

Wellow and District Horticultural Society

Annual General Meeting 2021

Held 18th November 2021, via Zoom

Present:

Committee: Bridget Woollen (Chair); Liz Hunt (Vice Chair); Avril Greig (Secretary); Ian Harris (Treasurer); Gill Fee; Gail Balfour; Pam Pike; Alex Martin (President); Janet Plater (Vice President).

Members: Janet Martin; Richard and Clover Holland; Jane Rees; Audrey Gerber; Rob Greig; Sue Saker; Hugh Prentice; Jill Lambert; Mike and Debbie Clarkson; Marchelle Farrell.

1. Apologies:

Colin & Heather Voutt; Julia Wetherall and Roger Stephens; Fiona Schubert; Jill Tremellen; Mari Bartholomew; Prakriti Karthausar. Caroline Thomas (represented by proxy); Sue Wilford (represented by proxy); Pat Caudle (represented by proxy); Alice and Rob Lancaster.

2. Minutes of AGM held 19.11.20

Approved as a correct record.

3. Matters arising from AGM 19.11.20

There was one matter arising. Bridget reported that a mulberry tree in memory of past President, Michael Carpenter, has been planted in the North Field behind the Church.

4. Chair's Report for 2021:

Bridget began by apologising that, for a second consecutive year, we have needed to resort to Zoom for our AGM. She commented that we are very much looking forward to sharing food and wine with everyone next year, in the Village Hall.

The Committee was pleased we had been able to have two Zoom talks earlier in the year, one by our own Jane Rees on The Galapagos Islands and the second by local TV presenter and writer, Chris Sperring, on Rewilding.

These talks were followed in early May with the Plant Sale. Once again, this was run remotely because of Covid, by Rob Greig, who was assisted this year by Audrey Timm. They were thanked warmly for all the hard work.

Although the garden party was abandoned this year, we were delighted to be able to stage the Flower Show once again. Although this was a scaled down event, it was hugely successful and the weather was kind. It gave everyone a chance to meet up again and feel that at least some things were returning to normal. Bridget extended her thanks to all the committee, especially Avril and Liz and to everyone else who contributed their time and efforts, in one way or another, to making the Show a success.

Bridget concluded with special thanks to Avril, as secretary and to Ian, our Treasurer, who is standing down as of this meeting. We are sorry to see Ian go with his talents in the spreadsheet department and keeping the accounts so well!

5. Report from the Treasurer:

Copies of the Treasurer's report and the accounts were available prior to the meeting on the website. The accounts for 2020 have once again, been audited by Hugh Prentice.

Ian summarised the contents of his report. Income from subscriptions was substantially reduced as these were waived for 2019/20. Income from the Flower Show was also very much down because of reduced entry fees, lower footfall and no raffle. However, the Show still made a small profit of £196. Thanks were extended to Caroline and other committee members for their efforts in securing such a high level of sponsorship this year. The Plant Sale was very successful again this year, raising over £500.

The only substantial outgoing, apart from the Flower Show expenses, was the purchase of a credit card reader at £119. This has been well-used at both the Plant Sale and the Flower Show.

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

6. Election of New Committee:

Alex Martin reported that all current committee members had said they were willing to re-stand this year other than Ian Harris. One nomination for a new committee member had been received – Fiona Schubert. Alex asked for any other nominations but none were forthcoming. All were therefore re-elected unopposed and thanked for their willingness to continue the work of the Society. Fiona was also thanked for stepping forward and also agreeing to take on the role of Treasurer.

7. Announcement of Awards:

Bridget read out the names of all the winners of awards at the Flower Show. They were:

Sue Rodford Cup – for most points by a pre-school child – **William Hart**
St Julian's Cup - for most points by a St Julian's School pupil - **Clara Elliot**
Junior Gardener Cup - for most points in veg, fruit and flower sections by someone under 16 years old – **Rufus Lancaster**
Combe Hay Cup - for most points in the cookery and food section – **Katie Millar**
Best in Poultry - a £10 voucher from Castlemead Poultry - **Imogen Atkin**

Sarah Moore Trophy - for best individual exhibit across all flower categories - **Alice Lancaster**

The Late Jean Rittner Cup - for best entry in the flowers in a cottage garden category – **Judith Wetherall**

The Ken Mannings Shield - for most points in the Novelty Garden section - **Rob Greig**

The Ted Welch Memorial Cup for most points in the fruit section (n.b. 3 people all within 1 point of each other) – **Katie Millar**

