

**Gransdens Allotments Chair's Report**  
**Annual Parish Meeting 28 April 2025**  
**Karen Hewett (Chair)**

Despite the very wet, cold, and windy conditions in 2024, Gransden allotments are thriving. We now have 34 members. The instigation of frequent inspections has improved the general tidiness of the plots and, by freeing up unused and neglected plots, we have acquired new and enthusiastic members. A number of plot holders have built new structures, both to collect water and to provide shelter and storage facilities. A shed has been totally rebuilt after a storm at the end of the year spectacularly flattened it, lifting it over the plot fencing, and depositing it neatly on the grass.

The orchard, pond, and wildflower meadow continue to be a beautiful and wild-life friendly asset to the allotments. Working parties have been well attended; members have cleared abandoned plots, cut hedges, strimmed thistles, planted trees, repaired water collection systems, replaced the pond gate and pruned the orchard. A third beehive was added during the year, and we sampled our own delicious honey for the first time.

Water management is becoming every more important – we either have too much (flooded plots) or too little (water storage depleted). Local rainfall data collected by Andy Pearce over the past 20 years show a clear pattern for wetter winters and drier summers. Our plans for 2025 include encouraging plot holders to collect water wherever possible. We will also consider how we can raise funds for additional communal water collection systems.

The pond fencing will be replaced in May this year thanks to funding received from the Poor's Land charity. We boosted our finances by selling vegetables and flowers grown on the plots at a market stall outside the Reading Room in the summer; a grand total of £236 was raised. We hope to hold at least one market stall this year.

The allotments could not run without the support of our membership. Volunteers have attended working parties and orchard pruning sessions; donated produce and helped out at the market stall; and set up and maintained our beehives. Thanks are also due to the committee for giving up their time to manage the running of the allotments and in particular to Andy Pearce, who dedicates a considerable amount of his time to providing behind the scenes maintenance, support, and technical oversight in addition to his formal role of Treasurer.

We are extremely grateful to Mike Capps for his assistance in managing the wildflower meadow and green waste heaps, Des Merrill for cutting the large grass areas, Douglas Thorogood for providing a valuable and much-appreciated supply of manure, Bob Mitchell for mentoring our beekeepers, Mike Turnock for helping to clear the pond, Martin Adams for helping to remove trees and servicing our mowers, and Sue Chase for auditing our accounts.

## **Gransdens Allotments Treasurer's Report for Year Ending 31 December 2024**

Balance Dec 31st 2024: £3788.85 (Dec 31st 2023: £3006)

Expenditure during year included:

£300 Hedge Trimmer

£285 Beehive

£222 Site insurance.

£45 AGM

£250 Goodwill gifts

£350 Sundries (Inc petrol, pest control bait, first aid, bee equipment etc)

Income was boosted by sale of mower attachment (£199) and Allotment Saturday Market (£236)