

Wellow and District Horticultural Society

Annual General Meeting 2019

Held 21st November 2019, Wellow Village Hall

Present:

Bridget Woollen (Chair); Liz Hunt (Vice Chair); Avril Greig (Secretary); Ian Harris (Treasurer); Gill Fee; Gail Balfour; Pam Pike; Alex Martin (President). 20+ members.

1. Apologies:

Geoff White; Tara Gold; Sue Wilford; Mari Bartholomew; various members.

2. Minutes of AGM held 15.11.18:

Approved as a correct record.

3. Matters arising from AGM 15.11.18:

Bridget Woollen reported that we had been unable to respond to certain members' suggestions at the previous AGM. These were the establishment of a Gardeners' Forum on Facebook and the notification of members about new posts on the website. This was due to lack of time and of the necessary IT skills on the Committee.

4. Chair's Report for 2019:

The Chair thanked everyone for their ongoing support of the Society. She said 2019 had been a year of "ups and downs", citing the removal of the container and its subsequent replacement with a shed. The shed was then damaged beyond repair in a gale. There were also 2 occasions of vandalism. However, there is now a small container in situ and in use.

The "ups" outweighed these "downs". The year started with an unusual talk on our theme for the year, climate change. We will continue to support this theme for next year and hope to be involved in tree-planting locally. The visit to Downside Nursery in April was very good and useful for gardening tips, attended by 10 members. This was followed by another very successful Plant Sale in May, organised by Rob Greig, who was thanked.

In July, for the first time, we held a "Best Garden in Wellow" competition. There were 13 entries in the end, with judging by our guest Wayne Amiel (winner of this year's BBC's Gardeners' World Magazine, Garden of the Year Award), carried out over 2 days. He was so impressed with all the gardens that everyone received a certificate. Overall winners were Di Dalglish and Jonathan Knight for their wildflower garden. Rob and Avril Greig were thanked for organising this. The certificates were presented the same evening at the

annual garden party, hosted this year by Annie and David Scotland. Our thanks were also extended to them for a wonderful evening.

The Flower Show opened with a downpour, which meant the number attending was down on 2018. Despite that, it was a great success, with much positive feedback. Overall, entries for the judged classes in the marquee remained stable. It was pleasing that within this, the entries in the horticultural sections were up by 17%. Of these, 60% were from the same 8 people. We were also, unusually, in profit from the Show, with thanks extended to Pam Pike for donating the takings from the teas and cakes, to Alex Martin, for organising the sponsors and advertising, and to Janet Plater for organising the raffle. Noted that work for this major event begins in January and is ongoing thereafter.

Apple Day was very kindly organised this year by members Hugh Prentice and Helen Simpson, at very short notice to them. Despite this, plus it being quite late this year (end of October), it was still a great success, especially with young families. Many thanks to Helen and Hugh.

Our membership stands at 100, the majority of which are for families, therefore each membership covers several people. We lost a few members this year, but also gained a few.

The "seed offer" is available once again to members this year, forms available from Bridget, shortly to be posted on the website.

Outgoing committee members were thanked, as were those who are standing again this year.

Finally, Bridget closed by thanking Avril Greig (Secretary) and Ian Harris (Treasurer, appointed in 2018), for their contributions.

5. Report from the Treasurer:

Copies of the Treasurer's report were available at the meeting and also on the website. Ian started his first year as Treasurer with some misgivings about the finances and noted that the Society had lost £1200 in 2016 (including having had wet Flower Show, loss of £1k), with further losses in 2017 and 2018, despite the Show being good-weather successes both of these years. This would not be a sustainable trajectory. In addition, this year, there was the one-off expense of the new container. However, with a Flower Show profit of £894 this year, the reserves were being rebuilt and the overall loss this year was down to minus £208. Ian advised that reserves should, at an absolute minimum, be enough to cover the total losses on 2 consecutive rained-off shows, which he estimated at £2000 each or a total of £4000.

