



Notice of the Annual General Meeting 2026

**The 222nd Annual General Meeting
of the Royal Horticultural Society
will be held at 5.00pm on
Wednesday 01 July 2026 at
RHS Lindley Hall,
London SW1P 2PE**



For an alternative format of this Notice, or for any other matters relating to the AGM, please contact The Secretary by calling the AGM helpline on 020 7821 3194; by email to agm@rhs.org.uk; or by mail to 80 Vincent Square, London, SW1P 2PE

Agenda

- 1. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**
- 2. TREASURER'S REPORT**
- 3. DIRECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT**
- 4. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026**

4a. MINUTES To approve the Minutes of the 221st Annual General Meeting held on 08 July 2025.

4b. ANNUAL REPORT AND CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2025/26
To receive and consider the Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for 2025/26*

4c. ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND TREASURER

To declare elected unopposed Keith Weed as President and David Mathers as Treasurer for the next year.

4d. ELECTION OF ORDINARY MEMBERS TO COUNCIL

To declare elected unopposed Matt Davies, Stephen Hill, Wesley Kerr and Nicola Spence, as ordinary members to Council. Further details of candidates are on pages 9, 10 and 11.

4e. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS To appoint Crowe LLP as the RHS's Auditors for the next year.

4f. APPOINTMENT OF VICE PRESIDENTS To receive the names of the RHS Vice Presidents for the next year.

4g. CLOSE OF MEETING

5. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS (30 MINUTES)

* Copies of the Minutes for last year's AGM and the Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for 2025/26 are available on the RHS website at [RHS Annual General Meeting 2025 /RHS](https://www.rhs.org.uk/AGM2025) or from The Secretary by calling the AGM Helpline on 020 7821 3194; by email at agm@rhs.org.uk; or by post at 80 Vincent Square, London, SW1P 2PE. Copies will also be available at the Meeting.

Please note that photographs may be taken of the Meeting for publication in *The Garden*, the RHS's own journals and/or on the RHS website. These photographs may also be released to other media organisations.

Attending the Annual General Meeting

The Royal Horticultural Society's Annual General Meeting (AGM) will take place at RHS Lindley Hall, London, on Wednesday 01 July 2026 at 17:00. Doors will open at 16:30.

How to get to RHS Lindley Hall:

By Train / London Underground:

The nearest mainline railway station is **London Victoria**. From Victoria Station, the venue is a short walk away.

Victoria (Underground & National Rail) – approx. 5–10 minutes' walk. Exit the station and walk towards Victoria Street and South towards Rochester Row, then continue to Vincent Square (RHS Lindley Hall is at 80 Vincent Square).

St James's Park (Circle & District) – approx. 10–12 minutes' walk. Exit the station and walk towards Broadway / Victoria Street, then continue to Rochester Row and Vincent Square.

Pimlico (Victoria line) – approx. 10 minutes' walk. Exit towards Bessborough Street / Vauxhall Bridge Road, then continue north towards Rochester Row and Vincent Square.

Waterloo (Underground & National Rail) – approx. 25–30 minutes' walk. Walk via Westminster Bridge and Parliament Square, then continue along Victoria Street towards Rochester Row and Vincent Square.

By Road:

RHS Lindley Hall is located at 80 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PE. If travelling by car, please allow extra time for central London congestion and note that parking is limited in the area.

- Use postcode **SW1P 2PE** for sat-nav.
- The nearest public car park is Q-Park Victoria (Arneway Street, SW1P 2TX).
- If being dropped off, ask your driver to use the Vincent Square / Rochester Row area (as permitted by local restrictions).
- Please check local restrictions (including any traffic management, charging zones, and parking limitations) before you travel.

By Bus:

Bus services run along nearby routes, including around Victoria and Westminster.

Please use the [TfL Journey Planner](#) to identify the most convenient bus route to **Vincent Square / Rochester Row** for your point of departure. You can pay using a contactless card or mobile device, or an Oyster card, in accordance with TfL's fare rules.

Getting here on foot or by bike:

RHS Lindley Hall is within walking distance of Victoria Station.

