



**Bustardthorpe Allotments Association**  
**Charitable Incorporated Organisation**

Registered Charity No: 1211930

**Bishopthorpe Road, York, YO23 2QA**

Record of Extraordinary General Meeting including reports  
held at 7.30pm on Thursday 13th November 2025  
at Bishopthorpe Sports and Social Club, YO23 2RB

29 members were present

**1. Welcome and introductions – by Secretary**

- The trustees that were present were introduced.
- Apologies from Alli Church, Phil Wherrett and Phil Capon.
- As the Chair of Trustees was not present Jo Rogers proposed that trustee Susan DeVal should chair the meeting, seconded by Jim Poyner and agreed by a show of hands.

**2. Introduction**

Susan explained the context for the EGM, that since BAACIO became a charity (Charitable Incorporated Organisation - CIO) on 29 January 2025, it must work within the financial and reporting structure set down by the Charity Commission. This year a lot of work has gone into establishing new accounting and reporting systems, and it would not be possible to report on the year's activity in time for the previous November AGM date and meet Charity Commission requirements. The first AGM must be held within 18 months of charity registration, that is by June 2026, when the audited accounts, Trustees annual report will be approved, and Trustee appointments confirmed, and so the purpose of this meeting is to provide some information on that work, present the new website and award the annual prizes. The first Annual General Meeting is planned to be held in March 2026, date to be confirmed, and the reports at that meeting will reflect the full November 2024-31 December 2025 accounts. The accounting year is being moved to coincide with the rent year, 1 January -31 December.

**3. Update on Trustees**

Susan informed the meeting that Bob Bennett, Chris Church and Alli Church would all have resigned from the Board of Trustees by the time of the Annual General Meeting in 2026. Susan outlined the extent of the work and huge contribution that all three have made to Bustardthorpe Allotments over the years and congratulated them on having more time for their gardening. The meeting showed their appreciation with a round of applause.

**4. Interim Financial Report – presented by Treasurer**

**Charity Status Impact** – what is the impact to us. Being a Charity brings many benefits however we also need to comply with various requirements, some were

already in place, some we have had to review and implement new processes. We have changed the way we capture and share the income and expenditure so we can have consistency in future to be able to compare actual v budgets. Charity Commission requires the following:

1. Clear Financial information (income and expenses) with regular reviews
2. Good accounting practices and procedures including a financial health check
3. Financial stability and shared financial responsibility
4. New AGM reporting required (including a financial risk assessment and strategic planning both to ensure financial stability of the charity)
5. Submitting reviewed account with in 10 months of year end
6. Reduce cash transactions
7. Budget and Reserve plans in place and reviewed at AGM
8. Profit is allowed as long it is re invested in the charity
9. An asset list and financial plan for maintenance is required
10. Register for a tax exemption number (TIN)
11. We have been working through these and will update in more detail at our AGM in March.

***Capturing volunteer hours*** – we have tried to capture how many volunteer hours are required to keep the site going, this year we started to note how many hours were used in growing the plants we sell, in the maintenance of the site, in the repairs to vacated plots, in the behind the scenes admin and meetings. As part of our charity obligations, we need to ensure future proofing and caring for the charity, we need to understand the hours volunteers put and the cost to the charity if those volunteers are no longer available as we would have to pay external contractors. We estimate that around well in excess of 800+ hrs have kept the site going over the past year, this is just plant growing and site and plot maintenance. The shop has required around 75-100 hrs so far additional to the other hours (this is assuming 3 mins per shop entry in books so far 1,500).

***Bank changes*** – as a charity we need to have a charity account and also Lloyds have started charging for community accounts especially cash transactions. We have 3 trustees with online access, and any payment needs 2 authorised signatures. We are moving from a cash based transactions to cashless where possible to reduce the risk for trustees. We now offer cashless sales and rent payment using the Sum up option. As a CIO we have removed the use of petty cash for payments and now the majority of all our transactions are online. We can still carry out cash expenses but prefer not to.

***Financial stability*** - Better awareness of running costs to future proof the charity is another requirement of the charity status. To do this we need to have a clear understanding of our present and future costs. We have implemented a charity approved spreadsheet to capture our income and expenditure and have added codes to be able to monitor expenses by certain areas such as;

***Running cost ; Site Maintenance ; Shop and Plant Stock; Admin and Other***

In recent years the site has had to deal with the trees and water issues which made quite a financial impact on reserves. As the council is not responsible for the site we now need to budget and plan repairs and maintenance and aim to spread the burden. We have created schedules to monitor major trees and inherited aging self-build structures, and therefore can anticipate future expenses. Our findings have been confirmed by professional contractors and provisional estimates submitted to help us plan. We will regularly review these as part of our financial planning.

