



Objects, the Charity Commission and Members

Our Charitable Objects

The Brentwood Horticultural Society CIO exists to:

1. Provide allotment facilities for the residents of Brentwood, supporting recreation, wellbeing, and social welfare.
2. Advance education in horticulture, allotment management, and care of the natural environment.

These objects guide every decision we make and define our responsibilities as a charity.

The Charity Commission

As a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), we are regulated by the **Charity Commission for England and Wales**. Our constitution follows the Commission's model and sets out the governance processes we must follow.

Each year we submit:

- annual accounts
- a detailed trustees' report
- updates on our activities and compliance

The Commission has powers to investigate any irregularities, so it is essential that we follow our governance processes properly and operate with transparency and accountability.

Members

Members of a CIO differ from members of a commercial company. Membership is **not beneficial** — members do not have rights to the CIO's assets and must act in the best interests of the charity's objects.

Members are **sovereign** in one crucial respect: they elect the trustees.

Once elected, trustees hold legal responsibility for managing the charity in accordance with charity law and our constitution.



Trustees

Our Trustees

The constitution allows for up to **nine trustees**, who may be members or non-members of the CIO. Trustees meet regularly to oversee the charity's activities, finances, risks, and long-term direction. They also take on specialist roles to support the Society's work.

Current Trustees

Jane Bennett – Independent trustee; chairs the Grievance Panel; provides external perspective and has reviewed all sites.

Steve Griffiths – Treasurer; manages finances, banking, rent collection, payments, accounts; member of the Executive Committee.

Angela Hyams – Property lawyer; leads on leases, property matters, and byelaws.

Arthur Leathley – Vice Chair; Hartswood site representative; member of the Executive Committee.

Ian Palmer – Chair; leads relationship with Brentwood Borough Council; chairs both Trustees and Executive Committee; leads improvement projects.

Mike Rose – Finance background; governance roles across local organisations; liaison for smaller sites.

Antony Timmins – Former charity tax consultant; helped establish the CIO; Trustee Secretary; manages Charity Commission compliance; independent trustee.

Kay Bellwood – BBC journalist and podcaster; Hartswood allotmenteer; active contributor to community engagement.

Role of Trustees

Trustees are legally responsible for:

- ensuring the charity meets its objects
- managing finances responsibly
- overseeing risks
- ensuring compliance with charity law
- supporting volunteers and committees
- approving major decisions and policies

They delegate day-to-day operations to the Executive Committee but retain ultimate responsibility for the CIO.



The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is made up primarily of site representatives from all our allotment sites. It is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Society, within guidelines agreed by the trustees.

What the Executive Committee does

- Maintains allotment sites
- Allocates plots
- Collects rents
- Supports members and plot-holders
- Manages cultivation issues
- Oversees routine operations and improvements

The committee is chaired by **Ian Palmer**, who also chairs the Trustee Board. Trustees **Steve Griffiths** and **Arthur Leathley** also serve on the committee to ensure strong communication between trustees and site representatives.

Why this structure exists

This arrangement allows:

- trustees to focus on governance, compliance, and strategic direction
- site representatives and volunteers to manage practical day-to-day work
- members to have direct involvement in running the Society
- clear accountability under charity law

The Charity Commission has specifically approved this delegation model, provided trustees retain oversight and ultimate responsibility.

Administration and Support

Key administrative roles include:

- **Treasurer (Steve Griffiths)** – financial management, database.
- **Membership Secretary (Pat Griffiths)** – membership records, waiting list
- **Database Manager (Chris Smith)** – system management and billing
- **Trustee Secretary (Antony Timmins)** – Charity Commission compliance
- **Angela Hyams** – lease and property matters



Grievance Panel

If a dispute cannot be resolved locally, it is referred to the **Grievance Panel**, chaired by **Jane Bennett** with **Antony Timmins** as the second panel member.

Annual Cycle

- **Allotment Year:** 1 November – 31 October
- **Financial Year:** 1 January – 31 December
- **AGM:** Held annually; all plot-holding members may attend and vote.