

**Minutes of Catisfield & District Gardening Club AGM
Thursday 9 November 2023 at Catisfield Memorial Hall**

Members of the committee present:

Doug Glading (President); Glenn Duggan (Chair), Tiffany Harper (Treasurer), Vanessa Eastwood (Secretary), Susan Kavanagh (Web Master & Newsletter Editor), Jan Purnell (Raffles), Jen Glover (Meeting Ambassador), Theresa Duggan (Beverages), Lorraine Orridge (Welcomer) and Edward Richardson (Member)

Item 1: The Chair opened the meeting at 7,30pm and extended a warm welcome to all present. The following members offered their apologies:

Banks Alexandra, Baxter Alan, Bishop Carole & Tim, Bright Julie, Caldwell Doug & Josie, Cole Christine, Diaper Georgie & Ray, Dinenage Fred, Faithful Rebecca, Glading Wendy, Goddard Sally, Hunt Debbie, King Howard & Jenny, Layco Valerie, LeVerdier Brenda, Lewis Pamela, Lowe George & Sandra, Lowe Tina, Luckham Bev, McLellan Ian & Sarah, Melville-Brown Penny, Murphy Bob & Christine, Naish Anne, Osborne Helen, Owens Ann, Read Cheryl, Rogers Beth, Saunders Dawn, Tedore Judy, White Christine, Williamson Elaine, Woodgate Cicely, Woodhouse Arthur & Sue. 41 in total.

Item 2: Minutes of AGM held on 13 October 2022

A correction to the minutes was made where in Paragraph 2 the date was changed from 2021 to 2022.

Item 3: Matters arising.

There were no matters arising and the minutes were accepted as correct.

Item 4: Treasurer's Report

The Audited Accounts are attached at Annex A.

Tiffany reported an increase in membership of 20 persons. We now have 107 members. And a £1000 profit was made from various fundraising efforts and sponsorship from St Margarets Nursery. Unfortunately, due to the current economic climate, Parkers are not able to renew their monetary sponsorship for the club but have maintained the 10% discount given to club members. St Margaret Nursery are continuing to sponsor the club financially and again provide the 10% discount to members.

The plant sale including raffle held in May generated an income of over £800 respectively, making this the best year ever.

The Club now has a Tap and Go card reader, so we are able to now accept credit and bank card payments. The Club has to pay 1% of takings for this service.

A club member asked about hall expenses and Tiffany explained that these have increased this year because we have used the hall a lot more as we have come out of Covid restrictions.

Glenn remarked about the healthy membership, but it is interesting to him that 31 of our members have not attended any club meeting since May. He wondered why that might be.

The audited accounts were accepted as correct unanimously.

Proposer: Jo Drew

Seconder: Edward Richardson

Item 5: Emedia & Newsletter Report

Susan kept her verbal report short stating that everything she wanted to say was contained in her report which is shown at Annex B.

Davina Staffordowens took this opportunity to thank Susan very much for the production of the newsletter which she says she finds very useful and interesting.

Item 6: Publicity Report

Jo Bocutt was unable to attend the meeting and her husband Rob read out her report on her behalf as follows: The monthly meetings of the club continue to be advertised on the Memorial Hall notice board and at St Margaret's Nursery, where the club has its own notice board. Parker's at Highlands Road also have a stock of our leaflets displayed on their counter. We continue to have posters displayed on various community notice boards. Both Fareham and Stubbington Library have information about the club available to the general public.

Jo and Glenn worked to create a display to use on a Catisfield Gardening Club stand. A green tablecloth was purchased and some A4 display boards showing various aspects of the Clubs activities, plus boards with important information about the Gardening Club were produced. A watering can with the Club logo on it, was also created to use as part of an attractive display along with the club leaflets.

The stand had its first outing at the Community Showcase, at Fareham Leisure Centre on Saturday 30th September. This was a successful venture as it attracted a number of enquiries from potential members.

A member of the club asked if there are club pamphlets in the Stubbington branch of Parkers.

Post Meeting Note: We have supplied pamphlets to Parkers, and we rely on Joe the manager who manages both the Stubbington and Highlands branches to keep our presence up to date. Unfortunately, this is not a priority, and it is likely that the Stubbington branch has not had any pamphlets for some time. A decision on producing Club pamphlets for 2024 when membership numbers for next year are ascertained. If a pamphlet is produced it will be supplied to the Stubbington branch.

Item 7: Meeting Ambassador Report

Jen reported that it had been another year of well-attended meetings which have been both enjoyable and informative. We have been pleased to welcome some new members and it has been lovely to hear how friendly and welcoming they have found us to be.

The members competition program has included some new and varied ideas this year and I congratulate all members who have submitted an entry or entries and thank you for your support. In particular, a resounding 'Well done!' should go to all those who rose to the challenge of writing a garden themed limerick in March. You certainly made our coffee break very entertaining.

