

EWELL HORTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 13 March 2018 at 7.30pm

1. HON CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

The Chairman welcomed 40 members to the 2018 AGM of the Ewell Horticultural Association and thanked Margaret Angus for taking the minutes.

It was with deep regret that the Chairman informed all present of the death of one of our longstanding committee members, Gordon Norris; his demise was in October 2017, ironically the day of our very last Late Autumn Show. Gordon will be best remembered for his enthusiasm, energy and willingness to help and advise on all things horticultural. He will also be remembered as a prolific exhibitor of anything he chose to grow or cultivate.

The current membership is approximately 1300. The Chairman thanked Roger Bellingham, our Hon Registrar, who does a marvellous job behind the scenes, keeping track of all our members and covering for newsletter deliveries where Road Stewards are not available. Consequently, the committee has unanimously elected Roger as a Vice President. Congratulations to Roger on his well-deserved recognition; members applauded their approval.

Following on where Roger has covered for missing Road Stewards, he cannot be expected to carry on indefinitely, so an appeal has been issued for new Road Stewards in the current Newsletter, to the effect that if we do not get new Road Stewards, members may have to become e-mail or postal members.

The bedding plants will be available on Saturday 12 May at Glyn School; many thanks to Les Smith and his overworked band of helpers. Order forms could be given to Les at the AGM, at the Show on 7 April or posted to be received by 9 April.

The Chairman thanked Lynne Mason for all her hard work as our Secretary, particularly as Lynne has taken on more work, in the absence of other committee members. Similarly, he thanked Les Smith, as our Treasurer.

The trips and outings continue to be a very popular part of the Association's activities. The Chairman expressed appreciation of Brenda Allen and Pauline Horne, who organised four very successful trips during 2017.

Their first day trip was in April to Borde Hill Gardens, near Haywards Heath followed, in the afternoon, by a visit to Southon Plants, near East Grinstead, which specialises in unusual perennials, shrubs and alpines. In July there was a visit to Timbers, a private garden near Maidstone with an owner particularly interested in garden design and flower arranging; then on to Great Comp near Sevenoaks which has a nursery with unusual varieties of salvia. The August visit was to Cranborne Manor Garden, Dorset and Cranborne Garden Centre, with a wide range of roses for sale. Brenda and Pauline also arranged a four-day residential trip to Derbyshire enjoyed by 34 members. Among the highlights were Felley Priory, Haddon Hall and Waterperry Gardens as well as an alpine garden and cascades near Matlock. To end the season a Christmas lunch was held at West Dean Gardens near Chichester.

In 2018 the four-day trip to North Wales, from 29 May to 1 June, staying at the Celtic Royal Hotel in Caernarvon was fully booked with 43 members. Among the gardens to be visited are Plas Cadnant, Dibleys Nursery, Crug Farm plants as well as private gardens in Anglesey.

In 2018 the day trips have proved more popular than ever and, at the time of the AGM, there were only a few places remaining. Details and the booking form for the day trips were in the February/March Newsletter. On 3 May there will be a visit to Bere Mill, Hampshire, a garden with water meadows, herbaceous borders, bog and Mediterranean plants. In the afternoon the group will visit Chawton House Library, near Alton, which belonged to Jane Austen's brother. On 2 July members will visit Doddington Place, in Kent; features there include a rock garden and a sunken garden, a woodland garden, pond and folly walk. Then on to Godinton House which has many varied areas, including an Italian garden, rose garden and wild garden. On 31 August there will be a visit to Aston Pottery, Oxen where there will be a short tour of the working pottery and then time to explore the gardens. In the afternoon on to Red Kites, Bucks; this hillside garden is planted for year-round interest and they will certainly see some red kites to be seen.

Once again Brenda and Pauline hope to arrange a Christmas lunch to round off the year; they hope that everyone enjoys the trips and they both appreciate all the thank-you notes they receive and welcome any feedback or suggestions from members.

The Chairman continued by saying that the Association staged four well-supported shows in 2017, with attendances comparable with previous years although the number of entries has diminished slightly; however, this may have been due to very hot weather at the Summer Show and horrendous parking problems at the Autumn Show.

At our Shows we like to offer other local voluntary groups a chance to have a display and/or briefly talk about their work. So, during 2017 we invited Don Scott from ECHO, Revd Russell Dewhurst from St Mary's Parish Church and Steve Whiteway, until very recently CEO of Epsom Coaches plus of course, the Mayor. All had an opportunity to give out the prizes and speak on local topics. We intend to maintain this feature during 2018.

As mentioned at the 2017 AGM, the number of shows from 2018 onwards will be reduced from 4 to 3. This year and in subsequent years, our Shows will be held in early April, the end of June and mid-September. Many thanks go to Tracey Ross for all her hard work as our new Show Secretary, not forgetting Terry Eddowes as Tracey's very able assistant at all the Shows.

The quality of the catering at our Shows continues to be excellent and frequently commended, congratulations to Dawn Simms and her Team. The Chairman personally thanked all those who help with the catering at the Shows.

He also thanked all the members of the committee for their hard work during the year. In addition, he thanked all the helpers at our Shows, Talks and plant distribution. He especially thanked Tim and Thelma Goldsmith, who although not members of the committee, both have been a tremendous help to the Association, especially at the Shows and all the other events.

The Chairman also thanked Katherine Alexander for her hard work in the single-handed preparation and setting out of the newsletters and her dedication as Domestic Secretary at our Shows.

He went on to thank all those involved in the distribution of the newsletters, in particular Anne-Marie and Fred Evans and all the Road Stewards.

