

ABINGDON HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Northcourt Centre, Northcourt Road,
Abingdon on Thames on Tuesday, 15th January 2019 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Margaret Crick, Mayor of Abingdon on Thames in the Chair.
Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Show Secretary, Membership Secretary and 62 members of the Society.

The Chairman, David Bingley, welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished them a happy new year. He thanked everybody for attending and hoped they would be able to stay for coffee and the quiz after the meeting. He gave a special welcome to our Mayor, Councillor Margaret Crick who will be taking the chair for us for the second time, this time as our Mayor. Last year she stood in in her role of Deputy Mayor as the Mayor could not attend.

1 APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Vera and Keith Wakefield, Mary Blanks, Mary O'Brien, David Hastings, Steve Fisher, Julie Edge, Carolyn King, Mary Woodley, Trish Blackwell, Jean and Guy Thomas, June Bruce and Paula Beale.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: The Minutes of the AGM held on 16th January 2018 were approved by the meeting and signed by the Mayor.

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: David Bingley and David Hastings have been liaising on updating the development of the website. David Hastings' aim is to action the development as soon as possible. The website is up to date, but not as well developed as was planned for 2019. It is still the Society's aim to develop electronic communication in the future. David thanked everyone for using the Facebook page as an unofficial portal for society information/updates.

4 SECRETARY'S REPORT: The Secretary, Angela Hughes said that 2018 had been a challenging year for gardeners, firstly the snow and the "beast from the east" leading to the heatwave and drought of summer that didn't make it easy. Fortunately our members braved it all and the Society still had a successful year. We had talks from John Taylor on Fungi, Sally Nex on Year-round vegetable growing, John Negus on Twelve Months of Colour, Jim Buttress gave an amusing evening with his 65 years in horticulture talk and we finished the year with Andrew Mikolajski's talk on climbers. Angela thanked Pauline Dewhirst for organising these speakers.

Angela reported that the outings started off being very well attended, the outing to Beaulieu Gardens and Motor Museum, the Bishop's Palace Garden Festival in Wells and the RHS Wisley garden all needing extra-large coaches to accommodate everybody, despite the Wisley trip being in the middle of the heatwave. The numbers did drop off for the last two outings to Wrest Park and Painshill Landscape Garden but these were enjoyed by everybody.

The Christmas Lunch was again held at the Ock Mill Restaurant in Marcham Road and Angela thanked Barbara Bingley for taking on the organisation of this. 23 members enjoyed the Kentish and Cockney Christmas, something completely different to what we have had before with everyone joining in the fun.

We again provided judges for the Radley Garden Competition as we have done for a number of years and this year also the Radley Show. We held a plant sale at the Northcourt Centre Open Day and raised funds for the Centre.

Angela thanked the Officers and Committee Members for their support again this year, especially Sue Blake for her help with processing all the receipts and organising the driver's tips for the outings. Angela also thanked Pauline, Shirley and Maurice for the endless cups of tea and coffee they have provided us with over the past year, and to Ann Needham and Doreen Webb for running our raffle and to all the members who donate prizes and buy the tickets. Angela also thanked Vera and Keith Wakefield and Janet and Colin Moreton for the help they have given directing the coach drivers before she got on the coach, and all the members who help prepare the room and clear up again for the meetings. Finally Angela expressed the Society's thanks to all the members who haven't been mentioned for their continued support of the Society.

5 SHOW SECRETARY'S REPORT: Barbara Bingley, Show Secretary, reported that 2018 was another challenging year, weatherwise, so she was on tenterhooks before both shows wondering whether there would be enough entries to make them successful. But she need not have worried as although entries were down slightly on 2017 the Society's members came up trumps to produce colourful, scented, skilful, tasty and interesting exhibits. Barbara herself made one of the 6 entries in the trench cake class and was surprised that the result, although not judged a winning entry, was very edible. The fruit flavoured spirit was a new class and attracted 7 entries. Barbara commented that you only need a small glass of these to cheer you up on a cold winter evening. This will be the first year when all the handicraft classes are in the Spring Show, so Barbara reminded members that they have less than 3 months to make, sew, crochet, paint and create.

Barbara advised the members that 2019 is the year of the nasturtium and the carrot. There is a class of 5 of the flowers and a new one of a bunch of 5 carrots. One of the photography classes is titled "flower power" a fitting title as it is 50 years since Woodstock.

In the Autumn Show we are awarding a new trophy in memory of Muriel Welch. This year it will be presented to the winner of Class 70 which is an Exhibit with 4 different elements. This is a class that Muriel used to enter, and often win, and she was disappointed when it ceased being part of the show. In future years the trophy may be awarded for a different class.