**Reserves** – Why do we need them and how do we calculate the amount. In past years we have had around £2-4k. Our accountant recommends we have 3 months running costs in our reserves and also a little extra to allow for unforeseen (unexpected price increases, volunteer hours not being available and requiring external contractors, unforeseen repairs etc...). We propose to build up a reserve of £5-6k which will require a couple of years to build up. (for example, £1-5k structures; £500 trees; £1-2k lease extension; running costs £3-5k). The benefit of working out what costs need to be budgeted for increases financial awareness and helps future planning. The proposed reserve figures are not 'plucked out of the sky' but based on research and experience. The total expense of the reserve will be accounted for from year to year within the annual financial report.

**Rent review and updates** – a rental increase is not a result of the new charitable structure, but various reasons. Mostly reviewing our needs going forward and calculating a reasonable increase. Having carried out research on local and national allotment charges we feel it is still a fair and reasonable rent. We will continue to regularly review costs and rents to aim to keep future increases to a minimum.

Reasons for raise:

- We have only had one rent rise in the last 7 years of £4 for a full plot which was 3 years ago.
- Materials and labour have increased significantly in the last 2 years (20% inflation during the last 3 years) we have not passed this on
- Cost of services (insurance, water charges etc...) has significantly increased in the last couple of years due to inflation mentioned above
- Less volunteers available to carry out maintenance and repair jobs
- Due to increased responsibilities in H&S (training & insurance), use and maintenance of machinery means the need to hire specialist contractors.
- Site is no longer managed by York City Council, and we have inherited several unsafe structures and unhealthy trees that have needed and still need attention. These are being regularly monitored by specialists and form part of the budget considerations.
- There is an ever-increasing responsibility to ensure safety on site and need to build up reserves for financial stability

Based on considerable research and discussion, the trustees unanimously agree to increase the rents by 50% for 2026 and this will result in an increase of around £6000 pa. This will help the association over the next few years to deal with planned maintenance issues on site and build up a reasonable reserve to avoid any challenges from unexpected scenarios that may come our way. The Trustees will

continue to review rents every year and advise plot holders at our AGM of any increase for the following calendar year.

It is also important to note we include a lot more than other allotments such as water access, manure, chippings, shop on site, seating areas, common areas such as the nature reserve, safe parking, toilet on site, plug plants, secure boundary, and guidance. Many don't have concessions for pensioners and only have means tested concessions

**Rent collection changes** – we now carry out nearly 80% of rent collection via bacs or cheques. This year we can also offer payment via the sum-up app. We would like to move over to cashless rent collection if possible and would prefer card transactions to cheques. However, we are happy to accommodate plot holders if any of our preferences are not suitable to them. The timeline will be slightly different this year to accommodate the new accounting period. **Invoices will go out after this meeting and the deadline is now 5/12/25.**

**Year End change** – we have changed our end of year from October to December. Why? We found that October didn't fit in with our growing season, and it was during our busy invoicing and rent collections period. Trying to carry out invoicing as well as end of year accounts and reports for the AGM seemed quite tight deadlines, and it was never possible to get published accounts back from the accountant in time. It is a Charity Commission requirement that the published accounts be presented to the AGM and even with the new timeline, we have had to negotiate with our accountant to produce this within a tight time frame. We considered the natural tax year (end of March) and also the end of the growing season (end of September). However, we thought that choosing the same period as our rent charges will sit better going forward and also ensures that plot holders don't get communications during the lead up to and Christmas holiday period. This also enables the Treasurer, Lettings Officer and Secretary to enjoy this time without having the busiest part of the tenancy.

BAACIO Inc & Exp				
INTERIM-UN AUDITED				
For period to:		YE 25		
1/11/24 TO 31/10/25 ONLY				
BAACIO	Income	Total	YE24 Actual	YE26 Budget
Income	Rents	9,370	8,929	13,533
	Donations	974	100	619
	Fundraising & Awards	529		980
Stock	Shop Sales	7,384	8,212	6,270
	Plant Sales	1,744		1,705
Other	Keys	264	-	-
	Courses	510	-	-
	Other	1,251	-	-
	Deposit for Plots	-	-	-
	Totals	22,026	17,241	23,107
BAACIO	Expenditure	Total		
Admin	1 - Admin & Office Cost	235	476	1,163
	1 - Deposit Plot Refunds	-		-
	1 - Meetings & AGM	380	50	100
	1 - Professional Fees	325	90	200
	1 - Rent Refunds	60	-	-
	1 - Website & Comms	614		200
Stock	2 - Plant Stock	717		867
	2 - Shop Stock	8,652	5,253	6,208
Running Cost	3 - Equipment	1,300	-	-
	3 - Insurance	839	530	1,130
	3 - Keys Refunds	7	22	-
	3 - Portaloos Costs	2,184	2,119	2,222
	3 - Refreshments	239		210
	3 - Water charges	406	328	1,130
Site Mgmt	4 - External Labour & Contractors	100		250
	4 - Plot Repairs inc structure repairs	181		4,600
	4 - Site Maintenance & Repairs	3,112	6,702	5,050
	4 - Tree Management	3,020		850
Other	5 - Other (prizes, etc)	341	28	191
	Totals	22,710	15,598	24,371

