



Brighter Better Orrell Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 17th February 2026 at 7pm

The Straw Bale Café, Greenslate Community Farm, Greenslate Road, Billinge, Wigan WN5 7BG

Minutes

Facilitated by: Kathryn Johnston (JR)

Minutes: Elaine Hanmer (EH)

Present: Kathryn Johnston (KJ), Julie Ryder (JR), Elaine Hanmer (EH), Tony Hanmer (TH), Mandy Wellens-Bray (MWB), Mark D. Houlton (MDH), Natalie Milton (NM), Gail McManus (GM), Karla Taylor-Hildebrandt (KTH), Gillian Eyre (GE), Della Kirby (DK), Kathleen Greenall (KG), Shirley Skinley (SS), Dianne Yates (DY), Kathryn Lydon (KL), Tricia Scott (TS), Tracy Connor (TC), on behalf of Greenslate Community Farm, Michael Fishwick (MF) Wigan MBC Greenspaces Lead, Scot Griffiths (SG) Be Well Activator

Apologies: Councillor Anne Collins, Paul Boulton, Julie Ramsdale, Jeff O'Brien, Mrs Harris, Head Teacher of Newfold Community Primary School, Jennifer Gregory, Joanne Edwards

1. Welcome and Introductions

KJ welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending.
All committee members introduced themselves

2. Apologies

All apologies received were noted

3. Minutes of Previous AGM

The minutes of the previous AGM, dated 21st February 2025, and agreed as a true record on 22nd February 2025, were briefly discussed, with no further updates.

4. Report from the Committee

JR, on behalf of the committee, presented the report reflecting on the group's achievements during 2025, along with a brief overview of priorities for 2026. She thanked Corinne Eden for her nearly six years of service as Treasurer, and for her support, not only as a friend, but as an active committee member, and wished her well for the future.

JR also thanked Nic Winstanley and Georgia Gibson, who have stepped down from the committee, for their contributions and ideas they brought to the group. She welcomed Mandy Wellens-Bray (MWB), who has agreed to take on the role of Treasurer, along with Gail McManus (GM), and Karla Taylor-Hildebrandt (KTH) as new committee members.

JR expressed thanks to all committee members, local businesses, partner organisations, councillors, council officers and the group's many volunteers for their continued support, commitment, drive and energy, helping to move the group forward.

The full transcript is available in the Annual Report.

5. Treasurer's Report and Funding Summary

MWB presented the financial review for 2025, noting that the accounts had been prepared by Corinne, prior to her stepping down, and thanking her for leaving them in such meticulous order. MWB then provided a brief summary of the funding received from grants and donations, as well as income generated through raffles, sales and bank interest.

6. Changes to the Constitution

EH reported that two amendments to the Constitution required approval by the members. The first amendment clarified the group's legal structure, formally stating that it operates as an unincorporated association, defined as a non-profit group working together for a common purpose.



The second amendment related to the officer roles. Following previous discussions, it is proposed that the roles of Chairperson and Deputy Chair be replaced with the roles Lead Contact and Meeting Facilitator, reflecting a more informal and community-focused approach.

EH advised that, unless there were any objections to these changes, the amended Constitution would be signed off by the officers, and formally adopted by the group. **ALL** present agreed to the amendments.

7. Policy Review

EH reported that all the group's policies have been recently reviewed, and are up to date. She stated that the Volunteer Policy has been updated to include the provision of refreshments, and that a new policy has been introduced to cover the volunteer work undertaken by the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) students. All policies are available on the website.

8. Review of Officers and Roles

EH informed the meeting that, subject to those present agreeing to **MWB** taking up the role of Treasurer, there will be no election of officers this year, as all the current officers are willing to continue in their existing roles. **ALL** those present were in agreement.

The Officers are as follows:

Lead Contact	Tony Hanmer
Lead Meeting Facilitator	Julie Ryder
Treasurer	Mandy Wellens-Bray
Secretary	Elaine Hanmer

9. Review of 2025

TH gave a brief summary of the achievements for 2025, in particular the installation of the outdoor gym in Orrell Water Park, and thanked Scot (**SG**) for his support with the gym sessions each week.

TH also reflected on the amount of investment BBO had brought to the area over the last 6 years. This has amounted to almost £100,000 from fund raising, grants and Brighter Borough funds.

A full review for 2025 is available in the Annual Report.

10. Key Objectives for 2026

TH gave a brief overview of the priorities for 2026. There will be focus on strengthening community connections, improving local spaces, and responding to residents' priorities, including exploring options for a community base and continuing engagement with local people. Ongoing work will centre on environmental action, health and wellbeing, learning and volunteering, improving safety and accessibility in local spaces, and strengthening partnerships with the council, schools, charities, businesses and volunteers, reflecting the group's commitment to a cleaner, greener, kinder and more connected community.

11. Questions, Ideas and Suggestions from members

- Shirley Skinley (**SS**) asked about having a community herb planter. **TH** said there is already one on Upholland Road, at the bottom of Smethurst Road, and one at the side of the Copper Tap. It was felt that they should be promoted more on the Facebook page. Della Kirby (**DK**) suggested that there could be one at the garden area on Church Drive. **TH** said he would speak to Mike and Elaine who look after this area. It was felt that we should also try and find an area around Orrell Post, and suggestions are welcome.
Action: TH to speak to Mike and Elaine regarding a herb planter.
- **SS** asked whether there could be some signs to promote watering of the planters. **ALL** felt they are a good visible reminder. **TH** said he would look at getting some printing for the summer season. Dianne Yates (**DY**) asked about installing water butts in some areas. **TH** said we have got plans for one at the Grapes but the rainfall alone is not enough to keep any water butts full at peak watering times.
- **DK** asked whether there had been any progress with National Highways regarding the painting of the bridge over the motorway known as the banana bridge. **TH** reported that he had contacted National Highways in April 2025, and unfortunately the bridge is not on any maintenance schedule. For safety reasons this is not something BBO can undertake.



- **DK** discussed the amount of dog fouling in the area. **TH** said this can be raised with the council again, although it tends to reduce once we get the lighter nights. We also have a number of our own signs to put up in areas and will aim to get these put up in the next few months.
- **DK** also asked about the litter behind the fence along Linden Walk. Unfortunately, as this is National Highways responsibility, it needs to be reported to National Highways.
- There was also discussion about litter in front of some local businesses. Members are concerned about the environmental impact this is having. There was discussion about doing a leaflet drop to highlight the problem, and about awards for the cleanest shop front. Michael Fishwick (**MF**) said he would check whether the businesses have any responsibility for keeping the areas in front of their premises clean and litter free.

ALL felt that the litter problem across the whole area is exacerbated by the motorway closures.

Kath Greenall (**KG**) highlighted the footpath from Howards Lane down to St Peters RC School is particularly bad for litter and dog fouling. It was suggested that this could be one of the community picks during the Great British Spring Clean, particularly as we have two DofE students from the school.

DY asked whether there could be a litter picking station installed at Holgate Park. **TH** said one is scheduled to be installed next to the sign.

- The unused and overgrown allotment area in Holgate Park was discussed. **MF** said that Councillor Tebbutt has put aside £2000 towards the clearing, but it was planned for some of the Streetscene team to make a start and clear the brambles. There are plans to take a drone to the park on Friday, 20th February, to map out the area, so that consultation regarding the use of the land can proceed.
- Signage on the motorway bridges was discussed. There is a new Happy to Chat bench being delivered in the next few days which will be installed at East Mount. We are hoping to get appropriate signs installed directing anyone who needs help to a local support team.
- Other wellbeing initiatives were discussed – possibly a walk around the Water Park with inspirational items, and foraging walks, which Kathryn Lydon (**KL**) would be happy to do. Scot Griffiths (**SG**) said there is a fitness program called Couch to Fitness, which he could deliver. Some of the walks could be during the Big Wigan Walk Week at the end of May.
- **DK** asked whether the gym sessions on a Friday were fixed. **SG** said they are at the moment but he is flexible and it is possible they could be rearranged. At the moment there are only a few people attending due to the weather, but the attendees have been from all age groups and all abilities. **SG** is currently in talks with Georgia Wilson at Edge Hall Road to see if the indoor gym could be used during the winter months. If this is not available then possibly find some indoor space to do a gym session when the weather is not suitable for outdoor activity.
- **MWB** said she would like to see the area become more bee and butterfly friendly. **TH** said we are distributing 100% wildflower seeds to the colleges, schools and nurseries. We will also be raking the meadow in Holgate Park and sowing wildflower seeds in March, and have seeds for the railway bridge garden. **DK** would like to raise awareness of the need for hedgehog highways, so that hedgehogs can move between gardens.
- **TH** asked **MF** about holding events in the three parks during the school holidays. **MF** said there is money available for sports coaches, and this is something we could look at. **TH** to contact **MF** and **SG** for more details. **MF** would also look at getting some Be Well Gym fitness passes for raffle prizes or Random Acts of Kindness. **TH** asked if this could include access to the watersports at Scotsman's Flash. **MF** to enquire.
- **DK** asked about the angling at the Water Park. **MF** said the council legal team are currently working on the lease with Warrington Angling Association. This may take a while but **MF** spoke about allowing the association access to the waters before the season starts if the lease has not been completed. **MF** warned that turning the Water Park around may take some time.

12. Close

As there were no further questions, **KJ** brought the meeting to a close, thanked everyone for attending, and Greenslate Community Farm for allowing us to use the Straw Bale Cafe.

Signed:

Kathryn Johnston, Meeting Facilitator

Date: 23rd February 2026