Thanks must also go to Jane Hoddy. Jane has been invaluable in finding speakers for our Talks. We have a full programme of talks planned for this year; please consult your membership card and newsletter; well done Jane!

Also, a deserved mention and thanks to Beryl Smith and Tracey Ross, who provide the refreshments for the talks.

As members will be aware, the Potting Shed at Ewell Court is no longer in operation. However, we do still have a certain amount of stock, and selected items will be available to purchase at our Shows. However, if any member knows exactly what they require, eg, fertilizer, grass treatment or sundries, they are welcome to contact the Chairman to see if they are available to purchase; the buyer will need to be able to collect from the Potting Shed.

As an alternative to the Potting Shed, the Association has negotiated substantial discounts from local traders, details are on the membership cards and on page 14 in the Handbook. In addition, members can obtain a 40% discount on all seeds and 10% off other items from Dobies by quoting the discount code on orders by post, phone, online or by email. Dobies catalogues and order forms are available at the Shows and Talks.

Finally, thanks to Brian Angus for his behind the scenes activities and Margaret Angus as our Publicity Officer.

So, in closing the Chairman commented that the Association in need of people to join the Committee or just volunteer to help in whatever capacity they feel best suited, especially at our Shows.

The Chairman invited questions on his report: none were forthcoming.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM – 14 March 2017

Acceptance of Minutes: proposed – Les Smith, seconded – Lynne Mason. All in favour.

3 MATTERS ARISING

None

4 HON TREASURER'S REPORT AND ACCEPTANCE OF ACCOUNTS

Copies of the Income & Expenditure Accounts and the Balance Sheet were available prior to the start of the meeting. Les Smith talked members through the finances for the year ended 30 November 2017; he explained that red ink indicated a loss.

The Income & Expenditure account showed that the Potting Shed stocks had been run down by nearly £4,000 to £1,700. The 'direct overheads' included the Potting Shed rent since February 2017 which had increased from £600. Under 'other income' the total sales of plants, potatoes and seed had totalled over £4,000. He was pleased to note a reduction in the Talks deficit although we are still not covering the cost of the hall hire and speakers.

The Treasurer praised Brenda Allen and Pauline Horne who had balanced the books on the outings with a small surplus of only £205 on an annual turnover of £20,000. The Treasurer emphasised that as it was not the aim of the outings to produce a profit but getting the final figure to exactly balance was not easy.

Overall EHA had an operating deficit of £2,035 in the year to 30 November 2017. On the Balance sheet he emphasised that the Committee's aim was to rundown the capital for the benefit of EHA's members at the approximate rate £1,000 pa.

The Treasurer was praised for all his hard work in managing the finances during the year and for his preparation of the Annual Accounts. Their acceptance was proposed by Jane Hoddy and seconded by Terry Eddowes. All in favour.

The Treasurer had brought the Association's Bank Statements to the AGM, which were available to view. He invited questions on the accounts: only one enquiry was made regarding the calculation of the Association's funds.

5 FLORAL ART GROUP REPORT

Sheila Stracy, Floral Art Group Chairman, read her report:

'The Flower Club continues to thrive with a membership of between 40 to 50 members. We have a variety of different evenings, some workshops where members learn new skills and 3 demonstration evenings by Area Demonstrators. On these evenings we can sit back and watch gaining inspiration on how flower arranging should be done. The members entered the shows with a little encouragement and filled the staging with lovely floral displays.

Eileen and Doreen once again held their coffee mornings and afternoon tea party, raising an incredible amount of money for their chosen charities.

We took part in Floramania, the Area Show at Woking - "Circumnavigation", the Bookham Show - "Spring Symphony" and the Wisley Flower Show - "Upstairs/Downstairs"

I hope Ewell Floral Art Club will continue to flourish and our members have fun and friendship arranging beautiful flowers.'

6 ELECTION OF HON PRESIDENT

The Committee nominated Tony Field, a longstanding member, for a second year as Honorary President. The proposal was seconded by Dawn Simms and passed by all the members present. Tony Field thanked members for re-electing him as Honorary President.

7 ELECTION OF HON CHAIRMAN

Les Smith took the chair at this point; it was proposed by Beryl Smith that Dave Tarrant be elected as Honorary Chairman, seconded by Tracey Ross. This was passed by a show of hands. Dave Tarrant thanked the members present for voting him as Association Chairman for another year.

8 ELECTION OF HON SECRETARY

Lynne Mason was proposed by Dave Tarrant and seconded by Beryl Smith. All in favour.

9 ELECTION OF HON TREASURER

Les Smith was proposed by Reg Humphries and seconded by Tracey Ross. All in favour.

10 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following were elected en bloc; the Equipment Officer position is vacant

Sales Secretary	Roger Sheffield	Equipment Officer	vacant
Registrar	Roger Bellingham	Publicity Officer	Margaret Angus
Catering Officer	Dawn Simms		

The Officers named above were proposed by Roger Bellingham and seconded by Paul ?
All in favour.

11 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following were elected en bloc:

Terry Eddowes (Show Secretary's Assistant)

Sheila Stracy (Floral Art Representative)

Jane Hoddy (Talks Secretary)

Margaret Angus (Meetings Secretary)

The Committee Members named above were proposed by Roger Bellingham and seconded by Dave Tarrant. All in favour.

12 ELECTION OF HON AUDITOR

Dave Tarrant explained that the Association has no constitutional requirement for an Auditor and reminded everyone that the Treasurer had the Association's Bank Statements available at the AGM to be viewed.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further questions the meeting closed at 8.02pm.

The Chairman thanked members for attending the AGM and invited members and visitors to stay and listen to a talk by Paul Patton, entitled "Growing for the Kitchen".