The Horticultural Society has also just invested in a shredder at £415.00 for the use of members (available for inspection at the meeting). Some members are contributing £50, which gives them free use over a 3-year period. Others would be able to hire the machine for £20 for a weekend (compared with approx. £100 to hire a similar machine from a hire company). The other main contributor of £100 is the Composting Club. The shredder will be stored at Rob and Avril's home and Rob will administer the loans and hiring. Ian asked for people to come forward with any similar ideas for the committee to consider.

Ian proposed he would introduce a new financial year-end of September, so that the AGM would be presented with year-end accounts after 2020. In addition, Hugh has agreed to audit all future accounts.

Finally, with no queries on the accounts, these were duly accepted by members.

6. Election of New Committee:

Alex Martin reported that 2 committee members were standing down this year (Mari Bartholomew and Tara Gold). They were thanked for their hard work and contributions to the Horticultural Society. These 2 losses were in addition to the existing 1 vacancy on the Committee. We had received 2 nominations for new members (Jodie Davies and Caroline Thomas) in advance of the AGM. Alex asked for any other nominations but none were forthcoming. All were therefore elected/re-elected unopposed, thanked for their willingness to stand and welcomed into the Committee.

7. Presentation of Awards from Flower Show (adults):

Presentations were made to Katie Millar; Heather Voutt; Julia Wylde (in absentia); Hugh Prentice; Alice Harper (in absentia); Rob Greig and Alex Martin. Alex was further congratulated on his award of the RHS's Banksian Medal, received on the day. Children's cups had already been given out.

8. Events for 2020

Planning is already underway for 2020. On behalf of the events team, Gill Fee ran through the proposed programme:-

- Seedy Sunday (seed swap event) to be held 16th February.
- Rewilding talk by Chris Sperring in March
- Visit to Rosie Craddock's no-dig garden in Shoscombe in April
- Plant Sale on 9th May
- Garden Party in July, venue tba
- Flower Show on 5th September
- Apple Day in October – to be arranged if possible
- AGM in November as usual

Further details to follow as soon as they are available.

9. Any Other Business

- There was a query about subscriptions: Ian said that at this stage, there was no need to increase them.
- Member Clover Holland suggested we consider an autumn "swap" of perennial plants, many of which are divided at this time of year. This could possibly be combined with Apple Day.
- Committee member, Mari Bartholomew, has stepped down this year after over 30 years of loyal service. Members present and the committee expressed their sincere gratitude to her for all her hard work, in particular, her very popular wreath-making workshops at Christmas, as well as the Plant Sale, which she started. Fortunately for the Horticultural Society, she has expressed her willingness to stay involved as needed.

- Clover further mentioned how much she had enjoyed the “Best Garden in Wellow” contest and requested this is repeated from time to time.
- Hugh added in some detail about Seedy Sunday, which he is leading. He has arranged for a seed potato supplier from Prior Park Garden Centre to attend, as well as a tool/knife sharpener. There will also be a tool repair service available. He plans to find a commercial seed supplier to attend too, and reminded those present to collect and store their seeds. He provided seed envelopes for this purpose to those present.
- Member Katie Millar reported that the Parlour Shop had been very grateful for a previous donation. This had been used to plant herbs in pots outside the shop. The Shop Committee now hopes to develop the verges outside, possibly with perennials. Bulbs were also suggested as an option. The Chair expressed support on behalf of the committee and suggested further discussions outside the meeting.

The proposed talk, on trees and tree planting to help ameliorate climate change, did not proceed in the absence of the speakers. However, Hugh was able to give some background. The Parish Council is backing a plan to find new spaces on which 500 trees could be planted. So far, a few sites had been agreed and members were encouraged to think about space in their own gardens and/or fields which could be used. We were also encouraged to look out for any stray saplings which may have self-seeded in our gardens to dig up for replanting. Funding and labour would be needed. HortSoc hopes to be involved in this project. Please contact Hugh or Jo Trafford from the Parish Council for further information.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm