

# Wellow and District Horticultural Society

## Annual General Meeting

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023

7.30pm, Wellow Village Hall

### MINUTES

1. Apologies  
Marchelle Farrell
2. Present  
Committee – Ashling Hammerton, Gail Balfour, Pam Pike, Janet Plater, Liz Hunt, Bridget Woollen, Hugh Prentice  
President – Alex Martin  
And 29 members
3. Minutes of the last meeting 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022  
Approved
4. Matters arising from last meeting  
None
5. Report from The Joint Chairs - Bridget Woollen and Liz Hunt

Bridget Woollen

Welcome everyone, and thank you for coming to our AGM.

We've had another successful year. Our membership is steady thanks to Janet and her team.

We had an event most months, starting in February, with short video clips from the 1960s, which showed some of the carnival, followed by the film Green Fingers.

In March, Sally Morgan gave an informative talk on adapting our gardening with climate change.

The Plant sale in May was a great event and enabled us to donate to Red Cross for Ukrainian refugees. Both prior to the plant sale and after it, we provided vegetable seedlings and plantlets to order, to a small number of people. Hopefully this project will grow next year.

Thanks to Pam for her hard work in organising these events.

We helped fund and plant a hedge along the top of the playing field, for shelter and biodiversity, and we planted a tree in the churchyard to commemorate the late Queen's jubilee.

Sadly, our visit to a permaculture project was cancelled at the last minute by the host.

The Flower Show in September was a highlight of the year. Liz will provide more detail in a moment.

In October we organised apple picking on the Saturday, and with the help of people from Orchardshare, picked about a ton of apples. On the following day – Apple Day – we juiced most of the apples. It was especially good to see many children enjoying themselves, with apple bobbing, eating apple cakes and sampling the juice!. Thanks to Orchardshare for the loan of the juicing equipment, and to Hugh and Janet for organising.

We donated Charles Dowding's book on no-dig gardening to St Julian's school. Marchelle reported that the school gardening club is thriving and 3 new no-dig beds have been made following the book.

I'd like to thank Hugh for being such an enthusiastic secretary and to Fiona for her hard work with the finances and for sorting the printing of the Show schedule to save a considerable amount of money. My co-chair Liz has also done a great job, especially liaising with the Show team.

Liz Hunt

The Village Show was a great success, helped by great weather. For the second year, the Village Show was managed by the Show Team. We know how much hard work goes into planning the Show, and thank the Show Team for organising the day.

The Hort Soc manages the Flower Show – ie all that goes on inside the marquee. This year the competition was stronger than in 2022. There were 454 entries this year, up 60 / 15% on 2022. It was also good to see the 37 entries in the NEW vegetable section for those under 17 years old, and entries to the junior classes overall was up by 27% - fantastic! Our thanks to Marchelle and the school for helping with this.

The variable weather had an impact on the most popular Classes – in 2022 apples (and fruit generally) were very popular, but they didn't appear in the top 10 in 2023 – when cherry tomatoes and soft-fruit jam were the most popular.

Some classes – such as radishes and cauliflowers - didn't have a single entry. Entries to the photography classes especially have been declining consistently over the last few years. As usual, we'll be reviewing the classes with no entries for next year's Show.

Overall, the Village Show made a surplus of £2,500, up from £1,000 in 2022. So a great success all round.

#### 6. Report from The Treasurer

Annual accounts were made available on the Hort Soc website, and at the meeting. In Fiona Schubert's absence, Hugh Prentice highlighted 4 things in the accounts. We're in a year of transition, where the finances for the Village Show are being moved from the Hort Soc (for this year) to Wellow Rec (for next year). Although the Village Show finances are accounted for by the Hort Soc, the Village Show is seen as a stand-alone project. As far as the Hort Soc's accounts are concerned the Show income matches the costs – ie there is no impact on the Hort Soc. See page 2 of the accounts for more details.

During the year The Hort Soc received an exceptional item - a legacy of £3,000. The purpose of the legacy is to "enhance the show", and we're seeking suggestion on how to use this later in this meeting.

If we exclude the impact of the Show and the legacy, the Hort Soc showed a £214 loss for the year.

