

RAMSBURY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING **HELD IN THE CHURCH ROOMS, BACK LANE, RAMSBURY** **ON MONDAY 27th JANUARY 2020 AT 7.45pm**

Present: Denise Edwards (chairman), Diann Barnett (vice chairman), Rosalie Winter (secretary), Alan Smith (treasurer), Sheila Glass, Susie Whimster, Bev Mann, Alison Smith and approximately 40 members of the Society.

The meeting started with all members present paying their subscriptions and receiving their Show Schedules and Fixture Lists/ Membership Cards. Mulled wine was served.

1. Apologies. Sue Arnold, Lindsay & Victoria Macadam, John Herbertson, Jane Handford, Mary Cook, Carol Howard, Hilary Dodd, Juma Lance, Eve Long, Annabel Dallas, Molly Schutt and David Stoye.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on 28th January 2019

Copies of the minutes had been circulated among the members. There were no questions and it was PROPOSED by Graham Curtis and SECONDED by Janet Webster that the minutes be accepted as a true record. All in favour.

3. Matters arising not covered in the agenda Nothing

4. Chairman's Report (Denise Edwards)

2019 was a great and colourful year for the society, with new exhibitors and new trophy winners at the Shows, which I love to see. When you look in your new lilac Schedule you'll see we have put a novice Floral Art class in the Spring Show, with a new trophy named after our dear friend Phyllis Broadway. You'll also see some exciting new Home Industry classes, one for fermented vegetables and one for an Afternoon Tea (I'm always available for tasting!)

The Society now has an allotment available, in which we can store potted plants until the Plant Sales come around. Please make sure the plant is labelled then contact me and I will collect.

This is our Open Gardens year, your chance to show off your little piece of heaven. Please contact Rosalie if you would like to open, and also if you are prepared to steward on the afternoon. We also have our special Biennial Lecture later on this year.

We have given out copies of the Wiltshire NGS booklet this evening. If any of these take your fancy for an outing please let us know and we will try to organise something with the Ramsbury Flyer. The Flyer is going to Welford Park for the snowdrops on 20th February.

The Society now has its own website and a Facebook page.

Thank you for everything you do that makes our Society so special, and I wish you all a wonderful gardening year.

The Chairman then handed over to the Vice Chairman, who paid tribute to the friends that the Society lost over the last 12 months. Firstly Phyllis Broadway, who exhibited in several classes for many years, and attended all our shows, lectures and Christmas parties. We all miss her smile, but have so many happy memories of her. Then John Wilkinson, who died at the end of the year. A wonderful gardener and supporter of the Society; he will be particularly remembered for his hanging baskets. And finally our Floral Art judge Dorothy Baker, who died recently. We shall all miss the helpful comments she wrote on the entry cards. Her husband Keith has found us a new judge and will bring her to the Spring Show. We feel lucky to have known these people, and send our sympathies to their families.

5. Presentation of the Banksian Medal (Denise Edwards)

The Chairman announced that Sheila Glass was the 2019 winner. The meeting congratulated Sheila on her well-deserved win. The medal will be presented at a later date.

6. Treasurer's Report (Alan Smith) (summarised)

Copies of the accounts had been circulated among the members.

Looking at the Functions A/C The Society runs a two-year cycle of events and 2019 was the more expensive year of the two, because we host the Quiz against Lambourn and hold the Rose Evening. The Quiz cost £216 and the Rose Evening £82. Despite these expenses the deficit on the Functions A/C was only £935, which is £400 less than in 2017. A major part of our calendar is the staging of the shows. The combined £1,134 net cost of the Spring, Summer and Autumn shows in 2019 was consistent with both of the preceding two years.

You will note the importance of the Spring Plant Sale to the Funds of the Society. In net terms, together with a larger than expected boost from the Street Fair stall, it raised £1,042 in 2019. It has become a critical source

of income to the Society, so a big thank you for supporting this by both buying and donating plants. We had a wide variety of subjects from dahlias to French gardens in our talks in 2019. The net £615 cost of these was comparable with previous years when there has not been a biennial lecture. The year ended with the Christmas party that once again it paid for itself which was a nice bonus.

Looking at the General A/C £954 subscription income was within £40 of the previous year. At the end of the year the Society bought a new £320 projector that will make our lecture programme much easier to run.

There was a surplus of £391 on the General Account. Bringing together the deficit on the Functions Account and the Surplus on the General account results in an overall Deficit of £544 for the Year. The committee is comfortable with this outcome given the biennial nature of the Society's programme and is confident of returning to a surplus in 2020.

In 2019 120 members signed up. The subs rates are unchanged in 2020. Thank you for renewing this evening. For others, the schedules will be available to collect at the Post Office, with envelopes for the subscriptions. Thank you to Alison for all her work managing the subscriptions.

