

EWELL HORTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10 March 2020

at 7.30pm

1. HON CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

The Chairman welcomed 30 members to the 2020 AGM of the Ewell Horticultural Association and thanked Margaret Angus for taking the minutes.

Firstly, it is with deep regret that the Chairman informed all present of the death of three of our Vice Presidents: Pat Reddin, Jean Thompson and Roger 'In the Bowler Hat' Sheffield. Also, Bill White passed away late last year; Bill was a Road Steward and a prolific exhibitor of Chrysanthemums.

The current membership is approximately 1100. The Chairman thanked Roger Bellingham, our Hon Registrar, who does an incredible job behind the scenes, keeping track of all our members and covering for newsletter deliveries where Road Stewards are not available. But where Roger has covered for 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 sale will not take place in 2020, as we had an incredibly difficult sale in 2019, where we had to source a new supplier of bedding plants. However, this supplier let us down on the day by not supplying what we expected and we ultimately made a large loss. To try & compensate, we have negotiated a 20% discount on gardening related products, including plants, with Chessington Garden Centre.

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, our hard working Treasurer.

The trips and outings are a very popular part of the Association's activities. The Chairman expressed great appreciation of Brenda Allen and Pauline Horne, who organised four very popular and successful trips during 2019:

The trip to North Devon from 20th to 23rd June was enjoyed by 41 members with an especially good hotel and excellent food. There were a trips to a couple of interesting private gardens but the highlight for most was RHS Rosemoor with its wonderful rose garden.

On 10th May they visited to Kew Gardens. Several Epsom Garden Society and WI members joined as it didn't prove to be so popular as other trips, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the day, including the landtrain as a convenient way of seeing most areas of the gardens.

On 4th July, 47 members went to Charleston, near Lewes, East Sussex. They had a most interesting guided tour of the house, famous for its Bloomsbury Group connections. In the afternoon they visited King John's Nursery & Garden, a rather wild garden which is still obviously a work in progress.

On 28th August, 49 members went to 2 private gardens in Kent; Goddards Green, a 5 acre garden laid out in the 1920s. In contrast they visited Orchard House, a garden created within the last 2 years with a lovely gravel garden.

The Christmas lunch on 6th December was at Bears Restaurant, which is situated at The Packhouse at Runfold, near Farnham. This was well attended with 44 members enjoying a 3 course meal and also doing some last minute Christmas shopping in quirky surroundings.

Pauline and Brenda have, quite understandably, decided after 2019, not to arrange any more 4 day trips, as they have been organising these for 15 years and it is a lot of work and responsibility. In fact, shortly after they made the decision, the coach company they have used for many years decided to close down at the end of the year.

For 2020 they have arranged 3 day trips. The first is to a Rare Plant Fair at Kingston Bagpuize near Abbingdon on Sunday 24th May with a range of over 30 plant stalls. There will also be the chance to look round the 16th Century house and gardens. On Thursday 9th July there will be a trip to Goodnestone Park a large estate near Canterbury and, in contrast, to a 10 acre private garden, Nettlestead Place, near Maidstone with beautiful rose gardens.

On Friday 28th August there is a visit The Sussex Prairie Gardens, which is hosting an Indian festival during the week with crafts, textiles and food on sale. In the afternoon there is a visit to St Mary's Bramber where a tour of the 15th Century pilgrim inn and refreshments are included.

Brenda and Pauline plan to arrange another Christmas Lunch, details of which will be available later in the year. Brenda and Pauline hope that everyone enjoys the trips, and they both appreciate all the thank-you notes they receive and welcome any feedback or suggestions that members may have.

The Chairman continued by saying that the Association staged three well-supported Shows in 2019, with the attendances very good at all the Shows, with the number of entries encouragingly high, especially at the Summer Show.

At our Shows we try to offer other local voluntary groups a chance to have a display and/or briefly talk about their work. So, during 2019 we invited the Surrey Police and the local RNLi an opportunity to give out the prizes and/or briefly talk on local topics, plus of course, the Mayor Epsom & Ewell. We intend to do similar in 2020.

Many thanks go to Tracey Ross for all her hard work as our Show Secretary and 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.

The Chairman 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 and Talks. He especially thanked Tim and Thelma Goldsmith, who although not on the committee, both have been a tremendous help to the Association, especially at the Flower Shows and all other events.

The Chairman also thanked Katherine Alexander for her hard work in the single-handed preparation and setting out of the current Newsletters. However, Katherine has now relinquished and her duties as Domestic Secretary at our Shows and we have been fortunate to have recruited the services of Beryl Smith, who has agreed to be our new Domestic Secretary; thank you to both Katherine and Beryl.

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.

Appreciation must also go to Jane Hoddy. Jane has been invaluable in finding speakers for our Talks. We will have a full programme of talks this coming year; please consult your membership card, newsletter and the EHA website; 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 still have substantial stock and we will therefore be having a grand clearance sale on Sunday 15th March 2020 from 10am to 2pm where items will be sold at cost price.

As an alternative to the Potting Shed, the Association has negotiated substantial discounts from local traders, details are on the membership cards and 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 were available at the AGM and will be available at all the Shows and Talks.

Finally, thanks to Brian Angus for all his help at the Shows and Margaret Angus as our Publicity Officer.

So, in closing the Chairman commented that the Association is, as always, 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 – 12 March 2019

The Chairman reminded Members that a draft of the 2019 AGM Minutes had been placed on the Association's website as will a draft of the 2020 AGM Minutes. Acceptance of 2019 Minutes was proposed by Dawn Simms and seconded by Roger Bellingham. 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, which had been approved by the Committee, were available prior to the start of the meeting. Les Smith talked members through the finances for the year ended 30 November 2019; he explained that red ink indicated a loss.

