret Angus	Helen McMeechan	Deirdre Wallace	Susan Walker
Margaret Haslam	Brian Angus	Julia Byrne	Pat Dean	Joan Gabbett
Sue Glover	June Grant	Carolyn Page	Sue Wiltshire	

Apologies

Alan Moody	Anne Scott
Heather Martindale	Elizabeth Martin
Liz Evenden	Richard Martin

Welcome

Cathy Flitter and Kim Shrosbree welcomed people to the AGM and sent best wishes on behalf of all members to our President, Alan Moody who was unable to be present due to ill health.

1. Approval of 2024 minutes

Kim Shrosbree was omitted from the 2024 AGM attendees so with this noted to attendees, the 2024 minutes were approved and accepted by the meeting.

Proposed by Carolyn Page and seconded by Steve Roebuck. This was accepted by all members at meeting.

2. Chairs' Report – Cathy Flitter and Kim Shrosbree

This is a joint report with Cathy, it is a great success being Chair with her— she has so many skills I do not and knows everything and everyone who's anyone – I think my only real skill is being able to talk!

It's been another colourful year for our society—quite literally in some cases. We've had everything from glorious blooms to the usual battles with weather, pests, and the occasional plant that simply refused to cooperate no matter how nicely we spoke to it.

What we've both enjoyed most is the friendliness of the society. This year, I personally have been able to enjoy more meetings, outings and garden visits - all have that wonderful mix of learning, laughter, and shared enthusiasm (including Cathy's side-splitting guffaws when I crashed off the end of a slide at one garden visit!). Whether you've been giving or receiving advice, donating plants or raffle prizes, sharing a cuppa, or just turning up with a smile, you've helped make the Society what it is.

We would like to thank everyone who has helped over the last year, all the people setting up tables and chairs for the meetings, especially the Langley Vale posse; everyone who volunteered at the show, everyone who has made cakes (especially Margaret who has gone way beyond in her cake production); to those who make refreshments, take money, sell raffle tickets and everything and everyone we've forgotten to mention.

You will now hear reports from other members of the Committee today which we are sure you will find interesting. There will be plenty of time for questions and any other business. If you are going to propose or second a resolution or want to ask a question or add any other business, please state your full name before you start as we have lots of new members who may not know who you are.

3. Secretary –Kim Shrosbree

We have had another successful year and continue to enjoy this lovely venue - thanks to everyone here and to Pam for making this happen. As I mentioned with my Chair's hat on, I would also like to thank all those involved with refreshments for our meetings and those who helped with, and attended, our lovely Annual Show – what a fabulous day with everyone enjoying the beautiful displays and yummy refreshments. As we say so often, please do not think you are “not good enough” to enter our show, even the most experienced entrant thought that once! Anyone can take part, no matter what your level of experience and every entry helps to make such a lovely display for our visitors. I'd especially like to thank our committee. So much of what keeps the Society going happens quietly behind the scenes, and we're very lucky to have people who are willing to roll up their sleeves—sometimes literally—and help out.

You may remember that one of our biggest jobs from last year was to address the lack of publicity locally for the Society. I have been trying to publicise all our meetings and events both on Facebook and Instagram and in various What's On publications and sites. Our meetings have grown in popularity and the Show, which Cathy will talk about, was a huge success. As mentioned, I have been adding all our events to our Facebook page and our Instagram and local events sites. We have done a mini revamp of our website and, as many of you will know, we now have the epsomgardensociety.org.uk domain and email addresses.

Don't forget to consult your Members' Handbook and membership card for the amazing discounts which have been negotiated by Pam – what great work, thanks so much to her, I have certainly taken advantage of the discounts which can easily cover your society membership, and which are all listed in the Members' Handbook. I would just like, for one last time, to mention that we no longer have an affiliation to Tender Shoots, the online gardening club as it was felt that the value to members was not commensurate with the cost to the Society – not enough members expressed an interest, and it was not felt a good use of membership money.

4. Treasurer Report – Pam Davis

The Annual Accounts and Show Costs are at the end of these minutes.

