

## ABINGDON HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**20<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2026, 7.30pm at Northcourt Centre**

### MINUTES

**Due to unknown circumstances the the Mayor did not attend. It was agreed by the members attending that David Bingley should stand in and chair the meeting.**

1. Apologies - Jill Wells, Shirley Trafford, Elizabeth & David Wadham, David Hastings
2. Minutes of 2025 meeting were approved by Maurice Tubb and seconded by Susan Hammersley and signed by David Bingley as a true record
3. Matters arising – none
4. Secretary's Report - Evelyn Walker

I would like to thank the previous secretary, Linda Berry, for her very professional and comprehensive set of instructions that she left us. I have some big shoes to step into. I'm not a horticulturalist so how 2025 went as far as growing things went I'm not sure but I do know it becomes more and more difficult to predict the weather patterns and when to plant. But as to entertainment, we have had some splendid talks this year, 6 in total, on a varied range of subjects. The suggestion of how to do pots and containers was more in my personal range of growing. The shows have both been very successful events, but will continue to evolve with new suggestions on how to compete for the cups and medals. The holiday was a really nice break, with some lovely weather just right for wandering through the gardens and sitting in the sunshine with a nice lunch. The entertainment in the hotel in the evenings was hilarious at times, and apart from one unfortunate incident resulting in a hospital visit, it went off very well. The Christmas lunch was once again well attended and it was a nice way to start the festive season. So on to 2026 and hopefully it will be a good growing year with lots of opportunities to sit and admire your handiwork.

## 5. Treasurer's Report - Karen Fisher

Our books were checked in January this year by Douglas Bradshaw, a retired employee of HMRC. He found that our accounts were adequate and satisfactory.

Our Lloyds current account as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025 is £5801.90.

Our Newbury Building Society savings are £11063.60. We received £233.07 interest on this account at the end of October. There has been a change to the interest rate on 03/09/2025 to 2.1% (previously 2.3%).

Our 1<sup>st</sup> year of bank charges has amounted to £87.66. This is a monthly charge plus any money we pay into the account. We have had a 50% discount this year on charges which has now ended. As of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025 our charges will be:-

Service charge monthly £4.25

Cash in/out at bank 42p per £100 at deposit machine, 75p at counter. BACS item 7p.

Cheques 42p at deposit point, 50p at counter

We have an adequate amount in the current account going into 2026, and a healthy reserve in the building society

## 6. Membership Secretary's Report - Karen Fisher

Members - single 75; Family 46, Total membership 121

This time last year there were 133 members.

There were 10 new members throughout 2025.

Thank you to all those who have paid subscriptions this year.

## 7. Show Secretary's Report - Barbara Bingley

2025 was another year with 2 successful shows.

Last year was the first year when entries were free and when no prize money was won. As an exhibitor myself, I missed the envelope containing my winnings, but as Show Secretary it meant a large saving in administrative time before & during the show. The change caused no detrimental effect on the number of entrants & entries.

This year we are going to trial starting the prize giving & raffle at 3:30 pm (15.30) instead of 4 pm (16.00). The shows will be open to the public & members for 1.5 hours before prize giving instead of 2 hours. This should still give visitors enough time to have a good look round, buy their raffle tickets, buy from the sales tables & enjoy a chat with a cup of tea.

I hope that you have already viewed this year's Spring show schedule and planned your entries. Seville oranges are still available in Waitrose and perhaps in next week's Monday market. There are handicraft classes to suit all our talents. Most of us could take a photograph of Winter & Spring. I would love to see increased numbers of members entering our shows.

The Autumn Show schedule is also on our website. I was amazed that members were able to defy the hot dry summer of 2025 to stage a show at all, let alone a full & colourful one! This year, due to several years with very low entries, there are no Summer garden classes. BUT you will all be able to send in photographs of your garden successes to our website, where all of us may view the pictures in the gallery.

I hope that members will enter both shows and for the first time the Muriel Welch Challenge Cup will be awarded to the member who enters at least 4 different sections in the Spring and/or Autumn Shows and gains most points, obtaining these in at least 2 sections. The winner will not be eligible to win in the subsequent 2 years.

Without the support of members, my fellow committee members & members who help on shows days it would not be possible to organise & put on the shows. Thank you all. And if there is a member who feels they have the time & the interest to become involved with the show aspect of the Society, please let me know!

