



HEMPSTEAD & DISTRICT GARDENERS' CLUB

Minutes of Annual General Meeting Held at 8pm 5th March 2013 in the Village Hall



Present:

Diana Frost (Chairman)
Sean McCarthy
Victoria Ham
Hanne Greville-Morris
Cath Sladen

Brian Ray (Secretary)
Julian McCarthy
Sue Ray
Alan Weedon
Bruce Burden

Tricia Ridgway (Treasurer)
Nigel Smith
Alan Walker
John Sladen
Stella Burden

1. Apologies: Don + Lynn Feaver, Richard + Angela Crane, Anthea McCarthy, Tracey McCarthy, Sarah-Jane Davies

2. Minutes of the Last Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 8th March 2012 were distributed and agreed, noting a grammatical error in the Chairman's report and a mis-numbering issue. The Minutes were proposed for approval by Sue Ray and seconded by John Sladen and signed post-meeting when corrected, by the Chairman as being a true record.

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Treasurer's Report

Our income and expenditure for 2012 shows a deficit of £ 571.91 for the year. This compares to a surplus of £981.39 in 2011.

The reasons for the deficit are that the horse show could not go ahead due to the adverse weather around the horse show date, making the ground waterlogged and dangerous to compete. We still received a generous donation of £150 from the horse show sponsors. We had already made a donation of £500 for the Jubilee event and £125 for the hearing loop for the village hall and, because of the generosity of the horse show sponsors despite it did not go ahead, we made a further donation to the SWRC funds. The key figures to note are:

Income:

Horse Show	£ 150.00
Gardeners Mart	£ 568.48
Subscriptions	£ 51.00

Expenditure:

Annual show £ 143.76 – this was higher than 2011 due to flowers for longstanding members, more from Chairman later, higher than usual entries by children therefore prize money was higher.

Insurance £ 0 – there was no insurance cost for the year as the date of RHS insurance debiting dates have moved resulting in last year's insurance covering an 18 month period and the next insurance debiting February 2013.

During 2010 the bank paid in £50 that we advised was not being ours. Despite following this up with the bank on occasions, the £50 has remained in the account as has been stated as ours so after 2 years it has finally been incorporated in to the club funds.

The total fund stands at £6,628.24 at year end (2011 £7,150.15). Despite the deficit, the fund total is still higher than it was at 2010 year end leaving the club with a strong financial base.

Thanks were recorded by the Treasurer to Chris Scott for auditing the books and the accounts, which were duly recommended for adoption.

5. Chairman's Report — Presented by Diana Frost

This was the year of the Diamond Jubilee and London Olympic Games so there would be much to celebrate as the year progressed.

From a gardening point of view, it started very dry; so much so, that by the 5th April a hose-pipe ban was implemented, which had the guaranteed effect of producing non-stop rain for eight months and us ending up with a record high rainfall in Hempstead (since our village records began) of 820mm (33")

We held the Annual Dinner at the Bluebell Inn as usual on March 1st and enjoyed a lovely, sociable evening with maximum numbers and we made plenty of noise.

The AGM attracted no new committee members and none of the newer residents of the village attended the meeting but we did discuss drafting a new constitution for the Club and sharing some joint initiatives with Ashdon Gardening Club who have speakers at their well-attended meetings through the main months of the year. With regard to the collecting of subscription money, rather than make house-to-house calls which we feel is now somewhat inappropriate, we tried asking for subs at our events or suitable occasions. This met with partial success.

Our plant sale, the Gardeners' Mart, was held on Saturday 26th May in glorious sunshine and on a day where the temperature rose to 28C. it was perfect to encourage everyone to buy plants and we sold out, making a profit of £568.48. As always we were grateful for all those who helped on the day as 'many hands make light work' and it is a very sociable occasion too, especially with Zoe's coffee stall by the pond as well.

We tidied, planted, weeded, pruned, oiled, painted and maintained everything we could around the village to make it look nice, including planting up the hanging baskets at the Bluebell Inn by kind request of Rod and Marian Stokes and we put two new tubs planted in red, white and blue by the signpost at the bottom of Church Hill to celebrate the Diamond jubilee. The timing of their arrival perfectly suited the dying down of the crocus leaves, which had done well earlier, and despite the high rainfall, they looked magnificent in August – a bit later than the event itself, but something to enjoy throughout the summer.

