

ABINGDON HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Northcourt Centre, Northcourt Road, Abingdon on Thames on Tuesday 17th January at 19:30 hours.

PRESENT:

Michael Matthews, our President, in the Chair.

Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Show Secretary, Membership Secretary and 35 members of the Society.

The chairman, David Bingley, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming out in the cold weather. He handed over to our President, Michael Matthews, to chair the meeting.

Michael thanked David and said he was delighted to be chairing the meeting again.

1 APOLOGIES:

Apologies were received from Linda Caldicott, David Hastings, Jill Wells, Carolyn King, Jean and Guy Thomas, Anne Beveridge, Shirley Trafford, June Bruce, Rosemary Carruthers, Sue Mullord and David and Janice Stretton-Smith.

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.

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

No matters were arising from the minutes.

4 SECRETARY'S REPORT:

The Secretary, Linda Berry, commented on how challenging the weather had been in 2022, but the clubs' activities had almost returned to normal. Over the year there were 5 talks, 3 trips, 2 shows and 1 plant sale along with a Christmas lunch.

The talks started with a journey of creating a wildflower garden by Ray Broughton. This was followed by a talk on Pots for the patio, then in May Jack Willgoss talked about the journey of creating Wild Goose Nursery along with some plants for sale. October's talk by Paul Williams was on winter containers and our final talk on Floriade was by none other than our chairman.

May saw us hold our 2nd big plant sale in the Northcourt Centre car park. This led to us raising around £550. Thank you to everyone who helped and donated.

Also in May, David Bingley attended the Mayor Making at St Helen's Church. A bonus was our president, Michael Matthews receiving Honorary citizenship of the City of Lucca, Italy, to recognise his work linking the two communities of Abingdon and Lucca.

June saw the whole town take part in the Platinum Jubilee celebrations which included various events held on Rye Meadow. One of these was the Clubs and Societies Day, luckily the sun shone, and we had a successful day managing to enrol a few new members.

Welcome to you if you are here tonight. The main attraction on our stand was the amazing orange flowered Rebutia, loaned by Peter Girling. Thank you to him and to everyone else who helped.

Finally Christmas lunch was held at the Ock Mill on 6th December. 41 members attended and there was lots of sparkle, festive jumpers and ties on show.

We are now looking forward to a full programme of events for the coming year. This will include the Clubs and Societies Day on the 18th March at the Guildhall.

5 SHOW SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Barbara Bingley reported that Covid restrictions were much less in 2022 and we were able to hold both shows with members and visitors. Unfortunately, two days before the Autumn show our Queen died and we had to make a difficult decision as to whether to hold the show or not. The Palace website helped us out by saying that events should go ahead and that is what the Queen would have wanted.

Entries were down on 2019, the previous normal year, but they nevertheless showcased our members high standard of colourful exhibits.

No shows are possible without the support of everyone who helps organise, exhibit, visit, tidy etc. Thank you.

Changes to the schedule are based on the number of entries to a class. Handicrafts were moved to the Spring Show, but due to popular demand the Autumn Show now includes a class to give the crafting members an opportunity to put together a Crafty Meal on a Plate. Full details are in the schedule but must include an upcycled item. I do hope we get at least 10 entries, and the winner will be awarded the Muriel Welch Memorial Cup. The winner will be chosen by visitors to the show.

The wine classes have, over the years, been supported by a declining number of entries. A fruit spirit class was introduced a few years ago and this year the section title has been changed to Beverages and now includes a non-alcoholic class, and fewer wine classes.

The schedule is available to view on the website so you can start planning. Seville oranges are in the shops now if you like marmalade. It is still winter if you wish to take a photograph and then it will soon be Spring and time to plant seeds for the Autumn Show classes.

It is a real pleasure receiving your entries and then seeing them materialise at the shows.

6 MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Ian Shepherd started by apologising for the recent emails where the wrong file was sent out. Apology was accepted by the members. He also apologised to Robin Carter for putting an incorrect email on the January Newsletter.

The membership database is linked to the website and the 2022 numbers were: 55 family memberships and 89 Single members and 1 honorary which will disappear in 2023. So far for 2023 there have been 5 resignations; 4 family memberships and 8 singles already paid up. For those who haven't paid please send in your renewals to Karen Fisher.

This years' newsletters and distribution will be directly from the database and not from a personal file.