Funds from membership has remained good, most members are enjoying the new facilities we found and attending more meetings. We are fortunate that we have our sponsors who support the society and give us concessions at 4 local garden centres (Chessington, The Moat, Ashted Park, and Farm Lane). We also have Dave Ford Tree Care and Brooks Gardening whom I have used, and both do a really good job. We give details in our monthly newsletter regularly. Please do take advantage of these as it helps greatly for the sponsors to continue to support us. I am always working on finding new sponsors, but it is difficult in these times.

Last year, as many know, we changed the venue for our monthly meetings, to The Epsom Sports Club, having changed the day to a Wednesday and the time to mornings, (10.30 to 12am. We have gained a lot more members attendance and thus more income, but speakers are getting more and more expensive, so it is important to try and improve our attendance. The committee would still like to hear any feedback on these changes.

We held our show this year in June, and it was well attended, including the Mayor and his wife. Weather was good and it gave a lot of our members the chance to catch up with friends with coffee and cake as well as appreciate the beautiful show of exhibits. The show cost us £307.03 this year, this included the support from our sponsors, and the committee believe the show is an important part of the Society. The school hall costs, together with Judges and prize money, make up the majority of the costs. This year we moved the timing of the show to June, and this gave us a huge increase in our Plant stall. We also need to thank Barbara Warwick who worked hard on our raffle table both in prizes and selling the tickets. Entrance fees were the same. On a positive note, the show was a great success and enjoyed by all.

As the Treasurer of the garden society, it is my job to try to balance the books each year but, as I am sure you all know, costs for all of us are rising and we are no exception to that. So, as a committee, we have had to look at our key costs. A few years ago, hiring St Martins School Hall for the show was £350 it is now £550 which is expected to increase again this year and sadly is an unsustainable cost to us. So, we have looked at our options, and we feel the exhibitor's entry cost of 20p per item will need to rise to 25p as from 2026 - this cost has not gone up for many years, so I do ask you support us and in turn support our Society.

General expenses for printing, stationery and postage were down but are essential for the running of the society. The monthly meetings this year came in at a cost of £108 whereas last year it cost £219. We did have some very interesting speakers this year which many have enjoyed. Insurance and memberships for the Society remain the same.

Overall for the year, income versus expenditure leaves us with a surplus of £358.01 as an income, which is very healthy for us. The Society still remains in a good position financially and this will allow us to continue to have our meetings with our excellent speakers and our annual show and provide another fun year with the Society.

The accounts have been independently reviewed by Julian Flitter, a partner of Goodman Jones firm of accountants and we once again thank Julian for doing this. All members thanked the Treasurer for her work.

Questions:

- Carolyn Page - Why no cost for gazebos? – we didn't hire any
- Jane Hoddy - increasing exhibitors' entries – how is this justified with quite a big bank balance? Trying to balance entrant fees with prize money and Treasurer. Large chunk of bank balance came from Flower Arranging Group so is not really main club funds and the interest on this money covers our bank fees.

Members were in agreement with the Treasurer's report and acceptance was proposed by Sarah Mitchell and seconded by Debbie Turner. Accepted by all members at meeting

Agreement to continue with the appointment Julian Flitter as auditor of the accounts was proposed by Felicity Peatfield, seconded by Barbara Warwick and accepted by all members at meeting

5. Membership Report –Steve Roebuck

We now have 265 members of whom 5 are Honorary. During the year we lost 30 but gained 26, a net loss of only 4 in the year. That is brilliant and the best for about 20 years. At the summer show we managed to recruit 11 members which is a record. This is really not surprising as we offer fantastic value for money with our meetings with amazing speakers, monthly newsletter, gardens to visit and, of course, valuable discounts from our kind sponsors. Most of the leavers gave no reason. 10 were just impossible to contact. Interestingly, of the members who don't have a rep we lost 25%, whereas where a rep chased members, we only lost 7%, so the value of having reps is clear. Rep's members can still pay direct online if they don't have the cash.

In the year we have received £1309 in subs plus £28 in donations. All has been paid in, and Pam has a copy of both the membership and the subs received spreadsheets so she can check everything is in order.

Finally, a reminder to let me know if you change your email address. It's very easy for emails to disappear into the ether and they don't always bounce back to let me know they haven't been delivered. Also, don't forget that our website and Facebook as they both have lots of information on. Previous newsletters and contact details are on the website.

