

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

3.30 pm, Saturday 21st June 2025

• Welcome	Attendees were welcomed to the meeting.
1a. Apologies	John Fisher, Wayne Gannon, Audrey Macnaughton, Olivia Major, Kevin Morrow, Pratim Sarkar and Lucy Smyth.
• Minutes of AGM 2024	Proposed by Pat Harvey, seconded by Ken Douthwaite.
• Matters arising	None
• Committee appointments	Audrey Macnaughton, Lynn Bryden and Umi Filby stepped down from the committee, as chair, secretary and committee member respectively, in autumn 2024. They were thanked for all they have done for the Association, and their absence on the committee is keenly felt. Wayne Gannon and Alex Talbot joined the committee and took on the roles of chair and secretary respectively; more recently Jackie Fender has re-joined the committee. The committee currently consists of: Chair – Wayne Gannon Treasurer – Lucy Smyth Secretary – Alex Talbot Committee members – Olivia Major & Jackie Fender.
• Chair’s report	The chair’s report was read by Jackie Fender on behalf of Wayne Gannon. The report can be found at Appendix A.
• Finance report	The treasurer’s report was read by Alex Talbot on behalf of Lucy Smyth. The report can be found at Appendix B
• Section reports 7a. Bowls 7b. Tennis 7c. Women’s Institute	The Bowls Club rep sent apologies, and no report was read at the meeting. However, it was submitted after the event and can be found at Appendix C. The Tennis Club report was read by Ken Douthwaite on behalf of Pratim Sarkar, and can be found at Appendix D. The WI report was read by Alex Talbot, and can be found at Appendix E.
• AOB	John Fisher asked that his thanks be passed to the committee and the team of volunteers for all the time, effort, thought and care that are put into running the site so well, and that all efforts are much appreciated.

The meeting closed at 4.00 pm, and was followed by a cream tea (thank you, Pat Harvey).

Appendix A Chair’s report

Welcome to the AGM for Gosforth Garden Village Association (GGVA), which has had another good year in terms of community events and improvements to the grounds and facilities.

Firstly though, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the passing of the Chair of the Trustees, George Jobe. His commitment to this fantastic community space has been so valuable over the years and his support of all that the committee does has been greatly appreciated.

His role has been taken up by Ross Elliott and together with the other Trustees, Margery Lyons, Paul Fisk, Gary Maughan, and Graham Vickers, they oversee the legal aspects of the Association, the land and its usage.

During the year we have continued to organise community events including:

- Poetry and Music Night provided by North East poet Harry Gallagher and the singing group Mariners & Marras.
- Summer Festival which was sadly marred by bad weather and the clash with a football fixture. But we did get to try out our new gazebo which was a big improvement. The 2025 Summer Festival is scheduled for Saturday 5th July for a shorter period of time and we hope it will act as a good draw for the village and encourage people to try out bowls and tennis.
- Children's Halloween Disco
- Christmas Wreath Making with the event materials and instruction supplied by our resident garden centre proprietor, Laura from Oaklands.
- Children's Christmas Party with a visit from the real Fenwick's Santa! He is booked again for 2025, providing a cost-effective alternative for the families in the Village.
- Claire Austin's Christmas Eve advent trail ended at the Hall with a fantastic window created by Lynne Maughan. It really was a lovely end to the trail and a successful gathering was held.

There were regular events which are attended in the main by Garden Village residents and they are:

- The fortnightly Craft Group
- The bi-monthly Lunch Club
- Techy Tea Parties to help people navigate their online requirements – much appreciated by all who attended. We did not charge a hall fee for these events as we want to ensure we can provide services of this nature but Monju who runs them did secure a Capgemini Community Spirit Award of £500 which was most welcome.
- Garden Village Quiz Night which is run by Lynne and Gary Maughan, a great night and all proceeds added into the Association funds.

There have been regular classes by external bookers at the Hall which are open to non-residents but continue to be well supported by Garden Villagers. These include yoga, tai chi, choir, Pilates, junior dance class, Zumba, and gentle exercise for over 60's. For expectant mothers there have been regular classes in yoga and relaxation. For the little ones there has been, over the year, the Bloom Baby Class and Grow and Play Baby Class.

We trialled doing 'Stay and Play' sessions where residents could come along with their little ones and use the outdoor play equipment, pop a pizza in the oven and generally use the space. We felt this was important as part of the planning permission restriction for the play equipment was that it could not be open access, but we do want it used more often and by village residents. The take up wasn't good but Dom Miller on Beechwood has agreed to take it over and we will try again to get greater usage.

Along the same lines we have been encouraging community members to be more active and take on events and there was a 'bring and buy' event which was well received.

We have had a good year of bookings with regular hirers continuing to be at a good level and as mentioned, holding classes and sessions that are attended by Garden Village residents and are in keeping with the intention of the hall.

On ad-hoc hirers, family parties, at the start of the year, had really taken off but this was not without its problems. We became increasingly concerned about the continued nuisance caused to neighbours of the Hall and the Hall was suffering from damage which was becoming more than just normal wear and tear.