## 8. Outings Report - Robin Carter

As many of you know we had two outings this year. The first was to Exbury Gardens in early May. The Gardens were beautiful with the azaleas and rhododendrons in full flower. Our second outing was to Bledlow Manor gardens, this was a private visit and we were the only visitors. Lord Carrington welcomed us and showed us around his garden for about an hour. After which we roamed at will until it was time for tea and cake.

This coming year we are visiting Spetchley Park Gardens in the middle of May (14<sup>th</sup>). All arrangements have been made and the application form will be out, on line, in the next few weeks. Please give me the information asked for on the slip at the bottom of the form. If you have not got a computer and would like a hard copy please let me know. The price of the trip is £35 plus £1.50 if you book a tour.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> outing is in early September (3<sup>rd</sup>) to hopefully Hidcote Manor Gardens, a National Trust property. I am at present sorting out arrangements with the NT as our current coach size will be too long for their car park and we have to limit numbers in a smaller coach which will be a 37 seater and a visit time of 3 hours.

#### 9. Speakers/Talks for 2026 – Bryan Hitchman

February is Russell Attwood,  
March is Smith Veg talk “30 Years of showing vegetables, flowers & cakes”  
April is Michael Brown “The Historic Gardener”  
May or October is Phil Eastell “Rhododendron, camellia & magnolia”  
November is Pip Bensley, Flower National Association

Other date will be filled and notified

#### 10. Holiday Report – Suzanne Hamblin

In July there are 34 booked to go to Kent, (30<sup>th</sup> July - 4<sup>th</sup> August). There are still one single and 2 twin rooms available. The balance is due beginning of May.

#### 11. Chairman's Remarks - David Bingley

This evening we had reports from our committee, may I on behalf of the membership thank the committee for their work and time they have given to ensure the continued success of our society. The committee have helped us enjoy another successful year with a varied programme of speakers, visits, holidays, shows, raffles and plant sales. Importantly again our accounts are in safe hands. As important, there is also a wider team that makes this possible, our families as well as other enthusiastic members who help with so many different aspects of running a successful society. Thank you to all who have helped with the refreshments and stalls on show days as well as teas and the plant sales and I hope you will continue in the future.

Our two shows have been really special this year, partly due to a hot summer, so thank you all for supporting them in the way you have. The communications team have continued to keep us up to date with the latest news and information and the website is becoming more important over time.

I was pleased to hear from new members that they had been made to feel so welcome and part of our society and that they felt able to join in with all the activities. I think that is an important part of our community spirit and a real strength of our group.

It was with sadness that I received the news that our secretary Linda Berry was having to step down due to major family issues. My thanks go to Ev Walker who very kindly picked up the role and is doing a great job.

I would like to thank Barry for organising the quiz this evening.

Thank you to Charlton Park Garden Centre for their continuing sponsorship.

David presented Linda Berry with a RHS Recognition Award Certificate and a voucher to thank her.

## 12. Election of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer

Evelyn Walker was nominated onto the committee by Angela Hughes, seconded by Suzanne Hamblin.

Then the nomination for David Bingley as Chair, Evelyn Walker as Secretary and Karen Fisher was made by Linda Caldicott and seconded by Barry Wiggins.

## 13. Election of Committee Members

Due to the covid year 5 members were due for re-election. Suzanne Hamblin and Linda Caldicott have extended their term for another year. Jill Wells has resigned.

Bryan Hitchman, Robin Carter and Karen Fisher have agreed to restand. Acceptance of their nominations was made by Peter Girling and seconded by Ron Hamblin. Bernie Watson was also nominated by Bryan Hitchman and seconded by Suzanne Hamblin, so will join the committee.

## 14. Appointment of Examiner

Douglas Bradshaw was unanimously agreed an examiner for 2026 unless he becomes a member of the AHS.

## 15. Subscriptions for 2027

It was proposed there be no increase to the subscriptions in 2027 and this was agreed unanimously.

## 16. Any Other Business

- a) Our affiliation to RHS and the National Vegetable Society provides monthly magazines, Karen Fisher will share these with the members at the meetings.

- b) There is a discount card for the RHS providing 1 free entry with one entry at half price available for use.
- c) The examiner's report raised two issues - is there an adequate budgeting process, any suggestions are welcome; and an asset register needs to be maintained.
- d) Northcourt Centre needs a new roof, £100,000 estimated cost. Fundraising events are being planned. Next one is 8<sup>th</sup> March, 12.00 - 15.00, a Preloved Sale.

The meeting was closed at 20.37