

# ABINGDON HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Northcourt Centre, Northcourt Road, Abingdon on Thames on Tuesday 21st January 2025 at 19:30 hours.

### **PRESENT:**

Cllr Rawda Jahanli, Deputy Mayor, in the Chair.

Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Show 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 the Deputy Mayor, Rawda Jahanli, to chair the meeting. She thanked the club for inviting her. She said even though she had been living in Abingdon for 20 years it was during the covid pandemic that she decided to get a different balance in her life and decided to become a councillor and give back to the community.

### **1 APOLOGIES:**

Apologies were received from David Hastings, Shirley Trafford, Tim Holdstock, Jan Munn, Suzanne and Ron Hamblin and Bernie Watson.

### **2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:**

The Minutes of the AGM held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were approved by the meeting and signed by the deputy mayor.

### **3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:**

No matters were arising from the minutes.

### **4 SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

The Secretary, Linda Berry, commented on how 2024 had been another challenging year due to the ever-changing weather. Over the year there were 6 talks, 2 trips, a holiday, 2 shows and 1 plant sale along with a Christmas lunch.

The talks started with a complete guide to Clematis with ideas for varieties for every season by Peter Skeggs-Gooch. This was followed by Sue Bedwell taking us through the seasons with irises. We then had an introduction to hostas and in May a very interesting talk about bees from David Busby. After the Autumn show our next speaker was Bryan Hitchman, committee member, telling us about Bach's flower remedies and the year concluded with Dr Chris Gibson introducing us to his book 'a Guide to Wildflowers'. We can now look forward to another full year of talks.

May saw us hold our 3rd big plant sale in the Northcourt Centre carpark. This led to us raising an amazing amount and is fast becoming a major raiser of funds for the club. Thank you to everyone who helped and donated. Please remember to get growing and dividing for this year's sale on Saturday May 10<sup>th</sup>.

The club has been approached by Tendershoots and as a result a couple of the committee have joined WhatsApp groups as it may help with speakers in the future.

Finally, Christmas lunch was held at Coseners House on the 12<sup>th</sup> December. 48 members attended and there was lots of sparkle, festive jumpers and jolly ties on show. The staff and chef looked after us very well. This venue is the only one, that I am aware of in Abingdon,

that can accommodate our number and gives us the option of 2 or 3 courses and includes tea and coffee. Please let me know if anyone has any other suggestions.

We are now looking forward to a full programme of events for the coming year. All of which will be on the website and will be hand delivered to those without email.

## **5 TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Karen Fisher reported that the accounts are currently with the auditor.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> December the current account total was £9119.18

The savings account is now with the Newbury Building Society and total amount £5830.53.

In October the interest added to the account was £110.99. The treasurer and chair have access to this account.

2024 Subscriptions raised £1792 and the plant sale just over £700. The cost of speakers was £942. The Spring show made a small profit, and the Autumn show a small loss. The margins in the coming year may be different as there will be no entry money or prize money.

Following a question from the floor Karen said she would be moving more money into the savings account once all the fees and bills for January have been paid.

## **6 MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

Karen Fisher reported that 2024 ended with a total membership of 133. This was 81 single and 52 family members. There were 13 new members in 2024, 11 single and 2 family. So far this year subscriptions have been received from 28 single and 25 family memberships.

## **7 SHOW SECRETARY REPORT:**

Barbara Bingley said she is always happy to give her report as every year there are 2 successful shows. Inclement weather tries it's best to spoil the fun but there are always enough quality entries to give excellent displays.

The varied interests of our members means that the shows include classes to reflect not only the growers but the crafters, bakers and photographers amongst us. The schedules are tweaked every year to take into account members input and the number of entries in classes. The schedules for 2025 are on the website so start planning now. There is still time to make Seville orange marmalade.

The biggest change for 2025 is the removal of the entry fees and prize money. It will be interesting to see if this changes the number of entries. Hopefully there will be more.

