

Draft Minutes of BCGREA Victoria Branch 1200 AGM of June 18, 2026

June 18th 2026 at 2pm

Esquimalt Gorge Park Pavilion, 1070 Tillicum Road, Esquimalt, BC

The AGM was called to order at 2pm and adjourned at 3:30pm. Forty members attended in person and none attended online. Sarf Ahmed chaired the meeting and George Bowden took minutes and monitored Zoom.

Jim Swanson, Managing Partner of Victoria HarbourCats Baseball Club was the keynote speaker and he gave a presentation on the baseball club, highlighting its role in the community.

Minutes of the AGM for 2025 were distributed and approved by the members present.

Sarf gave the Chair's annual report. He reported on the organization's activities over the past eight months, highlighting a member survey that showed interest in outdoor activities and hobbies. He requested volunteers to help organize outdoor activities in September or October, with no long-term commitment required. Gerry Buydens was recognized for his many years as Program Director.

George presented the financial report noting that branch currently has \$21,000 in the bank and needs to increase its spending. Goal is not to have more than half of annual operating expenses at the end of the year.

The group discussed attendance challenges, with 40 attendees at the current event compared to 80 last year, and plans for upcoming monthly sessions at the current venue and Christmas event.

The members present approved the Chair's annual report and the Financial Report as presented.

BCGREA Branch Executive Election

The meeting focused on the election of the BCGREA Branch Executive Board for 2026-2027. Linda Foubister volunteered to run the election. Following candidates were elected by acclamation:

- Sarf Ahmed - Branch Chair
- Karen Harper - Vice Chair
- Mark Brown - Treasurer
- Jan Broocke - Communications Chair
- Sonja Ruffell - Membership Chair
- Art Pollard - Program Director
- Zoe Duff - Social Director

- Tracy Barron - Goodwill Director
- George Bowden - Technology Director
- Vicki White - Director at Large

After the Branch elections, the official meeting concluded.

Draws for door prizes and a group photo of the new executive board was taken.

Approved by:

Sarf Ahmed, Chair

George Bowden, Treasurer

CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT

On behalf of your Executive Team, it is my honour to present our annual report of activities for the year 2025-26.

Your current Executive Team was elected at the last AGM in October 2025 with some new volunteers joining. We had a short tenure of 8 months as it was decided to change the annual date of AGM from October each year to June each year. This change was made in view of the province's decision to change the financial year end of the Association to December 31. The new AGM date allows us to present the financial statements to our branch members within 6 months of the year end.

During this shortened 8-month period, the Executive engaged in several activities at the Provincial level and organized various events for its branch members.

At the Provincial level, we actively participated in the All-Branch Chairs meetings, Recruitment and Retention Committee, By-Laws Committee, Finance Committee (which I chair as well), Treasurer's meetings, Communications, Membership Committee and Merchandising Committee. This is in addition to representing the Branch at the Society's AGM and Directors meeting.

At the Branch level, we conducted a survey of our branch members to assess areas of interest for programming. The top 3 areas of interest in the survey were gardens and recreation events in the spring/summer season, hobbies and special interests and staying physically safe. Many events for the current year had been planned before the survey results but we did organize a garden tour and our upcoming keynote speaker at the AGM will cover a favorite summer past time for many - baseball.

The incoming executive may consider the survey results in planning activities for 2026-27.

The Executive met 5 times in October, January, March, April and May to plan and organize events for members. We also initiated some efficiencies by introducing forms-based bookkeeping, use of artificial intelligence for meeting minutes, closing our BC Mail post box and consolidating it with the head office. A new laptop was purchased for Branch use.

In December, we had a full house for our Christmas Lunch and meeting at Vista 18 restaurant. I presented my interim report followed by a buffet lunch and draw for gift prizes. Members were charged \$35 per person.

In March, we organized presentations on Reverse Mortgages and Financial investments at the Gorge Pavillion. This event was also well attended.

In April, we had 2 events. We collaborated with the West Shore branch to arrange a presentation from CRA and Service BC through zoom. In addition, a post retirement workshop was held in coordination with the province.

In May, we recognized our past and present volunteers for a lunch event at Swan's Pub and Restaurant and our well attended guided garden tour of the Government House. On a sunny afternoon, many of our members enjoyed a leisurely informative walk through the garden and had the opportunity to visit the tearoom.

Finally, in June we have organized the summer lunch followed by a presentation from Victoria HarbourCats and AGM for election of the executive for 2026-27.

We continued to provide telephone support and goodwill wishes to members whenever we get to know they are not doing well.

Our finances are in good standing. For the 12 months ended December 2025, the branch had income of \$9,034 and expenses of \$8,044 leaving a surplus of \$990. The financial statements were independently

reviewed by 2 members who were non-signatories on the bank account as required by the province. We ended 2025, with a bank balance of \$18,401 at Coast Capital Savings. More details will be provided in the Treasurer's report.

For the year 2026, we received \$7,638.30 in funds from the province and have budgeted expenses of \$11,728. As a result we expect reduction in the bank balance.

At the time of writing, your branch has approximately 2,300 members which is about 20% of the total members of the Provincial Association.

We will bid farewell to couple of our executive members this year due to health / family reasons and wish them well. Gerry Buydens leaves the Executive after many years of service. He was instrumental in arranging presenters for our members' meetings.

We are fortunate that most of our existing executive can volunteer for the next year. We also have at least 2 members willing to join the executive. We still need more members to volunteer for activities and deliver on the survey results. You can volunteer for specific tasks related to something you enjoy like your hobbies or special interests, if not able to make a year long commitment. Just send us an email at chair.branch1200@bcgre.ca

On behalf of your Executive Team,

Sarf Ahmed
Chair