Jen Glover then explained that she will be standing down from the committee this year and Glenn presented her with a gift to express thanks for all her work and dedication to the committee over the years.

Item 8: Beverage Report

Theresa was pleased to report a good year for her Beverage Report. We continued the practice instigated in Covid times of using disposable cups. Although we found that the original cups, we purchased were too large for our needs. We used these cups then purchased smaller cups and they have proved to be just right. The tea pots provided by the Memorial Hall are not good pourers and I am delighted to say that the committee agreed to the purchase a 6-pint easy pouring new tea pot which I am looking forward to using in 2024.

This year we have held 7 meetings where we provided beverages and biscuits. The benefit of the disposable cups means that we have better sanitisation and washing up is kept to a minimum and which means that the beverage team on the evening does not have to miss out on some parts of the talk and means there is no distraction from the kitchen particularly at the start of the second half of the meeting.

The system of asking for volunteers to help with beverages is working well and I have been most grateful to everyone who has helped so willingly. I hope that members will continue to volunteer for next year. We particularly need strong men to pour the new 6-pint tea pot!

Item 9: Chair's Report

That completes the reports from your committee all very positive as I am sure you will agree. As your Chair I am delighted to report another very good year for the Club. We have a strong membership base, a very strong committee, and an equally strong financial position. The good news is that is improving year upon year.

The subjects the speakers have given us this year were based on the survey conducted with members in 2022. You asked us for more talks on vegetables and we had two talks one in April and one in June. The popular Chris Bird got our year off to a good start with his talk on "Right Place, Right Plant". We had Tim Woodland visit in March talking about Container Planting with Bulbs and as the owner of Direct Bulbs he brought bulbs along to sell for members. We always like to have a mix of subjects and include a couple of talks on areas outside the UK and this year we had talks on the Gardens of Japan and the Orchids of Panama including the dangers faced by Orchid Collectors in the Darien. We had two away days this year the first in July when we visited Longstock Park Water Gardens and I think a lot of members were surprised at how good the water gardens are. They are described as world class and that is no exaggeration. The only disappointment was no cream tea being possible despite the gardens being owned by Waitrose! Everyone made their own arrangements and

there were plenty of options. Our second away day was to Hayling Donkey Sanctuary in August when our own Phil Upshall gave us a guided tour. This time we were able to have tea and cakes!

May saw us hold our Garden Plant and Garden Item sale opened by Fred Dinenage. The weather was not so kind to us this time and we had to end earlier than planned when heavy rain interrupted proceedings. Despite this we made £811.11. We tried something new this year inviting Will Wright to sharpen knives etc with the Club benefiting by 10% on all takings. This success has prompted us to invite others such as our sponsors to have a stall at our next Plant Sale and do the same with them.

The Club has had a good presence at two other events: The Coronation event held in the Memorial Hall grounds where we had a stand advertising the Club and selling some plants that we had on a sale and return basis from St Margarets Nursery. We also had a stall at the Fareham Showcase Event at the Leisure Centre. We had a lot of interest in the Club and it is clear that we have a good name in the local community. It is a pity (and not really understood as to why the 15 strong contacts we made on that day have not resulted in new members). Perhaps some of them will join us in the future.

The Committee have made one or two decisions on your behalf to improve the Club and its facilities. You have heard about the purchasing of a new kettle. In addition it has been agreed to purchase two pop up gazebos. We have a requirement a couple of times per year to use them and rather than keep asking our members to loan us them we are purchasing two now with a view to purchasing one or two more next year. We have decided to dispose of our old wooden tables that are kept in the Club's shed. We do not use these tables any longer preferring to use the newer metal tables owned by Fareham Horticultural Society and kept in the same shed. We have struck a deal with FHS to pay an annual usage fee. Getting rid of the tables will free up a nice amount of space for our gazebos.

So, what of 2024? We have a good Programme in place and it is a very interesting and varied programme again packed with subjects you want to hear about. For our Away Day we are going to West Green House near Alton and we will have a guided tour by the Head Gardener followed by a cream tea.

As Chair I am very lucky in having an excellent committee and I would like to thank them most sincerely for all their support and help this last year. Each has been a stalwart from Tiffany looking after the Club's funds. Susan who does an amazing job producing interesting and informative newsletters month after month as well as looking after our very effective on-line presence through our Web Site and Face Book. To Jan who is so effective at running a very good raffle at each meeting as well as producing a lovely buffet for the Club which we will enjoy shortly. To Jen and Jill who between them have been very effective running our members competition as well as the Tea Rota and ensuring new members are looked after at meetings. I am sorry to say that Jen has decided to stand down from the Committee. Jen we are going to greatly miss your "wisdom and calming influence and as a thank you I would like to present this on behalf of the Committee. Thank you to Jo who has so effectively taken over as our Publicity representative. To Vanessa who takes and produces the meeting

minutes and Edward and Lorraine our “floating” committee members who help where-ever it is needed. On behalf of myself and all the members of the Club, thank you so much.