If travelling by bicycle, please plan your route in advance and follow local cycling guidance. Bike racks can be found via [OpenStreetMap](#)

Access to the AGM:

RHS Lindley Hall offers step-free access for visitors with disabilities. If you require

assistance on arrival, please speak to any RHS member of staff or volunteer.

If you have any accessibility requirements or queries in advance of the Meeting, please contact the Secretary via the AGM Helpline on 020 7821 3194 or by email at agm@rhs.org.uk.

Facilities for those with a hearing impairment:

A hearing induction loop will be available at the event. Visitors with hearing aids that have the T-coil setting can use this for improved audio access.

Admission to the AGM:

Admission is subject to presentation of a valid RHS membership card. Members attending as the representative of an RHS affiliated society or other organisation will need to evidence that they are authorised to act on its behalf. Further guidance on acceptable forms of authority may be obtained from the Secretary of the RHS.

Security:

You must retain any bags or personal belongings with you throughout the AGM. You may also be asked to consent to a search of personal items.

Mobile phones:

Please ensure mobile phones are switched off before entering the AGM.

Filming the AGM:

This year's AGM will be livestreamed and recorded so it will be available on the RHS AGM webpage after the meeting. The audience will not be filmed. **Please do not use any personal devices to film the meeting.**

Please contact secretary@rhs.org.uk if anyone has any concerns or questions about the live stream filming.

Refreshments:

Refreshments will be available on arrival, and water will be available throughout the Meeting.

Medical care:

If you require medical assistance, please contact any RHS member of staff, who will ensure that appropriate support is provided.

AGM Helpline:

020 7821 3194. For enquiries relating to the AGM, please telephone the Helpline between 09:00 and 17:00, Monday to Friday. Standard call charges apply.

Live Streaming:

For those who cannot attend in person and have selected the live stream option on the Booking Link, a link to access the live stream will be sent to you nearer to the event.

Lindley Library Collections Up Close

For those RHS members attending the AGM in person, you are warmly invited to join **Lindley Library Collections Up Close** before the AGM at either 4pm or 4.30pm, on a first come first served basis.

The beautiful RHS Lindley Library in central London holds world-renowned collections of rare and modern books about horticulture, botanical art, photographs, as well as the archives of the RHS. The RHS has had a library for over 200 years, and our collections reflect our longstanding passion for gardens and garden plants.

Please note all talks will start from the Lindley Library entrance at 4.00pm and 4.30pm.



RHS members are invited to please confirm attendance at the AGM by pre-booking your place in advance via this [Booking Link](#) . Here you will also be able to pre-book your place on one of the library tours listed above. For the enjoyment of all, numbers will be limited.

Please note that dogs are not permitted at the AGM.

Agenda Item 1 President's Report

The President will make his statement.

Agenda Item 2 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer will make his statement.

Agenda Item 3 Director General's Report

The Director General will make her statement.

Agenda Item 4 Annual General Meeting

4a Minutes

The Chair (the President unless he is not present) will invite you to approve the Minutes as an accurate record of last year's AGM by a show of hands at the Meeting.

4b Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements 2025/26

The Annual Report is presented to the Meeting by the President and explains what the RHS has achieved over the past year and its plans for 2026/27.

4c Election of RHS President and Treasurer

PRESIDENT

The President of the RHS is elected annually by the membership and provides leadership and direction to the RHS's Council Members, enabling them to fulfil their responsibilities for the overall governance and strategic direction of the organisation. The President also acts as Chair of Council and the Horticulture and Sustainability Board and is a trustee of the RHS.

The only candidate validly nominated for election as President this year was Keith Weed. Keith is standing for a seventh and final year to ensure stability during a challenging period of financial and strategic change. As there were no other candidates, Keith Weed will be declared elected unopposed as President of the RHS for 2026-27.

Keith Weed



James Hitchmough

Proposed by:

Nicola Spence

Seconded by:

Tazim Essani

Supported by: Liz

Nicholson, Tony

Kirkham, Darren

Share, Helen Cox,

Sue Beesley, and

I have had a lifelong love for gardening and spend as much time as I can in my garden, which includes a productive vegetable and fruit plot.

