

The Garden Friend

Annual General Meeting Agenda

Date: 10th January 2026

Time: 11.00

Location: The Garden Friend HQ

Welcome and Opening Remarks

- Welcome from the Chair
- Acknowledgement of attendees and apologies received
- Brief outline of the purpose of the AGM

Annual Report

- Chair's overview of the year
- Summary of key projects, achievements, and community impact
- Recognition of volunteers and partners

Financial Report

- Treasurer's presentation of the annual accounts
- Overview of income, expenditure, and reserves
- Independent examiner's statement
- Motion to approve the accounts

Election or Re-Election of Trustees

- Summary of trustee roles and current vacancies
- Presentation of nominees
- Voting process
- Confirmation of appointments

6. Plans for the Coming Year

- Strategic priorities and upcoming projects
- Fundraising and grant-seeking plans
- Community engagement and volunteer development initiatives

7. Resolutions and Governance Matters

- Proposed amendments to the constitution or policies
- Member-submitted motions
- Voting on resolutions

8. Open Forum

- Questions, suggestions, and feedback from members
- Discussion of opportunities and challenges for the year ahead

9. Any Other Business

10. Closing Remarks

- Thanks to members, volunteers, and supporters
- Confirmation of next meeting date
- Formal close of the AGM

If you'd like, I can also prepare a matching **Chair's Report, Treasurer's summary**, or a **member-friendly version** for distribution.

Chair's Report – Speech Section on Mental Health Funding in Northern Ireland

Friends, members, and supporters,

As we reflect on the past year, it's important to acknowledge not only what we have achieved together, but also the wider landscape in which we are working. The reality is that mental health services in Northern Ireland are facing a crisis of underfunding and unmet need — and this directly affects the people we support every day.

The Public Accounts Committee has been clear: **waiting lists for mental health services are too long, crisis support is limited, and many people in distress are forced to attend Emergency Departments because appropriate services simply aren't available.** This is not a system designed around people; it is a system struggling to cope.

We also know that **data on mental health services has been described as “extremely poor” and “unacceptable”**, making it harder for government to plan, improve, or even understand the scale of need. When the foundations are this weak, progress becomes even more difficult.

The Department of Health's own review shows that the Mental Health Strategy — a ten-year plan launched with real hope — has received only **£12.3 million of the £76.7 million required for its actions so far**, just **16% of what is needed**. Even more concerning, the Department confirmed that **no additional funding has been allocated** to deliver the Strategy since it was published in 2021. Without investment, the Strategy risks becoming a promise that cannot be fulfilled.

These gaps in funding and services mean that community and voluntary organisations — groups like *The Garden Friend* — are increasingly stepping in to fill the void. The Public Accounts Committee recognised this, highlighting that the **voluntary and community sector plays a vital role** in supporting people where statutory services cannot meet demand.

And that is why our work matters more than ever.

Every garden session, every conversation, every moment of connection we offer is part of a much bigger picture — one where people are waiting too long, receiving too little, or falling through the cracks entirely. We cannot fix the system alone, but we can continue to be a place of safety, dignity, and belonging for those who need it most.

As Chair, I want to thank each of you — volunteers, members, partners, and supporters — for helping us stand in that gap. Your commitment ensures that, even in a landscape of scarcity, hope continues to grow here.

Purpose of the AGM – Short Paragraph

The Annual General Meeting is our opportunity to come together as members of *The Garden Friend* to reflect openly on the year gone by, review our finances, and ensure the charity is being run responsibly and transparently. It allows us to celebrate our achievements, discuss challenges, elect or re-elect trustees, and make key decisions about our future direction. Most importantly, it gives every member a voice in shaping the work we do to support people across our community.

See notes on last year.