Lastly, I would like to thank you the Members for your loyal support of the Club.

I would now like to raise an issue which is important for all members of this club that of succession. What I mean is ensuring the continuance of the Club. When I became Chair in 2014 we had slightly less than 30 members, and we had very little funds in the kitty. We are now a thriving Club with over 100 Members have an interesting Programme of events each year, and a strong Committee. At the last committee meeting I raised the subject of ensuring that the Club continues to thrive long after I am gone! I am in my mid 70s and I am willing to continue as Chair for a further year, but we need that succession plan in place now. I put to the Committee a plan that we elect a Deputy Chair to understudy me for 2024 with a view of taking over from me in 2025 with perhaps me becoming Deputy Chair. I thought this was a good succession plan rather than me suddenly standing down and the Club trying to resolve the situation. Although this plan has not come to fruition to date the Committee are looking at what jobs currently undertaken by me can be shared amongst the Committee. We have two excellent members joining the committee as you will hear when we propose their election latter. They will strengthen an already strong committee but we do need other members to come forward particularly anyone interested in joining the Committee and taking up the roll as Deputy Chair. I hope all of you will give what I have said some serious thought. We do not have to elect a Deputy Chair tonight we can always co-op someone to the Committee throughout the year.

Action: All

At the last Committee meeting the Committee agreed that the Annual Subscription should remain at £15 for 2024. New Credit Card Membership Cards for 2024 have been produced and Tiffany would be delighted to receive your subscription or if you prefer you can join by doing a BACS (an electronic transfer) straight into the Club’s bank account. Tiffany will then get your Membership Card to you as soon as she can.

The Committee have decided to hold back producing and distributing a good quality pamphlet to advertise the Club and its programme until we have an idea of membership numbers and the best time to do this is in the Spring. We have well over 100 members currently, although numbers of members attending meetings are down compared to previous years for some reason. I have produced copies of the programme for members on a handout and they are available this evening. We will be working on allocating the Members Competition over the winter break and this will be added to the programme later and sent out to all members.

Our regular sponsors (St Margaret’s Nursery have agreed to sponsor us once again in 2024 however Parkers have once again decided not to sponsor the Club because of the downturn in trade they have experienced. They have agreed to maintain the 10% discount for our members as have St Margaret’s. Please use both as much as possible it not only helps you but also helps our Club.

That completes the Chair's report for 2023. At this point I will stand down as your Chair, but I have stated a willingness to stand for election as your Chair in 2024. I will now hand over to our President Doug Glading. Mr President.

Item 10: Election of Chair for the club 2024

As per constitution requirements, Glenn stood down as Chair and proceedings were handed over to the President Doug Glading. Glenn was willing to stand again as Chair for 2024 and since the secretary reported no nominations, Glenn was re-elected, with unanimous approval from all present.

Proposer: Edward Richardson

Seconder: John Blundell

The meeting was then handed back to the Chair.

Item 11: Block election of present committee members

All committee members, except for Jen Glover, were happy to stand for another year. This motion was carried unanimously.

Proposer: Pat Fisher

Seconder: Helen Blundell

Item 12: Election of new committee members

Davina Staffordowens and Lynne Pederson were invited to join the committee and following their acceptance, this motion was carried unanimously.

Proposer: Lorraine Orridge

Seconder: Margaret Wellington

Item 13: Banksian Medal and Certificate 2023

This was presented by Glenn to Davina Staffordowens, in recognition of her commitment to the club. Her support goes over and above that expected from a member. She has been seconded to the Committee to plan, set up and deliver the plant sale for the last two years and has done an excellent job in helping run two club stands at local events advertising the club. Davina attends most meetings and is a first class supporter of the club and its aims. She is a very worthy winner of this award. .

Item 14: AOB

Phil Upshall, a member of the Hayling Donkey Sanctuary, thanked members for their support but reported that the sanctuary was struggling financially due to the inclement weather which resulted in no visitors attending the venue and food costs have "gone through the roof". He asked if members of the club could offer any donations or even adopt a donkey which costs £30.

Jo Drew, one of the members, read out a poem called Garden Waste which was very humorous. A hearty round of applause followed.

The Chair concluded the meeting at 8.23pm when all present adjourned to eat their fill of a magnificent buffet-style dinner, organised by Jan Purnell followed by an inter-table quiz based on “Who Wants to be a Millionaire”.

Annex: A. Audited Accounts for 2023.

Annex: B. Emedia & Newsletter Report.

(Both Annexes e-mailed as separate attachments)