#### Comments on YE25 Interim Actuals

1. Insurance pay out
2. Unplanned tree costs
3. Water lower than actual due to credit 2024
4. £3k on hedge, grass trimming and machinery maintenance

#### Comments on YE26 Budget DRAFT

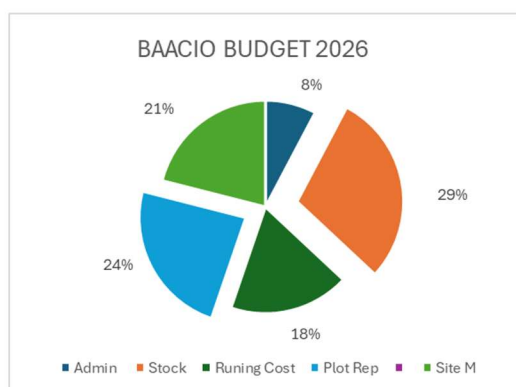
1. Provision for lease advice
2. Increase in water charges
3. Structure repairs
4. Increase in external labour
5. Planned maintenance

#### Additional information

1. Opening Bank Balance £ 2,748
2. Closing Bank Balance £ 1,300 estimate
3. Stock Value– cost £3,423
4. Stock Value– sale £4,975

## HOW DOES MY RENT GET USED?

### Budget Breakdown Estimates



### Breakdown of main provisions

#### Major expenses are

- **Site Maintenance** – grass and hedge cutting, nature reserve, drainage, vermin management.
- **Plot and structures** – we have 3 we need to deal with
- **Polytunnel irrigation** – to reduce water usage and volunteer hrs – grant awarded for this
- **Water management Support** – to help save water

#### How can you help to keep costs down:

- Don't waste water
- Keep your structures and plots in a safe state
- Maintain your plot and boundaries
- Keep trustees informed of any issues, or any cost saving ideas

## 5. Confirmation of rents for 2026 – presented by Treasurer

### RENTS FOR 2026

#### 2025 Regional and National averages

We still have very reasonable rents.

- YACIO XLP £135 FP £100; HP £50; ¼ plot £25
- National ones for 2025 from £20-100 per plot
- Private run it can range £50 -200 per plot

**And many don't include what we do ...**

water access, manure, chippings, shop on site, seating areas, common areas such as the nature reserve, safe parking, toilet on site, plug plants, secure boundary.

#### BAACIO Rents 2026

YE 26	Full Rent	Con Rent
Full Plot	£90	£60
Half Plot	£45	£30
1/4 Plot	£23	£15
1/3 Plot	£30	£23
3/4 Plot	£68	£45

## 6. Presentation from Lettings Officer

It seems like I've been the lettings officer for the site for much longer but I think it's only been a year.

In that time I've let 38 plots and while a couple of those were to existing tenants wanting to move or expand, the vast majority gave me the pleasure of meeting new faces. People that had been waiting up to two years for a place to grow. I've had the honour of meeting retired newcomers just bursting to have the space to garden after downsizing their lives, young families wanting somewhere they can watch their children flourish, people in their 20s and 30s who remember gardening with parents or grandparents, members of the LGBTQ+ and other minority communities finding a non-judgemental space, gardeners from all over Europe and of course, those people who just want a bit of bloody peace and quiet a few times a week!

As the Lettings Officer, I try to work to the Strict but Fair rule and so I must say thank you to those of you that gracefully received the dreaded letters or emails from me re the state of your plots and met up for a chat or got on with making the necessary changes straight away. I've no idea where those tenants that ignored my letters have gone but my rhubarb is doing exceptionally well this year.

Finally, we have enough tenants on our site to qualify as a village, but we want it to be a real community. If you have a criticism, offer a solution, if you have a suggestion, please help make it happen, and if you know someone whose life would be better with a growing space of their own, send them my way. Thank you.

## **7. Changes to the lease with City of York Council – presented by the Secretary**

At the end of another 12 months we are no further forward in getting our lease renewed. Our current lease doesn't expire until 31 December 2036.