Barbara added that she was disappointed that there was only a single entry in the basket/container class. She hopes that more of you will enter your examples this year.

All the exhibits have to be judged and many of our judges have given their time and expertise to help us for many years. Last Autumn show flower and vegetable judges let us know that they may not be continuing once retired. The search will start for a replacement.

Thank you to the committee members and members who give valuable support to ensure successful events. Together with the exhibits the plant, produce and raffle tables mean there is plenty for visitors along with refreshments.

This year the shows are March 29<sup>th</sup> and September 6<sup>th</sup>.

## **8 OUTINGS REPORT:**

**Trips** – Robin Carter reported that there were 2 trips in 2024. The first, on 30<sup>th</sup> May, was to Sir Harold Hillier Gardens near Romsey. 34 members enjoyed the day, and the weather stayed dry. The second trip was to Kew Gardens, which nearly got cancelled due to the high winds, but managed to go ahead.

The trips for 2025 have been arranged. The first is to Exbury Gardens on the 8<sup>th</sup> May. The applications forms are going out this week. The second trip is to Bledlow gardens near Princess Risborough on 24<sup>th</sup> July. Information will be sent out in April. This will be a shorter day as the gardens are not too large.

## **9 CHAIRMANS REMARKS:**

David Bingley, Chairman, said the evening had seen reports from the committee who have helped us enjoy another successful year with a varied programme of speakers, visits, holidays, shows and plant sales.

He thanked all the team that make this possible, the committee, their families and other enthusiastic members. Thank you also to the dedicated team who keep us up to date with news via the website, the newsletter, as well as regular emails of events from our own society and other local gardening clubs and societies. Barry kept our grey cells active with his quiz at the AGM and Diana supports him with the raffle.

We had a successful plant sale in May, thank you to everyone who supported the day both growing plants for sale and buying them.

In 2024 there were 2 well supported shows, thanks to Barbara. Suzanne organised a successful holiday and has the 2025 booking in hand. Robin organised 2 successful trips despite the latter nearly being disrupted by storm Lilian. Bryan has treated us to some special speakers who have travelled quite a distance and has already planned 2025 even at a time when his energy levels are low. A big thank you to Karen for wrestling with the Lloyds Bank closure, the opening of the Newbury Building Society Account and preparing the books for the examiner. Finally, I appreciate the work and help of our secretary, Linda, who manages to meet the necessary deadlines despite the many pressures she has. Linda, with help from others has taken on many new aspects for the society.

Thank you to Charlton Park Garden Centre for their continuing sponsorship.  
Finally if anyone would like to join the committee there is always space.

## **10 ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

The election of officers:

Chairman: David Bingley proposed and agreed by the meeting.

Secretary: Linda Berry proposed and agreed by the meeting.

Treasurer: Karen Fisher Proposed and agreed by the meeting.

## **11 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Barbara Bingley, David Hastings and Barry Wiggins have all agreed to stand again. This was agreed by the meeting

## **12 APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINER:**

Karen Fisher will ask Fiona Shadbolt, the current examiner, if she is happy to continue.

### **13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

- I. Bryan Hitchman said that all the speakers for 2025 had been arranged, he followed with a brief description of each one. He asked members for any other suggestions.
- II. David Bingley said that the committee had been asked to consider holding an afternoon meeting in the winter months. Many members do not like driving in the dark, but it was also argued that the club is trying to attract younger members and would this be a deterrent. In addition getting afternoon speakers is quite difficult. There was discussion and different points of view made from members. Flexibility was advised but for now this is on hold.
- III. David Bingley thanked members for their raffle prize contributions. He asked that donations be checked for 'best before dates' and packaging integrity.

No other business was reported.

### **14 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING BY THE DEPUTY MAYOR**

Cllr Rawda Jahanli thanked the society for inviting her. And she announced the meeting closed

**Meeting closed at 20:30.  
Date of next AGM Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 19:30**