If you have any friends or neighbours who might be interested in joining, please take a flyer to give them. Personal recommendation is always a good way to recruit.

Thanks were given by all members to Steve and Pat Roebuck

6. Meetings report – Cathy Flitter

It has been a particularly successful and varied year for meetings. Some were deliberately planned well in advance and others the result of a great deal of luck! We kicked off our meetings year with an excellent Christmas floral demonstration from Elizabeth Barralet. This was our best attended meeting of the year, so I am sure you will be pleased to hear that she will be making a return visit on 10th December. Kim prepared a most enjoyable quiz for January and Sarah Foss visited in February to talk all things Houseplants. This meeting turned out to be enormously successful, not just in terms of turnout, clearly, we have plenty of members who are much better at keeping houseplants alive than your meeting secretary, but Sarah also revealed that she had done her dissertation on Worms so, after a cancellation from the booked speaker, we enjoyed a fascinating talk on the subject. I for one did not know there are so many varieties and they have so many habitats, or indeed how useful they are to gardeners. It was a particularly scorching day in August but there is something quite cooling about Earthworms, I think. The Society has now been added to the mailing list for EcoLocal in Carshalton who host a variety of great talks/workshops and courses, so look out for details in the newsletter. Definitely luck was on our side there!

March saw a slightly bonkers presentation from Jacqueline Aviolet on plants in TV and Films, she also does one on Chocolate that feels like a must for the future! April saw our Spring display and Plant sale where we not only enjoyed the gorgeous displays of Spring flowers and bulbs but raised a healthy amount from the donations of plants to sell. May saw our annual 'garden history' talk with an excellent presentation on the History of Allotments from Dr Judith Hill, like worms, nowhere near as dry as it sounds!

Our speaker for July had a tree surgeon booked so instead we were entertained with an excellent ad hoc presentation from our member Carolyn Page, with a little help from a fun film of Peter digging potatoes and singing. Lots of useful information on using empty milk cartons and a fun time was had. Our booked speaker Carol Gubler did finally attend in September with an entertaining and informative talk on all things Fuchsia; and we ended with some seasonal flower arranging from Lynn Sleet. Turns out she is a tutor and runs beginners' courses, so she was promptly booked to run a workshop next year in the hope that we will have far more entries for the Show with a bit of coaching.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Margaret Haslam, who not only bakes the most delicious cakes and, together with Pat Roebuck, doles out gallons of coffee and tea, but also sits through the meetings taking notes to prepare pieces for the newsletter. Thanks are also due to the 'Langley Vale posse' who, together with Steve and Kim, get the hall set up in time for said quantities of cake and coffee to be dispensed. I hope you have all enjoyed this year's meetings and look forward to the coming year.

7. Show Report – Cathy Flitter

This year's show fell in the midst of one of the hottest, driest Spring/Summers in many years, so it was really quite worrying if we would actually have any entries at all. However, as always, our members pulled out all the stops and 245 fantastic entries graced St Martins school hall. It was particularly gratifying to have some brand-new exhibitors, including one lady who used to exhibit as a junior.

There was a big increase in the number of junior entries. This used to be a very strong section and, as those children have grown up (mine are now 21 and 25!!), it has been difficult to find their replacements. Part of this is down to the fact that we no longer have a committee member responsible for Juniors, so if anyone would be interested in taking this area on, I would really love to hear from you. However, this year the 'grandchildren cohort' produced some delightful entries, and it was an absolute pleasure to once again award a 'Show Secretary's choice' certificate.

On the other end of the scale, it was so disappointing that we only had two people enter the Flower Arranging categories. This has always been such a highlight of the Show and the first thing visitors see when entering the hall. Very sadly, Audrey Simpson passed away this year - Audrey was the driving force and worked so hard to maintain this section of the Society (more on a tribute to her anon). Before she died, she had even prepared files with all the information on how to organise and prepare for Shows, so we owe it to her to ensure that Flower Arranging continues to be an important part of Epsom Garden Society. I am, therefore, so pleased to inform you that Joan Gabbett has volunteered to assist with this section and will be working with local judges and experts to try and build up the Flower Arranging group again. I have also organised a beginner's workshop for May, so am really hoping that this will give some confidence to those would be novices, to 'give it a go'. Again, if there is anyone who enjoys flower arranging and can assist Joan, particularly with encouraging young people to enter, we would be most appreciative.

