

ABINGDON HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Northcourt Centre, Northcourt Road, Abingdon on Thames on Tuesday, 18th January 2022 at 7.40pm.

PRESENT: Michael Matthews, our President, in the Chair.
Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Show Secretary, Membership Secretary and 24 members of the Society.

The Chairman, David Bingley, welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished them a happy new year. He said he was pleased that our President, Michael Matthews, had agreed to chair the meeting this evening. Michael added that he was delighted to chair the meeting, his family have been connected with the Society for over 100 years, with his Grandfather, Father and now with Michael himself.

1 APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Vera Wakefield, Angie Edmondson, Victoria Middleton, Mr and Mrs Thomas, Jill Wells, Linda Berry, David Hastings, Carolyn King, Janet Moreton, Jenny Price, Mary Woodley, Sue Woolhouse, Pamela Williams, Jean Knight and Timothy and Elizabeth Holdstock.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: The Minutes of the AGM held on 21st January 2020 were approved by the meeting and signed by the President. Unfortunately there was no AGM in 2021 because of the pandemic.

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: Maurice Tubb queried why the change to Rule 5 was necessary and when it was adopted. David Bingley explained that many entrants travelled long distances to enter and we wanted to keep the show local. Most of the long distance entries were of a more professional standard. Unfortunately we have a lack of space for the entries so it was necessary to limit them in some way, and the distance travelled was the only way the committee considered could be the way forward and this ruling will stay. It was agreed from the floor in 2020 that the committee should make the decision.

4 SECRETARY'S REPORT: The Secretary, Angela Hughes reported that 2021 started as another can we, can't we, do we, don't we, year and unfortunately became a no we can't year as following Government restrictions we were unable to hold our AGM in January, or commence the programme of talks. We did hold the April talk on Japanese Gardens via Zoom to some mixed results. However, in May we were able to hold the plant sale in the fresh air in the Northcourt Centre car park. This was a very successful afternoon and raised valuable funds for the Society. Angela offered a big thank you to all the members who contributed plants and to those that came and bought them.

With restrictions easing the next part of the planned programme that was able to go ahead was the short break to North Devon. 35 members enjoyed this break in August when we visited the Rosemoor Flower Show at the RHS garden. We visited the Walled Garden of Cannington on the way, visited Arlington Court, a National Trust property, and also stopped off at Kilver Court Garden in Shepton Mallet on our way home.

In September the Autumn Show was able to go ahead and from then on we were able to hold the scheduled talks. Hydroponics in the Greenhouse in October and Timothy Walker gave us an entertaining talk in November. Angela gave thanks to David and Barbara Bingley for arranging these

talks and looking after our programme. We held our annual Christmas Lunch at the Ock Mill Restaurant in December when 35 members enjoyed an excellent lunch and took the time to catch up with friends.

Radley Village were unable to hold their garden competition this year so no judges were provided but they did go ahead with their village show and we provided a judge for this.

Angela thanked all the committee and members who helped us during this difficult year. To Barry Wiggins who kept our brains ticking over with his excellent quizzes, to Ian Shepherd who kept us informed of what was going on via email, to David Hastings for the picture gallery and the information he kept updated on our website and to David Bingley for keeping the whole thing going in exceptional circumstances.

Angela also thanked Sue Blake and Shirley Trafford for looking after our refreshments at the show and for our talks and to Barry and Diana Wiggins for running our raffle so successfully. Angela added that she hoped that 2022 will be an easier year and not include any more restrictions so that we can carry on with the scheduled programme and get on with what we like to do best, to attend our talks and shows and socialise with other members

5 SHOW SECRETARY'S REPORT: Barbara Bingley reported that 2021 was an unusual year in so many ways. Unfortunately we were not able to hold the Spring Show but we were able to stage the Autumn one. This was more low key than normal as it was members only, no publicity, no visitors. But still very successful.

We look forward to being able to have both shows in 2022. The schedules are accessed on the website and entries may be made by email or by phone, with payment on show day, or brought to the house. We will continue to ensure that members who do not have internet access, who wish to enter the show, will receive paper schedules.

There are no changes to the Spring Show classes but a reminder that the handicraft classes are included. One of the committee made a good suggestion to have a class using recycled materials. I wasn't able to think of a suitable class so would welcome ideas from members.

In the Autumn schedule we have Class 7 which usually changes yearly to the flower of the year (according to Kings Seeds). In 2022 it is the poppy which does not flower in September so this year it is a completely new class of 5 stems of grasses. Ornamental grasses are very popular so we hope for a good number of entries. The wine classes attract entries from very few exhibitors and unless we do have more interest this year it may be the last year for these.

We try and reflect our members' interests in the schedules so if you do have new classes to suggest or any changes you would like to see to improve the shows, please let the committee know.

Barbara gave her thanks to her fellow committee members and helpers and everybody who does anything to enable the shows to be successful. The contributions for the raffle, cakes, plants and teas all make for a good show. Barbara said she was looking forward to it all happening again this year.