At the year end, the Hort Soc remains in a strong financial position, with a free reserves of over £6,000.

#### 7. Election of new Committee and appointment of Vice President

Alex Martin, the President managed the election.

At the AGM all Committee members resign.

The following put themselves forward for re-election : Ashling Hammerton, Gail Balfour, Pam Pike, Janet Plater, Liz Hunt, Hugh Prentice.

At the meeting Lousie Nicolai put her name forward as well.

Up to 12 members may be elected onto the Committee.

As there were less than 12 people standing for election, all 7 were elected unopposed, unanimously.

8. Announcement of awards

The awards were presented. See a separate sheet for a list of the winners.

9. Nature Chain proposal by Ashling Hammerton

In the summer the Hort Soc was contacted by Limpley Stoke Nature Chain Group. Limpley Stoke Nature Chain aims to increase wildlife friendly habitats in their village in both public and private spaces. The aim is to curb the loss of biodiversity. I met with the organisers in August and had a fascinating conversation regarding the work they have done and hope to do on their project. They have focused on their park by planting trees and allowing areas to become meadows. They have also increased biodiversity in gardens by encouraging people to create ponds, build compost heaps and plant native plants and seeds.

Ideas for Wellow's Nature Chain:

Gardens:

Conduct a questionnaire that asks about biodiversity assets in the village. Such as if people have fruit trees, if they plant wildflowers or if they leave their lawn to go to a meadow in the summer. This information will be built into a biodiversity map and the changes across the village will be monitored.

Talks and events:

Host a talk by 'Meadow in my Garden' and show the '1000 bees' film in early 2024.

School and Pre-school engagement:

In the week before the end of the school holidays, organize events with the School and Preschool to build insect and bird boxes and teach them about local wildlife.

Parish Council:

Work with the Parish Council to encourage them to avoid cutting the grass in May and ask for permission to put up bird boxes in the village park. See if hedges can be cut back less so that they offer food and shelter to more birds.

Quarterly newsletter:

Produce a newsletter that brings together information on the progress of the nature chain project. This includes inspirational ideas, spotlighting on people's gardens and updates on any talks and events.

10. The committee are seeking Members' views on three issues:

A) Should the Society lend Wellow Community Minibus £3,000?

Prakriti Karthauser, a Wellow Community Minibus Trustee, gave an update on the Bus. The engine block on the bus had cracked, and repairs have cost around £6k. While the bus has been out of action, the costs of hiring a replacement bus has also cost around £6k. The Wellow Community Minibus does not have sufficient reserves to cover this, and has appealed for funds. One application has been successful - the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) has provided £10k for ongoing costs and £15k towards the cost of a new bus. A new bus will cost around £30k, so there is still a need for fundraising - so please come to the Bollywood fundraising night. Thanks to the Hort Soc for their community spirit in offering to lend the £3k, but this is now not needed. Many thanks.

B) How should the Society use the £3,000 legacy, and it's existing reserves?

Members at the meeting didn't have any ideas for the legacy.

Rick Halle made a request on behalf of the Community Compost Club. The Compost Club needs to refurbish the compost bins and equipment. It has received quotes of about £5,000 to do the work. It has £1,000 reserves, and £1,500 is promised from the Parish Council, provided this is matched. So there is a £2,500 shortfall – please can the Hort Soc help fill the gap?

C) Events planning for 2024 – what would you like?

Ashling had mentioned some plans earlier in the meeting. Vicky suggested a visit to Faulkland lavender farm.

#### 11. Any other business

Jill Tremellen reminded everyone about donating unwanted tools (not just gardening) to the charity “Tools with a mission” TWAM. <https://www.twam.uk/donatetools> The tools are sent to needy people in Africa. Jill offered to collect tools. “Tools for self reliance” TFSR offer a similar service <https://www.tfsr.org/home/about/>

The Committee and all the members offered Bridget enormous thanks for her commitment to The Hort Soc. Bridget had joined the Committee in 2005, and has been a major part of the Hort Soc ever since, especially in managing the whole Village Show for many years. A big “Thank You” to Bridget.

The meeting ended, and members enjoyed a selection of food and drink.