The raffle, refreshments and plant sale all contributed greatly to the lively feel of the Show, and I would like to thank everyone who gave up their time to make this such an enjoyable day. Everyone is a volunteer and for some it is a big sacrifice to take time out of their life to get the Show looking so good. With Kim's knowledgeable assistance, we have started to move entry systems online and, whilst this is a work in progress, I do think that you will start to see a more organised and time efficient Show than ever before and, who knows, I may even come to grips with technology, although somehow prefer veg growing!

8. Open Gardens and Outings– Sue Glover

This year we continued with visits to NGS gardens within the Surrey area on a shared car basis. In February we visited Gatton Park to see the snowdrops, and this turned out to be a really good outing as there was plenty to interest us on the day including a tour of the church. In April we visited Shielling garden which had a very traditional 1920s design and again this was an excellent garden with lots to see. This was followed by a very intriguing visit to Chauffer's Flat - the scenery was absolutely amazing as the garden was set in an area of outstanding beauty but, inside, the garden had all manner of strange, recycled objects and unusual pruning of shrubs and fruit trees. By contrast, our June visit was to Bridge End Cottage with a 2-acre country garden plus a wildflower meadow. Some of us were rather envious of their vegetable plot, mature trees and greenhouse. In July we went to Wren's Nest Cottage - their 1.5-acre garden featured various island beds plus a woodland area. Our final trip was to Titsey Place Gardens where some of our party managed to fit in a visit to the house. We should have given ourselves more time at Titsey as there is a total of 15 acres of formal and informal gardens.

In addition to visiting gardens in the NGS scheme, our members were also able to enjoy some of the Society's own members gardens. I would like to thank Cathy Flitter, Rosie and Doug Nurse, Louise Laudy, Steve and Pat Roebuck, John and Mary Lucking and Sue Wiltshire for opening their gardens to us. They had all done a wonderful job of getting their gardens tidy and providing refreshments (I would like to point out though that it is not essential to provide refreshments). The main purpose of these visits is to socialise and see how other people deal with local problems.

I am currently in the process of finding some new gardens for us to visit next year. There are lots of new gardens listed but it is not clear at the moment if any of them will permit private visits, but I will do my best.

Questions:

- Sue Wiltshire - could we revisit Titsey as we did not have enough time – will look at revisiting. How is transport arranged – Sue has a list of those who will carshare
- Jan Shapiro – thought about going to whole village open gardens? May put in newsletter to say as when trips are arranged, we do risk assessment and so on and parking and members' different paces may be an issue
- Brian Oliver – Is Munstead Wood worth a revisit not sure as it's now National Trust
- Steve Roebuck – visit to behind the scenes at a garden centre
- Pat Roebuck – if we visit a larger garden there may be more people there

9. Committee Election

All the existing Committee will stand:

President	Alan Moody	
Joint Chair	Cathy Flitter & Kim Shrosbree	committee@epsomgardensociety.org.uk
Membership & Webmaster	Steve Roebuck	membership@epsomgardensociety.org.uk
Shows & Meetings Secretary	Cathy Flitter	events@epsomgardensociety.org.uk
Treasurer	Pam Davis	treasurer@epsomgardensociety.org.uk
Secretary	Kim Shrosbree	secretary@epsomgardensociety.org.uk
Newsletter Editor	Margaret Haslam	newsletter@epsomgardensociety.org.uk
Assistant Show Secretary	Heather Martindale	events@epsomgardensociety.org.uk
Outings & Open Gardens	Sue Glover	outings@epsomgardensociety.org.uk

Joan Gabbett has offered to join the committee with responsibility for the flower arranging section.

Proposal to re-elect the existing Committee and to elect Joan Gabbett by Eileen Dann and seconded by Sue Wiltshire. This was accepted by all members

10. AOB

Barb Warwick suggested we could include raffle tickets in entry to show – we thought no but will move raffle table from just inside the entrance. Not many bought more than one. Do sign about raffle.