We therefore put in three measures which were:

- changed the cutoff point from the clear 9.30pm limit set last year to a much more neighbour friendly 6.30pm for all functions,
- declined functions on public holidays
- increased the price of Hall Hire from £15 per hour to £25 per hour for ad hoc bookings. NB We retained the price of £15 per hour for our regular bookers.

These changes had the effect of reducing the number of big family functions and we hope that our neighbours are experiencing an improvement, although inconsiderate parking is still an ongoing concern but sadly this is not exclusive to party goers. Please encourage all your members and visitors

to park considerably.

Income levels on ad hoc bookings reduced slightly but have remained steady even though we are now turning away enquiries. It is pleasing to see that the most common use for the Hall at a weekend now is for children's birthdays which is more in keeping with its intended purpose. With the increased hourly fee we are still managing to fund repairs and improvements and adding to reserves for future development of the Hall and the site.

The big maintenance item this year has been the reinstatement of the Tennis Club wall. This has been on the agenda for some time as the wall had been moving and the bricks themselves deteriorating. We had retained reserves for this purpose and have now completed the work. Ken Dowthwaite remained at our committee meetings to report on the wall situation, and it is great thanks to Ken that the work has been concluded so successfully and in addition now has an accessible entrance to the tennis court.

During the year we secured a grant from Asda and have purchased a projector and screen to enable us to have film nights and the like, hopefully reaching the 'teen group' of villagers. This has been installed and the hall redecorated following the works. Thanks go to Olivia and Dan Major for the sourcing and supervision of the installation and as always to Pat Harvey for all her work on co-ordinating the works and the redecoration.

We have for a while now been looking at how the hall can better serve our sports sections while retaining a high level of hall bookings. We have therefore engaged the architect Ian Henderson to give us preliminary drawings for an extension to the side of the current building. This would allow the Bowls and Tennis clubs to access an area for changing and storage but also with a separate small kitchen area to provide matchday meals. This could all happen without affecting other events going on in the main hall.

The preliminary drawings have been reviewed by the Bowls and Tennis sections and changes have been made to make the areas work better. As the plans are developed and progressed we will consult more fully with everyone. It will of course involve a great deal of fundraising activity, but we think this could be an important development for the building.

We had more focus on the gardens this year, and thanks to the work of Audrey Macnaughton, in the summer of 2024 the area of weeds around the Bowls Club emblem was cleared and with donations from Oaklands Garden Centre, the planters at the entrance were filled. This project has continued apace and in 2025, Audrey has continued to do the gardening work with help from volunteers and with donations of plants from Oaklands again and villagers, not least of all the large number from Lynne and Gary Maughan. The grounds are starting to look colourful, well-kept and above all pollinator friendly.

Claire Austin took on interactive children's sessions for the allotment where she engaged the children in learning about how to grow plants and vegetables, even doing drawing sessions when the weather was poor. The attendance was fantastic, and Claire has agreed to continue delivering this lovely programme next growing year.

We continued to produce the bi-annual newsletters and this year they were delivered by a group of volunteers which was much appreciated.

I hope you agree that the scale of community engagement and the level of activity has again been fantastic this year and it is all thanks to the hardworking Committee Members and the wider pool of volunteers which has increased over the year.

Once again thank you for attending. I'll pass you on to our Treasurer, Lucy, for the finance report.

Appendix B Treasurer's report

An overview was provided by the treasurer Lucy Smyth, who confirmed that the external examiner is happy with our submitted accounts.

Statutory Accounts 2024-25

Headline figures

- **Overall total net deficit generated of £14,915 (2024: surplus of £3,008)**
- **Total income was £30k (2024: £24.5k)**

The increase in income compared to the prior year is a result of

- a £2,150 contribution from the tennis club toward the costs of the wall replacement,
- an additional £469 raised by the lunch club,
- a £1,000 donation from Asda towards the purchase of a projector and screen,
- £500 from the insurance company following a claim for damage caused by a leak,
- increased receipts from regular and ad hoc rental income of £2,605

This is offset in part by grant income of £1,705 received in the prior year from the Mears Foundation for tables and chairs for use by the community and users of the hall..

The deficit position for the current year is largely due to the long-planned expenditure on reinstatement of the tennis club wall, which came from designated reserves.

Hall rental has continued to improve rising to £18.5k (2024: £16k). Regular bookings continued to be strong in the year, with a range of bookers holding regular sessions at the Hall covering a range of age groups. Various baby and child groups as well as yoga and pilates classes, a craft group and choir continue to use the Hall regularly. Private bookings have continued to perform well through the year.

Within sundry income, annual income from the bowls, WI and tennis club remained in line with the prior year contributing £2k. The tennis club also made a contribution to the costs of the wall repairs to include some improvements to the original specification. Other income has performed strongly due to holding community events through the year which have a small fee. This has an offset of events costs which are shown separately – so overall the net position comes in at a small surplus.