7 OUTINGS REPORT:

Robin Carter reported that the date for the first trip of 2023 has had to be changed due to problems with the coach company. Alternative companies were more expensive. The new date is Thursday 25th May. The visit is to Savill Gardens in Windsor Great Park there are also some Valley Gardens near by to walk to. The application form will be available from mid-March on the website. Provisional cost is £29 per member.

The second trip is to Bourton House Gardens near Moreton-in-the-Marsh. For those that came to the October talk the speaker, Paul Williams, used to be the head gardener there. As it is a fairly small garden therefore, we will plan to have lunch there and then visit Chastleton Gardens in the afternoon. There don't appear to be refreshments, but there are toilets. Provisional cost is £27 for National Trust members and £37 for non-National Trust members. The entrance fee to Chastleton includes entrance to the house as well as the garden.

8 TREASURERS REPORT:

Karen Fisher hoped that everyone had had a chance to see a copy of the accounts. The year started with £4251.66 in the current account. The National Savings was £5657.21 and received 57p interest.

Meetings last year cost £803.26 this includes the speakers and hire of the hall for meetings and shows. There was an increase in the cost of the hall hire last year to £271.

The miscellaneous on the balance sheet covers affiliation fees to the RHS and National Vegetable Society, the website, insurance and gratuities.

There was a loss on both shows, the Spring show lost £15.08 and Autumn Show £58.84. We raised a good amount with the teas, raffles and the plant sale.

The 3 trips were to Exbury, Wisley and Mottisfont. Exbury and Wisley both made a small profit which made up for the loss we had at Mottisfont.

The year ended with £5709.74 in the current account and £5657.78 in the Savings account.

9 CHAIRMANS REMARKS:

David Bingley, Chairman, said he would like to thank fellow officers, committee members and co-opted members for all their hard work and time they have given throughout the year. It has been a time to refocus after the disruptions of the previous couple of years.

Linda, our secretary, has been busy developing the role and the committee have taken on new areas of work to help her. Karen has kept the accounts in order, but it is sad news that Geoffrey, the accounts examiner, passed away recently.

We had a balanced programme of talks, Day Trips -thanks to Robing for arranging those, two shows, well done to the Show Secretary for dealing with entries, arranging the judges and planning the shows and everyone else who helped set up and help on the two show days, a real team effort by the committee and lots of family members. Thanks to Angie for keeping us hydrated at the talks and show days and Barry and Diana for organising raffles. Thanks to Ian who has once again worked hard to keep us all informed, up to date with information and reminders and David Hastings who continues to update and develop the website and database.

The society plant sale in May was, once again, a tremendous success, a team effort by members to produce the plants, set up stalls and encourage everyone to fill in the gaps in our gardens.

2023 plans are mainly in place, the Show schedules are online and it is time to start sowing and growing. There is another plant sale in May and six talks are arranged, the first being the 21st of February. Robin is again organising two trips and Suzanne Hamblin the holiday.

David told the meeting that after many years of supporting the Society Ian has decided to retire from the committee. Ian was presented with a voucher to buy something for the garden as a lasting memory of all his hard work. Also, Victoria Middleton is stepping down from the committee. She will be given a bunch of flowers.

10 ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

The election of officers was:

Chairman: David Bingley nominated by John Elflett, seconded by Peter Girling. Agreed by the meeting.

Secretary: Linda Berry nominated by Bryan Hitchman, seconded by Barbara Bingley. Agreed by the meeting.

Treasurer: Karen Fisher nominated by Linda Berry seconded by John Elflett. Agreed by the meeting.

11 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Bryan Hitchman, Robin Carter and Jill Wells are all willing to stand again and were duly elected by the meeting. Two co-opted members, Suzanne Hamblin and Linda Caldicott have agreed to stand and were duly elected by the meeting.

12 APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINER:

Fiona Shadbolt has agreed to be the examiner.

13 SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2024

Costs of hall, speakers and their travel are all going up and in addition a member mentioned the discrepancy between the family membership and the single membership. It was proposed that from January 2024 the Single price be kept at £11 and the Family price increase to £18. This was agreed by the meeting.

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

David Bingley has organised the speakers for 2023 and Bryan Hitchman will be taking over from 2024.

15 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

Michael Matthews said he had enjoyed the opportunity to chair the meeting and looked forward to seeing members at the shows. David Bingley thanked him for chairing the meeting.

**Meeting closed at 19:15.
Date of next AGM Tuesday 16th January 2024 at 19:30**