Want to create a trophy in Audrey Simpson's name and Cathy Flitter suggests that we have a trophy for each section. Will replace old trophy with one in her name. Also, will try and get a junior trophy too but this has not been awarded in a while. Donation was sent by the Society in memory of Audrey.

Suggestions for places to advertise were made but most of them we already submit our events to online. Secretary will check out Epsom Connection, however, it is believed that advertising is only on a paid for basis, but we can post in their Facebook group. Will also look at Epsom & Ewell Times. Borough Boards don't work and are not suitable for events other than the Show, which is submitted, but not always put up by ward councillors.

TREASURER REPORT – ACCOUNTS FOR END OF YEAR 30TH SEPTEMBER 2025**Income & expenditure for the year**

Income breakdown	2024	2025	Balance Sheet on 30 September 2025	
	£	£		2025
				£
Membership subscriptions	1,354.00	1,309.00		
Donation	40.00	45.00		
Monthly Meetings Income	702.62	724.60		
Advertising	350.00	225.00	Lloyds Bank – Community A/C	1,033.63
Bank Interest	-	45.05	Lloyds Bank – Interest A/C	8,045.05
Dobies Credit	2.85	-	Prepayments	70.00
	2,449.47	2,348.65	Deferred Income (advertising)	(225.00)
Expenditure breakdown	2024	2025		8,923.68
	£	£		
Printing/Stationery	281.25	167.99	Surplus brought forward	8,565.67
Postage	113.50	42.50	Surplus for the year	358.01
Hall hire for Lectures	444.00	480.00		
Summer Show (net) cost	566.66	307.03		8,923.68
Monthly meetings costs	478.60	614.90		
Bank charges	-	46.48		
RHS & SHF membership	80.00	57.00		
Sundry Equipment Polo Shirts/Cup/banner	144.74	74.74		
Insurance	80.00	80.00		
Last year's costs (school/gazebos)	698.80	-		
Mayor Fund/Gratuity members etc	147.60	120.00		
	3,035.15	1,990.64		
Surplus/(Cost) of income over expenditure	(585.68)	358.01		

ANNUAL SHOW 2025 COSTINGS

AUGUST 24 SHOW			JUNE 25 SHOW		
DEBITS	£	Notes	DEBITS	£	Notes
Total Prize money awarded	209.00		Total prize money awarded	204.60	
Judges Fees	110.00		Judges' fees	70.00	
Sandwiches for Judges/committee/helpers	45.60		Sandwiches for Judges/committee/helpers	75.65	
Voucher & planet for raffle	0.00		Voucher & plant for Raffle	0.00	
Cakes/jam/cream/plates	18.53		Cakes/jam/cream/plates	32.35	
Voucher for caretaker	0.00		Voucher for caretaker	0.00	
New Cup (over 3 yrs)	0.00		New Cup (over 3 years)	0.00	
Hall Hire	512.40		Hall Hire	540.10	
Stationery/printing	16.74		Stationery/printing	0.00	
Display Boards for Photography	0.00		Display Boards for Photography	0.00	
Consumables/new banner (over 3 years)	0.00		Consumables/new banner (over 3 years)	0.00	
Polo Shirts (over 5 years)	0.00		Polo Shirts (over 5 years)	0.00	
Hire of Gazebos	195.00		Hire of Gazebos/tables	0.00	
	1107.27			922.70	
AUGUST 24 SHOW			JUNE 25 SHOW		
CREDITS	£		CREDITS	£	
Tea/Cake Stall	205.44	Includes £40 cakes	Tea/Cake Stall	180.80	10 tokens taken for helpers at-£3 approx
Plant Sales	64.60		Plant Sales	139.87	
Raffle money	50.00		Raffle money	112.00	
Entry Fee for Exhibits	38.40		Entry Fee for Exhibits	47.00	
Advertisement in schedule 50% of receipts	0.00		Advertisement in schedule 50% of receipts	0.00	Shown in accounts as Income
Bread Stall contribution	0.00		Bread Stall contribution	20.00	
Book Stall	0.00		Prepayment Credit	0.00	
Entrance Fees	112.00		Entrance Fees	116.00	
Card Stall			Donations etc	0.00	
	470.44		Monies utilised from meetings	0.00	
				615.67	
COST OF SHOW	-636.83		COST OF SHOW	-307.03	