Looking at the Income & Expenditure Account the Treasurer noted that, since 2018 no Potting Shed sales had been made. The sales of stock at the Shows were to reduce stock levels; there had been no new purchases. Subscriptions were holding up well, but the delay in receipts of subscriptions has led to the figure for 2019 including some 2018 subscriptions.

The Balance Sheet represented the reduced stock levels as planned. The Treasurer had previously circulated and discussed the Bank Statements with the Committee. The Bank balances were down as the majority of the 2019 subs had been collected in 2018 and, as there will be no four day trip in 2020, there were reduced deposits in November 2019. The Talks costs continue to rise, as both the room rental and speakers' fees have increased. The Shows deficit had increased, partly due to the lower attendance at the Autumn Show whilst we still had the fixed overheads to pay.

Overall EHA had an operating deficit of £2,546 in the year to 30 November 2019. On the Balance sheet he emphasised that the Committee's aim was to return the Association's funds for the benefit of EHA's members by running down the capital.

The Treasurer praised Brenda Allen and Pauline Horne who had broken even on the outings, not easy 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.

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 Dave Tarrant and seconded by Roger Bellingham. All in favour.

5 FLORAL ART GROUP REPORT

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

'Ewell Floral Art Group had another good year, starting off with Barbara Meineck, demonstrating 'Spring Flowers' – alternative mechanics – how up to date were we; it is the in thing now not to use so much floral foam. We enjoyed 3 very good flower demonstration evenings by Area Demonstrators and several workshops including one when we all had a glass of Pimms to keep us going.

The Shows went well but it is always a challenge to encourage the ladies to take part, they prefer to do an exhibition. Flags were our theme for the last exhibition. The Floral Art Trophy went to Jean Sheridan, Runner up Trophy to Linda Cordle, Intermediate Trophy to Sara Fowler and the Novice Trophy was won Margaret Pryke. It was lovely to see new people winning awards.

We attended Member's Day, the Area Show at Woking, and the National Diamond Show at Islington, London. Our highlight was an outing to 'The Clink'. It was a lovely meal and a great day out.

We have arranged flowers at Ham House, Hampton Court Palace, Wisley and a great experience for me at Westminster Abbey for the 'Battle of Britain' Service.

Elsie and Doreen held their Coffee Morning and Afternoon Tea, raising mega amounts for their charities – they both have wonderful gardens and work extremely hard.

I hope we will continue to run a happy friendly club for our members, having fun with flowers.'

6 ELECTION OF HON PRESIDENT

The Committee has nominated Tony Field, a longstanding member, for a fourth year as Honorary President. Tony Field had sent his apologies as he had been medically advised to avoid any risk in conjunction with Corvid-19. The proposal was seconded by Lynne Mason and passed by all the members present.

7 ELECTION OF HON CHAIRMAN

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

8 ELECTION OF HON SECRETARY

Lynne Mason was proposed by Sheila Stracy and seconded by Dawn Simms. All in favour.

9 ELECTION OF HON TREASURER

Les Smith was proposed by Margaret Angus and seconded by Lynne Mason. All in favour.

10 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following were elected en bloc; we no longer have Equipment Officer or Sales Secretary positions.

Registrar	Roger Bellingham	Publicity Officer	Margaret Angus
Catering Officer	Dawn Simms	Show Secretary	Tracey Ross
Jane Hoddy	Talks Secretary	Domestic Secretary	Beryl Smith

The Officers named above were proposed by Dave Tarrant and seconded by Dawn Newman. 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)
Margaret Angus (Meetings Secretary)

The Committee Members named above were proposed by Dave Tarrant and seconded by Dawn Newman. 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 to be viewed at the AGM.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1 – A question was asked regarding the possible cancellation of the Spring Show in connection with Corvid 19. The Chairman responded that he did not wish to prematurely cancel and it was subject to whether the school would be closed. (*The Committee did agree to cancel the Show on 16 March following Government advice.*)

2 – The Committee had discussed the possibility of moving the Talks to a daytime booking at Bourne Hall. Following a brief discussion, including the knowledge that the car parking charge would increase, followed by a vote it was agreed to retain the evening timing. There were nil votes for a morning time, only six votes for an afternoon booking and the vast majority voted to retain the evening session as more people would be able to attend.

3 – Margaret Angus explained how members can easily register for the Chessington Garden Centre 20% discount on retail prices for landscape, gardening dry goods and plants:

- 1 - Take your current EHA membership card to the Chessington reception desk together with identification of your name & address, eg, a driving licence or a utility bill.
- 2 - Chessington will then take your photo and your details and log both onto their system.
- 3 - You will receive a Chessington Horticultural Club card to show, together with your current EHA membership card, to obtain the discount at the pay desk.
- 4 - The 2020 card will be valid for 1 year; you will need to repeat this process with your renewed EHA membership card from 1 February 2021 and each year thereafter.
- 5 - Note that the Chessington Horticultural Club card cannot be used in conjunction with existing offers or the Chessington Loyalty Scheme.

Margaret was thanked for setting up this discount on behalf of members.

There being no further questions the meeting closed at 8.10pm.

The Chairman thanked members for attending the AGM and invited members and visitors to stay and listen to the talk by Andrew Halstead, a retired RHS Entomologist, entitled 'Pesticides - are they safe?'