

BUXTED HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026

Meeting held Tuesday 17th March 2026 at, St Mary's Church Hall, Church Road, Buxted TN22 4LP. At 7 00 pm.

PRESENT: John Forster (Chair), Stephen Povey (Treasurer) (SP), Kirsten Brown (Secretary) (KB), Sheila Bartholomew (Events Coordinator)(SB), Sarah Ferguson (SF), Susan Pearson (Sue P), Victoria Taberman-Pichler (Membership Secretary) (VTP), Lisa Ayling (LA), Julie Taylor (JT)

18 Visitors/Members

APOLOGIES: Oliver Bangham

AGENDA

Welcome by Chair following which:

1. Minutes of the Annual Meeting 2025 had previously been circulated to the Committee members and were available on request. There were no matters arising and the Minutes, having been agreed, were signed by Chair (John Forster)
2. CHAIR'S REPORT: In his Yearly Report, John Forster (JF) Chair, commended the Committee for their combined support in making the previous year such a great one for Buxted Horticultural Society, making a point of thanking each member of the Committee for whichever task they had been most appreciated.
JF reflected on the year's events beginning with the Spring Show where the new tea tent had been in use, having been kindly loaned by the Buxted Art Group. The weather was kind, and with an almost village fete atmosphere in the sunshine, the show had started the year on a very good footing. However, JF reflected on the changing climate which had contributed to a lower number of entries in some classes. Later in the year the Autumn Show had benefitted from the large number of entries by the East Hoathly Community Garden, although poor weather on this occasion had meant the Teas having to be served inside as in previous years. With a successful plant stall at the Village Fayre, held on a very hot day in June, a very enjoyable outing to Wisley, when even the M25 did not prove an obstacle, and a well-supported and very promising first village Scarecrow competition, the summer months had been full of activity for the Society. With the night's drawing in the final event of the year had been a very interesting talk given by the Head Gardener at Bateman's, which had been enjoyed by many members.
JF also made mention of the Moving Forward initiative, very much spearheaded by Oliver Bangham (OB), which was encouraging input from members and visitors regarding future events and updating the day to day running of the Society. This, together with the regular newsletters published in the Buxted Messenger, written by Alan, David, Ron and Tom, all of whom were thanked by the Chair, had given Buxted Horticultural Society an increased profile in the village.

In summary the Chair thanked both the Committee and the members for supporting the Society during what had been altogether a successful year, and rounded off his report with the assurance that Buxted Horticultural Society would continue to monitor the impact of climate change and what effect this has on our gardens and show classes in the coming year.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT: In his Report Stephen Povey (SP) Treasurer referred to the Financial Statements 2025 – Comparatives 2024 and 2023

Financial Statements 2025 - Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet copies of which had been circulated to those present.

In summary SP commented that with an increase in expenditure on equipment, membership development and storage costs, together with the amount spent on website hosting, the income raised from membership subscriptions and donations, together with a relatively large grant from Buxted Parish Council, had nevertheless meant that the surplus/(Deficit) of income over expenditure had reduced to £42. SP further commented that the Total Reserves of £7,385 as reflected in the Financial Statements showed current assets of Cash at bank Current Account of £7,385. This reflected the surplus/Deficit of £42 as outlined above.

This left the Society on a firm financial footing at Financial Year End 31/12/25 which would enable the Committee to further build on last year's success and work on the moving forward initiative.

SP thanked the Committee for all their support during his time as Treasurer, saying he was confident that the Society was in safe hands and would continue to grow from strength to strength.

Finally, SP commented on the need to find not only a new Treasurer, but also an Auditor, who should be a non-member.

There were no questions, and the Chair (JF) proposed adoption of the Treasurer's Report, which was accepted.

4. ELECTION of:

Chair: John Forster, proposed Stephen Povey and seconded Sheila Bartholomew.

Treasurer: Position vacant

Auditor: (non-Society member) Position remains vacant

Secretary: Kirsten Brown, proposed Janet Morant and seconded Susan Pearson

Membership Secretary: Barbara Eastwood proposed Victoria Taberman-Pichler and seconded Susan Pearson

Show Secretary: Victoria Taberman Pichler proposed Janet Morant and seconded Stephen Povey

Events Coordinator: Sheila Bartholomew, proposed Sue Adams and seconded Jackie Fowler

Committee Members: the following agreed to stand for re-election

Oliver Bangham
Sarah Ferguson
Susan Pearson

Kirsten Brown proposed the election of all those willing to stand for re-election en-bloc, and seconded by Sheila Bartholomew

Committee Member: Position vacant

5. Proposal to retain Annual Membership Fee at £5 per person in 2027. Proposed by Chair, and with majority in agreement, therefore passed.
6. Plans for This Year:

Sheila Bartholomew, as Events Coordinator, outlined the following events planned for 2026 so far:

Following the Business of the evening, SB reminded those present that there would be a talk by award winning florist, Sue Flight, who would give us pointers on preparing and presenting floral arrangements for shows. This Sheila hoped would give encouragement to members to enter the first event of the year:

The Spring Show – to be held on Saturday 11th April in St Mary's Church Hall. With classes not only for flowers but ranging from crafts, domestic produce, photography and children's classes. Show Schedule is available on the website and SB encouraged those entering to look at the New Rules for 2026

Plant Sale – to be held on Saturday 23rd May in the Methodist Church Hall and front garden. Sheila encouraged members to bring along any spare plants or seedlings for sale.

Rose Day events for members only will be held on Sunday 7th and Thursday 18th June, while it is also hoped to run an Open Gardens event in Buxted during the summer, with exact timing and venues still to be confirmed.

The popular Scarecrow Competition will be repeated in August 2026 and Sheila hoped that this would stimulate further interest among other village institutions, as well as adults and children within the village, providing a fun and creative activity for the summer holidays

The Autumn Show will be held on Saturday 12th September when better weather is hoped for the event this year, so that advantage may be taken of the extra space afforded by serving teas in the tent, thus allowing us to showcase the impressive harvest of flowers and vegetables which we hope will again be entered into this show.

A coach trip is being planned for September and as Events Coordinator SB asked those present to send in names of gardens they would like to visit, as ideas would be very welcome.

Finally, we are holding an end of year talk on 9th October. This will be given by Julia Parker and will either be on 'Seasonal Sowing' or 'Veg on the Ledge'. Members were asked to send in their choice.

In conclusion, SB looked forward to welcoming members and visitors alike to the events planned by BHS this coming year, which she hoped would provide plenty of enjoyment and inspiration to members and visitors alike.

7. Any Other Business:

There being no further business, Chair, John Forster, took the opportunity to thank those Committee members who were standing down. Gifts were then presented to Lisa Ayling and Jools Taylor. In recognition of the many years Stephen Povey had held the role of Treasurer, he too was presented with a gift, with grateful thanks for his efficient and methodical running of the finances over many years.

In thanking the Chair, Stephen again stressed the need to find a Treasurer and a non-member Auditor for the Society, as a matter of urgency, to ensure that there might be a smooth transition. It was generally agreed that this would be a hard act to follow, after his dedication and commitment to the Society during the time he had served as Treasurer.

There being no further business, and the Annual General Meeting 2026 closed at 7 25pm.