At the end of 2019 the Balance Sheet shows the Funds for the Society at £9,616.

There were no questions on the accounts. The treasurer will submit them for audit later this week.

The adoption of the 2019 unaudited accounts was PROPOSED by Alan Smith, SECONDED by Michael Handford. All in favour.

7. Appointment of Auditor

It was PROPOSED by Rosalie Winter and SECONDED by Richard Doore that PBA Accountants, Hungerford, be appointed as the Society's Auditors for 2020. All in favour. The meeting expressed its thanks to PBA Accountants for performing this task.

Items 8 and 9a) - c) were taken by the Secretary

8. Election of the Committee for 2020

- a. The following committee members were willing to stand for another year and the meeting agreed to elect them en bloc: Sue Arnold, Diann Barnett, Denise Edwards, Sheila Glass, Lindsay Macadam, Bev Mann, Alan Smith, Alison Smith, Susie Whimster and Rosalie Winter. It was PROPOSED by Maureen Palmer and SECONDED by Janet Webster that these ten members be elected en bloc to serve on committee during 2020. All in favour.
- b. The secretary asked if anyone wished to join the committee: she suggested that if they did not wish to speak in front of the meeting they could talk to any committee member in private. The committee really needs fresh ideas.

9. Election of Officers for 2020

- a. Chairman - it was PROPOSED by Mary Holdsworth and SECONDED by Penelope Gordon that Denise Edwards be elected to serve as chairman for 2020. All in favour.
- b. Vice Chairman - it was PROPOSED by Betty Herbertson and SECONDED by Peter Kearns that Diann Barnett be elected to serve as vice chairman for 2020. All in favour.
- c. Treasurer - it was PROPOSED by Clive Glass and SECONDED by Karen Rees that Alan Smith be elected to serve as treasurer for 2020. All in favour.
- d. Secretary – it was PROPOSED by Wendy Allen and SECONDED by Janie Kearns that Rosalie Winter be elected to serve as secretary for 2020. All in favour.

10. Proposal to Amend Rule 3a) of the Constitution

All members of the Society had been sent a letter by the Secretary, either by post or email, outlining the Committee's proposal to limit membership of the Society to those living within the Whitton Benefice i.e. the parishes of Ramsbury with Axford, Aldbourne, Chilton Foliat, Baydon and Froxfield. One of the reasons given in the letter was concern over the valuable trophies going outside the immediate locality.

This led to a lively debate, and some of the points made are listed below:

- This would mean people living in Hungerford and Marlborough - some of whom are ex-Ramsbury residents - could not be Society members. *The Secretary pointed out that non members can attend all Society events & functions and can enter shows, but not win trophies.*
- Some of the older solid silver trophies are worth £8,000 or £9,000 each.
- The Society could award trophies but not let them be taken outside the Whitton Benefice area.
- If the trophies are so valuable, perhaps they should be awarded but stay with the Society, i.e. not be kept in the winner's house for the year no matter where they live.
- Having membership open to everyone boosts our numbers, increases subscription revenue and makes the shows better.
- We enjoy seeing first class exhibits at the shows.

- Having first class exhibits should encourage other exhibitors to up their game.
- Unfortunately the above tends not to happen. People are discouraged from entering because they feel they have no chance of winning.
- Ramsbury shows are essentially for local people. Members who have started to exhibit at regional or national level should stop entering our shows.

As there was obviously no consensus on this proposal it was withdrawn by committee. Members were asked to email their views to hortsoc@ramsbury.org. Committee will discuss this whole matter again. If a different proposal is formulated it could be brought to a Special General Meeting or to the 2021 AGM.

11. Date of Next Annual General Meeting Monday 25th January 2020.

12. A O B and Members' Forum

- a) Bev Mann thanked Denise, Sheila & Clive Glass for the new wooden planters at the entrances to the village. Sheila clarified that this is a Parish Council project and that thanks should also go to Mark & Karen Rees amongst others.
- b) John & Jessie Gunton have 20-30 strawberry plants available. Denise will get in touch with them.
- c) Sheila Glass reported that someone had stolen a bag of compost that had been left ready to fill one of the new planters.
- d) Penelope Gordon thanked Denise and her committee for organising the shows and all the other events.
- e) Karen Rees talked about the Great British Spring Clean which takes place between 13th March & 20th April. She also outlined the flower competition designed to make the village look as attractive as possible for the Best Kept Village competition. Planters etc should be themed around red, white & blue, and there will be a prize for the best. She also reported that this year marks Marlborough Flower Club's 50th anniversary. Various events are planned: please contact her for details.
- f) Wendy Allen talked about efforts by the horticultural industry to respond to climate change and make gardening as eco-anxiety free as possible. Denise will discuss this with her.

The business concluded at 8.45pm.

Members divided into teams of around six and did a quiz devised by Rosalie.