

Wellow and District Horticultural Society

Annual General Meeting 2022

Held Thursday 24th November 2022
At Wellow Village Hall

Present: Bridget Woollen (Chair); Fiona Schubert (Treasurer); Avril Greig (Secretary); Alex Martin (President); Janet Plater (Vice-President) plus a further 11 members.

1. Apologies: Liz Hunt (Vice Chair); Gail Balfour (Committee Member); Caroline Thomas (Committee Member); Pam Pike (Committee Member); Marchelle Farrell (Co-opted Committee Member)

2. Minutes 2021

Agreed as an accurate record

3. Matters Arising

Item 8: Where to for Wellow Horticultural Society? As a result of member Hugh Prentice's suggestion about fruit and veg growing, a trip was organised to Rosie Craddock's garden in neighbouring village, Shoscombe. This proved so popular that a second visit was organised on a Saturday for those unable to attend the first one. This was also well-attended and much enjoyed.

Item 10.2: A history of the Flower Show awards (suggested by member Jane Rees): Secretary Avril Greig has now gathered together a large number of old schedules which contain much of the information about the awards. It has not been possible to progress with this further, due to the personal circumstances of both Jane and Avril over the past year. It is hoped this can be taken forward in the coming year.

4. Report from the Chair for 2022

Bridget began by welcoming everyone back to the Village Hall for the first time since the pandemic. She noted, however, that Covid had impacted on our events through this year, with our first (re)scheduled talk by Sally Morgan in March being postponed again, due to the levels of Covid in Wellow. This was further postponed in September, as Sally had caught Covid! This is to be rescheduled once again. Likewise, Seedy Sunday in February was also not possible because of Covid levels.

Other events proceeded more normally, with the Plant Sale resuming its usual home in the Village Hall in May; a lovely garden party in July (for which our hosts, Alice Harper and Tom Jones were warmly thanked); and an extremely successful Village Show was held in September, which was run by a team of new volunteers, with the Flower Show part of the day remaining the responsibility of HortSoc Committee to organise. Bridget thanked Rob Greig for co-ordinating the day and all those who helped to organise and run the day, given the stupendous efforts needed to make it such a success.

The Flower Show saw entries up from 564 last year to 607 this year, although not quite back to pre-pandemic levels. However, the number of different people entering was up, which was much appreciated. The profit from the Show was split 50:50 between HortSoc and the Show Team. It was all donated to local good causes with approx. £500 going to Future Wellow from the overall Show team, to fund environmental/biodiversity projects. The other approx. £500 from HortSoc was spent purchasing additional whips to add to the new hedge on the Playing Fields, a memorial tree to be planted in the North Field behind the Church in memory of Queen Elizabeth II and a donation to St Julian's Church to mark their 650th anniversary this year.

Hugh was thanked for his planning and running of Apple Day, which also involved Orchardshare with their apple pressing kit.

Bridget went on to thank the entire committee for all their hard work and contributions over the past year. She also noted the retirement of 3 committee members. Firstly, Sue Wilford, who has been a committee member for 20 years and as one of the membership secretaries, has been holding and managing the electronic membership list. Secondly, Avril Greig, Secretary, is also standing down, having kept things well -organised and working very hard throughout her tenure on a variety of aspects, including the Flower Show and website management. Caroline Thomas has also stood down. All three were heartily thanked for all their contributions and Sue and Avril were presented with gifts on behalf of the Society.

Bridget reported on Charles Dowding's electronic "When, What and How" weekly list of sowing, planting and harvesting which she has set up and invited anyone who would like to be included in the e-mail circulation to let her know.

Finally, all members were invited to contribute horticulture-related ideas for use of funds for projects or events.

In Marchelle's absence, Bridget read out her summary of the horticultural work in the school, which is being supported by HortSoc. In summary:

Marchelle thanked HortSoc for an initial donation of £100, which funded repairs to raised beds, a mini-greenhouse, seeds and bulbs. The children also grew and sold plants at the Plant Sale and had a display at the Flower Show. In addition, there have been craft and forest school activities. There has been a lot of interest from the children (even when competing with the Lego Club) and various volunteer parents. Marchelle noted that with the cost-of-living crisis, parents are working longer hours and she appealed to HortSoc members for more voluntary support, particularly for teaching the children (and parents) about growing. The club will be restarted in the Spring after a winter break, focusing on linking the seasons with nature's rhythms and growing.