Expenditure was £45k (2024: £26.4k)

The increase in expenditure in the current year is mainly attributable to

- £15.9k total spend on the tennis club wall, some of which is offset against the contribution from the tennis club as above. This spend is from designated reserves
- £3.8k spend on the projector and screen, plus installation costs
- Improvements to the kitchen to support community and rental activities

Utility costs have increased compared to the prior year due to timing of the direct debit being taken from our bank account.

Bank balances were healthy at £14k (2024: £15.6k) in HSBC current account and £13k (2024: £26.2k) in the Virgin Money savings account after the spend on the tennis club wall..

Reserves c/f were £27k (2024: £42k) of which

- Unrestricted £26.4k
- Designated and Restricted
 - Lunch club £0.5k

Appendix C

Bowls club report

Four bird scarers have been positioned in the four corners of the green to prevent the Jackdaws from causing damage.

There are currently 42 members, 1 less than the previous year. The membership revenues only cover the yearly green costs, and other income is through the sponsorship boards, competition fees and the coffee morning.

Some committee members would like to have a working group other than Tom, regarding the proposal for the sports pavilion as they have requested input to the use and layout of the plans.

Brian the chairman will retire from his position at the end of the season in September, John and Jean will also retire from the treasury positions at the same time. It is urgent that the bowls find a replacement for the treasury position as it won't be able to continue without one. If the GGVA could also

let people know outside the Bowls Club that these positions are available.

Appendix D

Tennis club report

After the major expense of the court refurbishment in 2023, 2024 has been a year of consolidation. We were very pleased to help with the organisation and coordination of the works to replace part of the boundary wall and fence on Rosewood Avenue.

We took advantage of this ongoing work to widen our entrance to the courts, which has long been a pinch point and a restriction to access when major maintenance work is carried out. It is also now more welcoming for wheelchair users or people with large buggies. This work cost us about £2,500 but was money well spent.

With regards to membership, this was a little down on 2023 with 37 adult members, and with 12 student or guardian members. These numbers exclude those who have joined through the coaching programme.

We have plenty of capacity on court time especially on weekdays. Our social tennis slots are well attended but we would still like more players to take part. We are also always looking to develop our competitive tennis too, and to do this we also need a bigger pool of players.

So, the drive continues to recruit more players especially from the village. We continue to advertise and promote the club through the Association's newsletters, and on Facebook, we did a leaflet drop to every household in the village last year and we are about to do another, this will promote our membership offer and of course our Junior and Adult coaching programmes. Our membership offer is that our membership fee is just £60 if you join now, this is a massive 40% reduction on our normal fee!

The club has regular sessions of social play for members. They happen all year round on a Saturday afternoon and on most weeknights during the summer. The idea is that any member can just turn up at any of these regular sessions and will always get a game. We continue to have a free electronic booking system for the courts, enabling any group of players to book court time for a game, all included in the membership.

Last year we had three teams playing in the Northumberland league, after we were able to enter a Ladies vets' team again. All three teams finished mid table. So no one was relegated this year! We have now also been able to reintroduce a mixed vet's team for the 2025 season. So these are positive steps forward.

Our coaching team of Ian Pearson-Brown and Anthony Simmons continue to offer all year round adult and junior coaching, which continues to be very successful and accessible to children in the village. Although last winter was a little down on numbers. We had 85 players in the various coaching programmes last year, made up of 57 Juniors and 28 Adults.

On several occasions through the year the club held tennis events where players could donate to various Charities. Around £400 was raised at these events, and money was raised for MacMillan Cancer and Crisis at Christmas the homeless charity. We will look to build on this in the coming year. The club also had a successful social event in January when nearly 40 members attended a quiz night with a shared supper.

So finally, we would just like to repeat that the club is continuing to look for new members especially from the village. The club is at the heart of the community, and an integral part of the Village Association. It is vital to both the club and the village that we increase local membership. Our annual membership rates are monitored to ensure that they are some of the most competitive in the city, and with the current offer I have just mentioned the tennis club is really great value. There is more information about us on the Association website or speak to me after the meeting.

The courts will also be open during the summer fair, so if you are interested, please come along and meet us, or even come along and have a go, racquets and balls provided!!!

Thank you.

Appendix E

WI report

Our WI currently has 29 members, and we have enjoyed another year of diverse and interesting meetings, covering topics such as bee-keeping, recycling ghost fishing gear, the Ouseburn, the travelling herring girls, and a talk on autism.

We also have two parties each year, for our summer annual meeting and for Christmas, to which we bring food to share and enjoy. We held a craft evening where members could make various Christmas decorations, and other social evenings have included quizzes and human bingo.

We have a walking group and a book group that meet monthly, and we've also enjoyed other social activities together such as lunches and theatre trips.

We have continued to support the Garden Village lunch club with a loan of tablecloths, and cutlery (and woman-hours), and in return the GGVA have printed and distributed a promotional leaflet for us – thank you very much!

Our book group has donated £100 to GGVA, which will go towards buying presents from Santa for children at the Christmas party.

Our programme for 2025-26 is being finalised, and will be available soon. We are hoping to offer a few “bigger” events to encourage more visitors to try us out. We meet on the third Wednesday of the month (except August) at 7.30 pm.