During my career, I have gained broad experience in leading businesses in the

public and charitable sectors. While my main focus is now the RHS, I am also on other boards and can transfer best practice to the RHS. I have experience in the key areas of developing and implementing strategy, supporting and guiding the CEO, fundraising and business delivery to fund charitable initiatives.

The last two years have been particularly challenging for the organisation due to the negative impact of the M25/A3 roadworks on RHS Wisley, Surrey, its visitors and the resultant significant loss of income. The financial impact of the roadworks will continue into next year and the charity needs attentive leadership until this period of disruption is behind us.

I am an RHS Member and RHS Fellow Patron and live just seven miles from RHS Wisley. I am a regular visitor to the gardens and shows, which are powerful examples of horticultural excellence. I am also interested in the outreach of the RHS to communities, its education programme and the positive impact gardening has on health and wellbeing. Equally, the charity's role in horticultural science, sustainability and flora diversity continues to grow in importance in an increasingly challenged world.

I would be privileged to continue to serve as RHS President to build on its considerable heritage and bring my passion for gardening and business experience to help develop its future direction.

TREASURER

The Treasurer of the RHS is elected annually by the membership and is responsible for advising the President and Council on the RHS's financial and business affairs including those of the trading subsidiaries. The Treasurer also acts as Chair of the RHS's Finance and Commercial Board, the RHS Investments sub-Committee and is a trustee of the RHS.

The only candidate validly nominated for election as Treasurer this year is David Mathers. David was unanimously recommended by RHS Council to be the next RHS Treasurer following the retirement of Matthew Lindsey-Clark. As there were no other candidates, David will be declared elected unopposed as Treasurer of the RHS.

We would like to share a very special thank you to Matthew Lindsey-Clark who has given the RHS seven years of valued service as Treasurer. We are pleased to confirm that Matthew will continue to support the RHS as an external member of the Investments sub-Committee.

David Mathers



Proposed by:

Carolyn Townsend

Seconded by:

Jim Durrant

Supported by:

Gary Firth,

Matthew Pottage,

Sarah Flannigan,

David Ford, Roderick Newton, David Ridgeway.

I am honoured to seek election as Treasurer of the RHS. The RHS is a remarkable organisation. For over two centuries, it has advanced horticulture and brought people closer to gardening, through its shows, science, gardens and the work of its staff and volunteers.

The ambitions set out in the RHS Strategy to 2030 are important and timely. Supported by the investments in digital capabilities, the RHS offers the opportunity to extend its reach and impact. Delivering them, however, will require clear priorities and careful financial stewardship.

I have spent 35 years in finance, including 12 as Chief Financial Officer of a global bank, working with boards and management teams on governance, financial discipline and long-term planning.

Alongside this, horticulture has long been central to my life. I co-founded an orchid conservation charity in 2019, now responsible for over 20,000 plants, including six National Plant Collections. I also serve as a Trustee of Plant Heritage and of Chelsea Physic Garden, and as Vice Chair of the RHS Orchid Expert Group.

I see financial sustainability not as an end in itself, but as the means to ensure that the RHS can invest in its gardens, people, science and charitable work.

If elected, I would aim to support the organisation with independent oversight, constructive challenge and a focus on the long-term resilience of the RHS.

4d Election of ordinary members to Council

The RHS Council is responsible for the strategic direction of the RHS and ensures that it acts in accordance with the objectives set out in the RHS Charter. Council comprises the President, Treasurer, 15 ordinary members and up to two co-opted members. Those who serve on Council are the trustees of the RHS.

Every year, as part of the democratic running of the RHS, at least three ordinary members of Council retire, and the resulting vacancies may be filled by election at the AGM.

At this year's AGM, Pam Maynard OBE will retire as an ordinary member of Council having completed one five-year term. We would like to express a huge thank you to Pam for her service to council and are thrilled that Pam will continue to chair the Digital and IT board.

Each year, the RHS seeks to strengthen its Council by recruiting individuals who not only demonstrate a deep interest in gardening, but who also bring specific expertise in horticulture and skills or capabilities useful for the governance of the RHS that are under-represented among existing trustees. We conduct annual skills assessments of our Council to anticipate future gaps in light of planned retirements and the evolving strategic needs of the organisation.