The Patrick Hartley Memorial Salver – for best collection of 5 vegetables – **Alex Martin**

Newcomer's Award – most points achieved in veg, fruit and flower classes by resident for less than 2 years – **Marchelle Farrell**

The Wellow and District Challenge Cup – for most points in the vegetable section – **Alex Martin**

The Banksian Medal - for most points across the vegetable, fruit and flowers sections – **Rob Greig**

8. Where to for Wellow Horticultural Society?

Bridget asked those present whether they wanted HortSoc to continue with our usual array of events or look to do something different. One idea was put forward by member Hugh Prentice. He asked if HortSoc would consider using some of its reserve funds to contribute to an idea of encouraging a large-scale production of fruit and veg, so that people could “buy local” and thereby reduce their carbon footprints. All were in favour of the principle of purchasing locally produced food, but not necessarily about the role of HortSoc in this. After much discussion, Hugh was asked to produce a working document which could be put to committee in the first instance. It was also mooted that visiting similar local schemes would be helpful.

ACTION: Hugh to produce working and costed document. Events Committee to organise visit(s) to local fruit/veg production projects.

9. Future of the Flower Show

Members and local people had already received notice that the current Flower Show secretaries, Bridget, Avril and Liz, were either standing down, or may consider continuing, but only in a much-reduced role. A new model was proposed, that HortSoc would retain responsibility to organise and run the morning part of the Show (i.e. the booking of the marquee, entries and judging of fruit/veg, flowers, cookery, drinks, arts/crafts, children's classes etc etc). However, we would need to look for a partner organisation to organise and run the afternoon of entertainments, refreshments, stalls etc. In the past, no such opportunities existed, but the village and Parish is now very different. This is complicated by the fact that the afternoon of entertainments and refreshments etc generate the income, whereas the hire of the marquee and the morning of horticulture make up the expenditure. It was proposed that we seek to ask Wellow Recreation to take on the organising of the other activities. All residents of Wellow and the Parish are automatically members of Wellow Rec (which is registered with the Charities Commission). Sue Saker, who is a relative newcomer, said she was unaware of this. Wellow Rec is a legal entity in its own right, with a financial structure and a treasurer. Mike and Debbie Clarkson from Wellow Rec committee were present and said they had tried to meet to discuss this prior to our AGM, but in fact, had been unable to do so. They will be meeting on 22nd November. They

thanked HortSoc for providing them with the proposal. Bridget mentioned that a few people have very kindly stepped forward to say they would help, which will be taken up by the future partner, if there is agreement to proceed. Hugh pointed out that most members of HortSoc are in fact, the same people as are members of Wellow Rec, apart from the small number resident outside the Parish. He was very supportive of the idea and felt it provides a more rational model than the current one.

Bridget asked if anyone had any objection to us proceeding with the negotiations and there were none. It was therefore agreed that the Committee should progress discussions with Wellow Recreation with a view to seeking agreement about a mutually acceptable partnership for the future.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 In her capacity as school governor, Marchelle said the village school is looking at starting a gardening club. They would very much benefit from some expert input and Marchelle asked if HortSoc could provide this. This was felt to be very good news, and entirely in line with our Constitution. Marchelle said that space was being cleared, but at this stage, there were no clear plans for how to proceed. The school was in touch with Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) and looking at Forest School Training. The parents would be forming a core group, but would really benefit from our expertise. President Alex Martin said he was happy to provide some consultancy.

10.2 Jane Rees asked whether those present felt it would be a good idea to write a history of the awards which are given out at the Flower Show. They each commemorate a person who has made a significant contribution to HortSoc in the past. It was agreed it was important to conserve this history. Avril said she was in possession of Flower Show schedules dating back some significant time, some of which may well shed some light on this. It was agreed we should indeed do this and Avril agreed to start with looking at the old schedules. **ACTION: Avril to check old schedules for information on the trophies, with a view to taking this suggestion forward.**

10.3 Clover suggested we ask members to tell us about their most memorable Flower Shows, to ascertain what they most enjoyed. This was also agreed.

10.4 Alex volunteered to distribute all the Flower Show trophies which are currently in his possession.

10.5 Rob reminded those present that the HortSoc shredder is available. He said no-one had hired it yet this autumn.

Finally, Bridget thanked Liz for hosting the Zoom session for us.

The meeting concluded at approx. 8.40pm