

Petersfield Gardeners' Club AGM 13th November 2025

Chairmans Report for the year 2024/25

I am pleased to report that we have had a very successful year and currently have 94 members, 6 of whom are new members. This year everyone enjoyed the excellent speakers, demonstrated by very good attendance at meetings. The holiday was again a great success and the two coach day trips well supported and much enjoyed. Thank you to all the committee for their very hard work. I have every expectation that the current programme, up to the next AGM in 2026, will be equally appreciated and well attended by members and visitors.

About three years ago the Club was in real danger of closing through lack of Chairman and Secretary. It seems appropriate at this time to record that Colin and Anne, after many years in those roles, stated that this time they simply could not continue and would retire at the end of the year. Jane and I were then rather new members. We both felt that if the club did close down, which it was in danger of doing, the Club's activities would leave an important gap locally, as its activities seemed of real value to many of the long-term Members. No one else volunteered so after several discussions we decided that we should step up and join the Committee, with the intention of standing for election for a 3 year term as Secretary and Chairman at the following AGM. Our hope and expectation was that with an effort to widen publicity of our activities, more people would become members, in time join the committee and in due course take on the Officer roles. As previous committee members retired, we have had success in recruiting new committee members and Mel, Denise and Jenny have taken on the roles of Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Day Visits Organiser. They have made a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the club.

Now to think about the future. This will be my third and final year as Chairman and I will not be standing again at the 2026 AGM. It is only fair to be clear to members that Jane and I are totally resolved that neither of us will stand for re-election then. So far none of the current committee members are in a position to take on those roles. Indeed, because of the lack of volunteers, the committee is already doubling up on the many jobs necessary to keep the club running smoothly. I do worry about the future of the club.

When the Committee next meets in January, it will have some difficult decisions to make. In February/March the Committee is due to sketch out the draft programme for 2026/27 and book the speakers. Should we do that? Do you believe there are current members who will come forward to be Chairman and Secretary and Speaker Organiser? We need feedback from you to know if future planning is worthwhile. The Committee may decide to go forward, in hope, and book speakers, with the intention of cancelling them if necessary (and possibly paying their fee anyway). What about sending out renewal notices in July/August? Is it ethical to ask people to pay their renewal subscriptions on the 1st September when there is no prospect of the club continuing beyond November 2026? I understand that the last holiday that Angela will organise will be summer 2027 (assuming there are enough members to take up the places). Also, Gordan has indicated he will step down from the Committee at the 2026 AGM.

Time is running out. If there is no prospect of several new members joining the committee in the next few months then the club is in real danger of closing down. It is not just up to the current committee to make these decisions. Members need to let me and other members of the committee know their views. You have our phone numbers and you are welcome to come for coffee and a chat with me at any time.