For 2026, applications were encouraged from candidates with senior and current expertise in science, finance, business

and commercial activities, policy and public engagement.

Council felt the chosen candidates held experience that was highly relevant to the evolving needs of the RHS and reflective of the broader capabilities Council is seeking to strengthen in the coming years.

Matt Davies, Stephen Hill, Wesley Kerr and Nicola Spence have been validly nominated for this year's election. With four validly nominated candidates for four vacancies, Matt, Stephen, Wesley and Nicola will be declared elected unopposed.

Candidates for election to Council

Matt Davies



Proposed by:
Lady Roisin
Timpson

Seconded by:
Sarah Flynn

Supported
by: Darren Share,
Helen Cox, Joanne

Robson, Sharon Hockenhull, James Hitchmough, Nicky Dulieu

Having joined the RHS 12 years ago, my interest in gardening has really developed over that period as has my appreciation of the wonderful work that the RHS does. It would be great to support this work by bringing the skills and experience that I have gained as the CEO of Pets at Home, Halfords and Tesco UK and the current Chair of Greggs PLC and Autotrader PLC.

I have led diverse teams, managed significant budgets and worked with brilliant people to deliver impact in consumer facing organisations. I would hope this experience will help me to support the RHS going forward, through bringing to the RHS Council the commercial and retail skills that I have acquired as well as governance experience that I have gained.

The RHS is a wonderful organisation and to be able to play a small part in supporting the mission to be there for everyone on their lifelong adventure with gardening would be a real privilege.

Stephen Hill



Proposed by:

Joanna Wright

Seconded by:

Martin Bourke

Supported by:

Tazim Essani, David Rae, Janet Walker, Claire Austin, Sue

Beesley, Pamela Maynard

I have been interested in horticulture for decades, originally encouraged by my grandfather in Jersey, who allowed me to help tend his allotment when I was a child, as did both my parents. My mother was an outstanding plantswoman and designed and created several gardens. She was a long-term member of the RHS, and I had the pleasure of accompanying her to open gardens and shows for many years.

I have had a substantial career in media as CEO of the Financial Times and a non-

executive of many companies including Channel 4, and latterly in venture capital, specialising in technology. Most recently I have been working with Government as lead non-executive director of the Department of Business and Trade. I also have many years' experience of charity governance including chairing the Alzheimer's Society and the Royal National Institute for Deaf People.

It is only in the last 15 years that I have had the opportunity to create my own garden, previously a blank canvas, and now a series of spaces, each with their own character. I created habitats for wildlife and am rewarded by the regular sight of red squirrels, hawks, hedgehogs and an abundance of insects. I fully appreciate I am in the foothills of horticultural knowledge, with a mountain to climb, but I am looking forward to the journey.

I welcome the opportunity to apply my business and governance skills to the RHS and am grateful for the chance to put my name forward for election.

Wesley Kerr



Proposed by:

Darren Share

Seconded by:

Thomas Blaikie

Supported by:

Fiona Hilleard,

Bronwyn Hill,

Richard

Hamilton, Mark

Wasilewski, Caroline Egremont, Aurora Antrim

Gardening is transformative - to adults, to children, to our local and global

environment, to our health and to our communities. That is my firm belief, rooted in my hands on experience as an active, if amateur gardener; my professional experience as Chair of SarahRaven.com; and in my experience of setting up and leading local biodiversity projects and kids gardening clubs. Gardeners are not just hobbyists, or horticulturalists, but are increasingly custodians of our environment and ecosystems reflecting the outsize impact gardening has.

No organisation is better aligned with those core beliefs and values, nor has wider reach and authority than the Royal Horticultural Society, and the possibility to be able to join its governing council excites me greatly. This is the greatest gardening charity in the world, with a long and veritable history and a capability and ambition to ensure that gardening is recognised with the modern, inclusive, fun, fascinating and vital reputation that it deserves.