To give some context, discussions started in May 2023 as a result of the Association approaching City of York Council (CYC) for financial help when the sites water system required total replacement.

The reason for the replacement of the existing lease is to reflect the Transfer of Asset Management that was applied to all other allotment sites which were originally run by CYC, but this was subsequent to our own existing lease. The end result will relieve us of all future rental payments.

At the May 2023 meeting between representatives of our association and CYC a 99-year lease was discussed, however in our most recent communication last month with our contact Dave Meigh, we are now being told that a 99-year length is unlikely – 35 years is a period that the Council is comfortable with and is the same period being offered to York Allotments CIO (YACIO). YACIO manages 16 allotment sites in the City of York.

Bearing in mind we are the only allotment management arrangement who pay a rental, this would bring BAACIO in line with recent Community Asset Transfers and would be at a peppercorn rental.

This year the trustees have asked for an update before every one of our meetings. The reasons given for the ongoing delays included:

- Our request for a new longer rent-free lease needs to be considered by the Councils Executive;
- Our lease is one of several being considered as part of a wide-ranging update on the councils' property portfolio.
- Our request is tied in with other requests which are likely to have to go to Cllrs for approval. This has been delayed as there have been a few issues with some of the other requests.
- Changes in staffing elsewhere in the Council.

In September, we sought help from our Councillor Jane Burton and she is actively negotiating on our behalf. The current time estimate from CYC for consideration of our application is "in the New Year".

We have also been in communication with the chair of YACIO whose leases are also in the process of renewal. They also have been struggling to get anywhere with CYC and only got limited success by applying pressure through councillors. They are expecting a 35-year lease to be approved by the Council's Executive Group in March.

However, in the most recent communication which we only received at the very beginning of the month, we were advised of draft wording to accompany the formal application documentation which is destined for the Executive. The text was based on information requested at the beginning of 2023 and did not represent our current status, achievements and objectives. We have replied to CYC with amendments and updates last week.

We would like to assure the membership that we are doing all in our power to get this application through, and at the same time protect our interests. In particular, we are focussed on concerns voiced by individual plotholders regarding land acquisition for development by CYC in the future.

## **8. Presentation of developing website – presented by the Secretary**

The Association is required by the Charities Commission to have a website as this is one of the key pieces of information that goes on our information in the public domain. Up until now we had a blog that was set up about 8 years ago and is very out-dated and not fit for the modern purpose.

The Treasurer and Secretary have spent most of the year designing and writing content together with the expertise of Matt Riley at Fusion. It is still very much a work in progress and we are keen to get initial feedback from plotholders.

- The logo went through many varying versions before we settled with this:
  - the crossed tools signify our gardening purpose and reflect the crossed keys of the Minster's branding
  - the robin and butterfly reflect our environmental purpose and therapeutic benefit
  - lupin represents our heritage and is a poignant remembrance to recently deceased and highly regarded member Wally Hammond.
- Website includes articles written by well-respected plotholders. Some from newsletters we used to produce 8 years ago.
- The aim is to have all photos including aerial shots taken by plotholders.
- Since our successful grant application we now also can use the 'Funded by our local ward' logo which features in the footer.
- Collaboration with Collective Sharehouse will also be acknowledged

Once finally commissioned by website designer, we will keep it up to date and will continue to add useful information, and images to the gallery.

In addition, future plans include:

- Directly after the meeting sharing with all members as part of the minutes, asking them to come back with any comments by late-November
- mid-December – soft launch
- late-January – full launch externally, possibly with external publicity to celebrate the first anniversary of our becoming a charity. At that point taking the opportunity to promote our links with Collective Sharehouse.

From there we intend putting out news items at key points in the year. For example:

- Summer - water management
- Late Autumn – preparing for winter jobs

The developing website can be viewed at:

<https://wearefusion.editor.multiscreensite.com/preview/6bc2b3e2?t=1762247411361>

## **9. Any Other Business**

There was none received.



#### **10. Presentation of annual prizes**

This year's judging was carried out by last year's winners Steve and Linda Cordukes. Their choices reflect the hard work witnessed during the year.

**First Prize** - Plot 3 – Steven Holley

**Runner Up** - Plot 92A – Gail and Lee Kilmartin

**Third Place** - Plot 53 – George and Jane Wellock

#### **Highly Commended**

Plot 24B – Garry Gibson

Plot 117 – David Palmer

Plot 121 – David Morley

Plot 144 – Mari and Rodger Martin

Plot 36 – Curtis Robinson

**Best New-comer cup** judged by the Lettings Officer

Plot 20A – Lucy Hudson and Adrian Smith