6 MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT: Ian reported that he formerly kept the records up to date but is now using the new database. With David Hastings' help this is working well and he thanked David for his assistance. Ian said he would like to encourage members to use the website. Ian thanked Karen for entering the subscriptions etc. He assured members that any information given is coded and protected. Ian received quick responses from his membership renewal reminder email, including 10 resignations from members who would have given up anyway. We had 170 members a year ago and have had 70 returns so far and felt that the reminder encouraged members to send in their subscriptions. Ian said a number of members are now using the BACS system, one or two complaints were received regarding the increase. He said there are still some of the old style forms about, there are new ones on the website. Those members who are without the internet are kept up to date. We now only have to post about 6 copies, with Barbara and Angela helping with distribution. The next newsletter is being compiled and Ian said he would welcome any contributions.

7 TREASURER'S REPORT: Karen said that she hoped everyone could see a copy of the accounts. We started the year with £5383.09 in the current account. £1,710 was the holiday deposits so we really had £3,673. Our National Savings was £5,616 and we received interest of £41.03 on that.

We didn't ask for any subscriptions last year due to Covid 19 and not being able to meet, but we were helped by the successful plant sale in April which raised £409.30 and the holiday raised an excess of £348.68

Karen reported that the meetings last year cost £290.50 this was for 2 meetings at Northcourt and a zoom meeting on line. The Autumn Show unfortunately made a loss of £83.45 but this was to be expected. Our other outgoings were for affiliation fees to the RHS and Vegetable Society and administration. We raised a good amount with the teas and raffles and plant sales. We ended the year with £4,251.66 in our current account.

Karen advised us that she had received a good amount of subscriptions for this year both by BACS and cheques. She stated that members may remember we introduced BACS payments this year which has gone well and she thanked everyone who has already paid. Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report was proposed by David Wadham and seconded by Chris Waite.

8 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS: David Bingley, Chairman, said he would like to thank fellow officers and committee members for supporting the Society through a very difficult period in the society's history. Other short breaks where meetings were suspended included the two World Wars and now the Covid pandemic. It was good to restart events in the late summer leading to a full Autumn programme. Our lock down plants sales in the Northcourt car park were well supported with great quality plant donations and lots of buyers. Our online presence has been developing thanks to the expertise of David Hastings. Without our improved website 'lockdown' would have been even more isolating. The picture galleries were well supported with many special pictures of our favourite plants and wonderful gardens. The 'Tender Shoots' meetings have been interesting and are still available. The emails, latest news items and many reminders we all receive are all due to Ian's hard work. David thanked Ian for this. Ian also maintained the members' data base. Well done to Karen for keeping our finances in order, with Robin's help. Barry and Diana have organised the raffles for us with some great prizes zes. David also thanked the "tea boys and girls" and those who helped set up the show facilities and steward with the judges.

David told the meeting that as they would know, Angela is standing down as our secretary and much of our success over the last few years has been down to her. David advised the meeting that Angela has been a committee member for 11 years and Secretary for over 9 years. She has organised 38 outings, 5 holidays and 4 short breaks. As a thank you for all her hard work and dedication David presented Angela with a Garden Centre Voucher and flowers and said he hoped she will enjoy making some special additions to her garden. He also thanked Angela for all she has done supporting the Society and himself.

The 2022 programme is now available on line/on the website and includes a range of visiting speakers, 3 outings and 2 shows as well as our lunch in December. David added he hoped it would be a successful and trouble free year.

9 ELECTION OF OFFICERS: The election of Officers was:

Chairman: David Bingley, nominated by Angela Hughes and agreed by the meeting.

Minutes Secretary: Linda Berry, nominated by Michael Matthews, agreed by the meeting.

Treasurer: Karen Fisher. nominated by Eileen Bontompelli, agreed by the meeting.

10 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Brenda Atkinson does not wish to stand again due to ill health. Barbara Bingley, David Hastings, Barry Wiggins and Victoria Middleton are all willing to stand again and were duly elected by the meeting.

Angie Edmondson has said she is prepared to join the committee, she was proposed by Sue Blake and seconded by David Bingley. Angie was therefore duly elected. This still leaves a vacancy for another committee member

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

12 SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2023: Karen Fisher, Treasurer, confirmed that the subscriptions should stay as they are for another year.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS: Susan Hammersley told the meeting that she has noticed that Wallingford Horticultural Society have a stall at Wallingford Market where they sell compost, fertiliser etc and asked if AHS could do the same. David Bingley thanked Susan for her suggestion but said that storage of stock would be difficult as we did not have facilities for this and it would also be a lot of extra work. Reluctantly, therefore, we could not consider this proposal.

Robin Carter told the meeting that we needed someone to help with trips, the Christmas lunch and organising the talks. He told the meeting that there would be no holiday this year but asked members to think about next year and see if they could help. He also asked for comments on whether we should hold trips on Saturday. He thought we should be more active in the local area and suggested that we prepare advertising leaflets. Angela Hughes advised Robin that the Clubs and Societies Day organised by Abingdon Town Council was a valuable way of getting new members but, of course, that has not been held for the last two years. It was also suggested that we advertise our talks in the Round and About magazine. Chris Waite told the meeting that the Flower Club have started advertising on Social Media and this is proving to be very successful. David Bingley was asked when and how often the committee meet, he advised 3 times a year, here at Northcourt Centre. On Show Days all the committee help.

14 CLOSURE BY THE OUR PRESIDENT, MICHAEL MATTHEWS

Michael Matthews said he congratulated the Society on maintaining itself so successful over the last year. He said we can look forward to a good year with no more restrictions. He wished the Society the very best for the forthcoming year.