Barbara thanked everyone who supported the shows in any way, making them successful showcases for the society and hoped that even more members will enter the shows in 2019. Barbara said she was looking forward to seeing everyone and their entries on 6th April.

6 MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT: Ian Shepherd, Membership Secretary, reported that there are currently 181 members, 79 of these family memberships. We have 154 email addresses for members and are aware that members without emails will need communication by post. Ian reported that we have had 70 renewals to date, with more in this evening. Of the current membership 159 reside in Abingdon, 14 in Oxford, 3 in Wantage, and one each in London, Bicester and Witney.

7 TREASURER'S REPORT: Sue Blake, Treasurer, said that she hoped everyone had got or had access to this years' accounts. Sue stated that reading the minutes from the last AGM she was almost going to repeat herself. She felt that she was handing over very healthy bank accounts. The Savings Account stands at £6,516.41 and as in the previous ten years she has not had to use any of this money. The current account is £3,213.93 with no monies owed anywhere but this does include the £1,000 bequest from Muriel.

Sue thanked Angela for over £600 profit made on the day trips. The holiday money was paid in and all went out again. Sue also thanked Ann and Doreen for the raffle profit of over £200. Sue thanked everyone who brings prizes to put on the table and thanked the kitchen staff for over £60 for teas and coffee sold at the meetings.

Sue said that she was repeating herself again regarding the shows. These are the only loss. The hall hire is £200 for each show. There was a loss of £157.22 over the two shows, so again Sue asked members for more entries, buy more raffle tickets and have an extra cup of tea, preferably with cake! Sue then asked if there were any questions. Nobody had any queries.

Angela then confirmed to the meeting that it was not her intention to make a profit from the outings. The profit this year came from the large numbers coming on the first three outings. At the outset Angela calculates the cost of the transport on 40 people travelling but as there were 60 on the first three outings this is how the profit occurred.

8 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS: David Bingley, Chairman, advised that on reviewing the last 12 months at our AGM reminded him of the team effort and hard work the Committee, supporters and members contribute to the success of the Society. He said he would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for that work and dedication. He stated that our Secretary and Treasurer have made us aware of their work and we have had some very good speakers on a wide variety of topics this year. He added that we have heard about the 2 shows and weather related concerns leading up to the 2018 shows, but our members made the best of these difficulties with two stunning show days. We have had 3 plant sales with some high quality plants available, a fine way to encourage Abingdon growers. David thanked everyone for supporting our Society in so many different ways.

9 ELECTION OF OFFICERS: The Officers, David Bingley, Chairman, and Angela Hughes, Secretary were re-elected. The Chairman was proposed by Margaret Crick and seconded by Sue Blake. The Secretary was proposed by Jane Heritage and seconded by Margaret Able. A nomination for the new Treasurer was Karen Fisher, proposed by Pauline Dewhirst and seconded by Barbara Bingley, Karen was therefore duly elected.

10 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Current committee members David Hastings and Barry Wiggins were prepared to stand for another term, proposed by Angela Hughes, seconded by Pam Williams and were re-elected. Victoria Middleton was nominated for the vacancy on the committee, proposed by Barbara Bingley and seconded by Angela Hughes. Victoria was duly elected.

11 APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINER: The Examiner, Mr Geoffrey Bailey has agreed to continue.

12 SUBSCRIPTIONS: Sue Blake, retiring Treasurer, has confirmed that the subscriptions should remain at the same amount for 2020.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS: David Bingley reported that Sue Blake had been our Treasurer for the last 10 years. He thanked her for her loyal service and a gift voucher and plant was presented to Sue.

David said that clarification of the term "family membership" was needed. This means members of one family living at the same address. This will be confirmed in the Rules of the Society.

Chris Waite of the Northcourt Committee thanked everybody for our help with fundraising for the Northcourt Centre and said with this and the help of a Lottery Grant there was going to be a new heating system installed in the building. The works are due to take place on 23/24 January.

David Bingley told the meeting that our Membership Secretary's report didn't mention one thing, he has encouraged the Oxfordshire Archive in Cowley Road to accept the Society's historical documentation, this has been accepted by the Oxfordshire Historical Society – this means they are available to be viewed and used by others. David thanked Ian Shepherd for arranging this. Ian said that he would be going over with this the following day.

14 CLOSURE BY THE MAYOR OF ABINGDON ON THAMES: Councillor Margaret Crick thanked the Officers and Committee as a member as well as our Mayor. She especially thanked Sue Blake for her loyal service over the last 10 years and wished Karen the best of luck in her new post. Cllr Crick said that she hopes to be in the audience next year when her year as Mayor is finished and able to join in with exhibiting at the shows.

David thanked Cllr Crick for taking the Chair for us again this year.

The evening concluded with a fun quiz, enjoyed by all.