5. Report from the Treasurer

Fiona thanked Hugh for auditing the accounts for 2022. Details of her report are appended. In summary, membership is slightly down from pre-Covid levels, so we need to encourage new members. Proceeds of nearly £550 from the Plant Sale were this year donated to the Red Cross Ukraine appeal. The effect of the new model of running of the Village Show Day was to generate an increased revenue of 39%, offset to some degree by the increased expenditure, but overall, there was a profit of £965,

split as described in the Chair's Report. At year ending 2022, reserves are likely to be around £6990.

6. Election of New Committee

President Alex Martin oversaw the election of the new Committee. There are 12 places for Committee. He noted that in addition to the three mentioned standing down, Marchelle is also not continuing in her role as a co-opted member. Four people had been nominated to stand, Steve Carter, Hugh Prentice, Sal Lyons and Janet Plater (Vice President). It was agreed that the role of Vice President alongside committee membership was within the Constitution and should not present any conflict of interest. As no other nominations were received, all four were elected unopposed. Committee membership therefore stands at 9 for 2023, which means we are still running well below par.

7. Announcement of Awards

Children's awards have all been distributed already. These were:

Sue Rodford Cup (Pre-school entry with highest points) to Cressie Elliot
St. Julian's Cup (St Julian's pupil with highest points) to Esmee Mason
Junior Gardener's Prize (Under 16yrs most points) to Woody Lancaster

The adult awards were presented to those winners present by President, Alex Martin, as follows:

Newcomer's Prize (Parish resident 2 years or less) to Annette Luck (already given)
Wellow & District Challenge Cup (Vegetables) to Hugh Prentice
Patrick Hartley Memorial Salver (Best collection of 5 veg) to Alex Martin
Ted Welch Memorial Cup (fruit) to Alex Martin
RHS Banksian Medal (Fruit/veg most points) to Alex Martin
Ken Manning's Shield (Novelty Garden) to Hugh Prentice
The Late Joane Rittner Cup (Wild/garden flowers) to Judith Wetherall
The Sarah Moore Trophy (Floral Art) to Pam Pike
£10 donated by Castlemead Poultry (Eggs) to Matilda Heselton (given at the Show)
Colin Tremellen Cup (Art and Photography) to Ashling Hammerton
Combe Hay Cup (Cookery) to Katie Millar

8. Donations & Future Use of Funds

Bridget invited those present to make suggestions for donations and use of funds.

Member Katie Millar asked whether the Committee would consider a donation to the Wellow Lunch Club Christmas meal, which, although not horticultural in nature, would be a great help and support to the Club and make it an extra special event. We heard the Club provides a meal monthly to 26 villagers over the age of 60. Last year, it cost over £200 to provide this. Bridget agreed this request would be put to the new committee at their next meeting. **Action: HortSoc Committee to consider a donation to Lunch Club for their Christmas meal.**

Member Hugh Prentice suggested a donation of £100 for the school. It was agreed that support to the school would be ongoing and each request would be considered on its own merit.

Member Rob Greig wanted to revive the idea of HortSoc supporting the Parlour Shop through the purchase of seeds, bulbs etc which the shop could then sell on at cost price, but still generating an income for themselves. This would also encourage the community to grow their own, whether flowers, fruit or veg. Further ideas emerged from this, such as the donation of amaryllis plants to the shop, for purchase as Christmas presents; wild flower seeds; compost was also suggested (although this presents storage problems). We heard that post-pandemic, the shop is now running at a loss once again as people revert to previous shopping habits. Bridget asked the shop committee to come up with some proposals to put to HortSoc committee.

ACTIONS: shop committee to put together a proposal for HortSoc committee's consideration. HortSoc to make a donations to St Julian's Primary School as and when projects are proposed, costed and agreed by committee.

9. Events 2023

There was a query about the lack of visits to gardens. Bridget mentioned that there had been a problem, pre-pandemic, of lack of take-up of these. However, there was some support to try again and various gardens were suggested, such as Snape Garden, Charles Dowding's garden, and Pennard Plants nursery in a Victorian walled garden at East Pennard.

Member Jill Lambert suggested activities for older children in the form of projects. They could also be encouraged to help older and disabled members of the community by doing some gardening for them. Member Jill Tremellen offered her garden for such voluntary work. Hugh suggested that Duke of Edinburgh Scheme volunteers could be recruited by HortSoc to help with gardening initiatives around the village (in a similar way to how they help in the Shop). This would require someone on HortSoc Committee to agree to be responsible for overseeing what they do for DoE purposes.

It was suggested that closer links with Future Wellow around their priority of promoting biodiversity across Wellow could be mutually beneficial – and might also increase the level of interest and involvement in HortSoc from a younger (adult) age group in the village.

10. Any Other Business

Member Jill Tremellen thanked Bridget for all her hard work as Chair of committee over the past year.

The meeting then adjourned for everyone to enjoy food and wine together.