I hope that my experience - in commercial, operational and strategic leadership roles at digitally driven consumer brands and platforms; in non-executive roles at the forefront of digitally enabled horticulture; as a huge advocate for the role gardens can play in encouraging biodiversity (as founder of www.BritainsBiggestLivingGarden.org) and in engaging new audiences in gardening through kids gardening clubs - are highly relevant to the skills sought by the RHS, and can bring a unique perspective and skill set to the council.

Professor Nicola Spence



Proposed by: Sir Nicholas Bacon

Seconded by: David Rae

Supported by:

Darren Share,
Mick Crawley,
Tony Kirkham,

James Alexander-Sinclair, Liz Nicholson,
Claire Austin

I have had a life-long passion for horticulture, sparked by gardening with my grandfather as a child and then pursuing a career in horticultural research. I have a BSc in Botany, a MSc in Microbiology and a PhD in Plant Virology and more than 25 years' experience in plant pathology research in horticultural and wild plants in the UK and Africa. I am passionate about science education and have helped train students and edited scientific journals.

Currently, I am the UK Chief Plant Health Officer. I advise Ministers, industry and stakeholders about the risks posed by plant, tree and bee pests and diseases, and ensure that appropriate science, evidence and operational measures are in place to manage those risks and minimise their impact. I have been a member of RHS Council for five years and a member of the RHS Science and Collections Group for 10 years, and Chair since October 2025, which has given me insight into the RHS and the opportunity to work more closely with staff and Council. I garden on the Yorkshire Wolds and have been an RHS Member for more than 23 years, regularly visiting its gardens, particularly RHS Harlow Carr, North Yorkshire.

I am passionate about horticulture and take a strong personal and professional interest in protecting and promoting plants and trees. I bring skills and experience in horticultural science, policy, communication and fundraising and would love to contribute to the objectives and future success of the RHS for its members and the wider organisation by continuing to serve RHS Council.

Statement from RHS Council

In exceptional circumstances, RHS Council may waive the three-year membership requirement for election to Council as contained in Bye-Law 6.3a.

Whilst of course an RHS member, Stephen Hill does not yet meet the three year membership requirement. However, as his statement outlines, his commitment to the RHS is clear as he attended RHS gardens and shows with his mother, a longstanding RHS member.

Council confirms that the exceptional circumstances (required under Bye-Law 6.3(a)i.) have been met. The external environment continues to be extremely challenging for the RHS and Stephen's deep and broad finance, business and commercial experience and expertise are considered vital to help the organisation to navigate its future challenges. Council believes that Stephen's ability in this area fully justify waiving the three-year membership requirement. There remain more than two thirds of ordinary Council members who meet the three-year membership requirement in accordance with Bye-Law 6.3(a)iii.

Council Members continuing in office after the AGM

The following ordinary members of Council will continue in office after the AGM:

Claire Austin
Sue Beesley
Helen Cox
Nick Dunn
Tazim Essani
Professor James Hitchmough
Tony Kirkham
Baroness Kate Lampard
Liz Nicholson
Darren Share
Ruth Willmott

4e Appointment of Auditors

The RHS is required to arrange for its accounts to be audited by a firm of chartered accountants and the Bye-laws provide for an auditor to be appointed annually at the AGM.

Council recommends that Crowe LLP be re-appointed for the financial year 2026/27.

The Chair will invite you to vote on this recommendation by a show of hands at the Meeting.

4f Appointment of Vice Presidents

Each year, Council appoints a number of members of the RHS to serve as Vice Presidents. The office is honorary and appointment recognises people who are deeply familiar with the RHS, knowledgeable about its activities and passionate about horticulture. Vice Presidents are expected to promote and represent the RHS.

Vice President appointments for 2026-27 will be shared during the AGM meeting.

4g Close of Meeting

The President will formally draw the AGM to a close.

Agenda Item 5 Members' Questions

This is the opportunity for RHS members to ask questions. It is helpful if you can please let us know your questions in advance of the Meeting so that we can ensure we have the information available to give you a full answer. You can provide advance notice of your question to The Secretary by email to agm@rhs.org.uk or by calling the AGM Helpline on 020 7821 3194 or by writing to 80 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PE.