On Sunday the 1st of July we visited Ashdon Hall gardens where we were warmly welcomed by the owners Mr and Mrs Padfield as we explored their magnificent gardens and listened to their history. Sumptuous cakes and a cup of tea was provided on the patio near the house and a wonderful afternoon was had by everyone who came.

An area we focused on for 2012 was re-vamping the Children's Section of the Annual Show Schedule and with Brian Ray forging a strong link with Mrs Kate Hockley, Head of Radwinter Primary School, we developed a new three tier stream for Cups instead of two. We purchased a new cup for the new class and the schedule was aligned to the curriculum, plus some independent classes for children not at that school. The result at the Show itself was a fantastic array of over 300 children's entries. Our thanks go to Sara Scott, Niki McNeill and Janet Easterbrook for bringing them all to the hall and labelling them which is a complex job in itself. We noted that we needed more space for written material and would seek some new equipment accordingly for 2013.

The Show stats were: 22 Adults put in 179 Entries and 90 Children put in 307. Our winners included Mandy Newman, Jess Long, Julian McCarthy and Fred Pollitt. Fred won the new Jubilee cup for Reception and Year 1 children and must be the most enthusiastic receiver of an award that we have ever seen. Having shown it to every visitor to his house for 5 months non-stop, the inevitable happened and he tripped over while carrying it so it now carries a dent. We don't mind!

We were also delighted to extend Honorary Membership at the Show to Dorothy Fleming and Nellie Halls, two of our oldest residents and long-standing supporters of the Club. They were each presented with a basket of flowers and I thank Brian Ray for the research he did into their association with the Club.

The rain then really got the better of things as the water table rose and the ground saturated and the Horse & Pony Show had to be cancelled for safety reasons. This is the first time this has happened in its history but 3 of the sponsors very kindly continued with their support to help make amends for lost revenue.

We were blessed with another beautiful afternoon for our visit to Fuller's Mill gardens near Bury St. Edmunds on Sunday the 9th September. This gentle garden reflects the surrounding forest woodland. More tea and cakes were consumed as we sat under umbrellas on the perfectly stripped lawn. Another outstanding Club visit.

Brian Ray and I spent much time writing articles for the website, Ambo, the Newsletter and The Gardening Year. We hope you make full use of these and enjoy them.

We re-planted 500 tête-à-tête daffodils at The Triangle in the autumn as they had diminished in number through spells of drought.

6. New Constitution

A new Constitution was proposed for approval. The wording in this Constitution requires four weeks notice to be given of a meeting where the Constitution will be discussed. Four weeks' notice had been given for the meeting but the advertisements did not state that the Constitution would be discussed. As the Club does not appear to have a Constitution in place, a vote took place to determine whether the Constitution should be put forward for approval by the assembled attendees. This was unanimously carried.

It was then observed by Nigel Smith that the proposed Constitution had the name of the Club incorrectly spelt at the top – stating 'Gardening' instead of 'Gardeners'. Noting that this needed correction, in principle the Constitution was approved by the majority in a vote. The Chairman giving assurance that a corrected copy would be made available via the Secretary and on the village website, with a suitable timescale for comment before it would be adopted.

7. Election of Officers

Sue Bright stood down at the end of the 2012 season. We thank her for her contribution and energetic support in the time she was with us. The 2012 committee has been:

Chairman - Diana Frost, Secretary - Prof. Brian Ray, Treasurer – Tricia Ridgway

Committee Members – Sean McCarthy, Sarah-Jane Davies, Julian McCarthy and Life President, David Haylock.

Proposed for 2013:

	Name	Proposed By	Seconded By
Chairman	Diana Frost	Bruce Burden	Sean McCarthy
Secretary	Brian Ray	Julian McCarthy	Hanne Greville-Morris
Treasurer	Tricia Ridgway	Nigel Smith	Alan Weedon
Committee:	Sean McCarthy	}	}
	Sarah-Jane Davies	} John Sladen	} Hanne Greville-Morris
	Julian McCarthy]	}

8. Any Other Business

A date for a village clean-up day has yet to be determined and will be advertised in the Newsletter in due course.

The Gardening section on the website is always available at www.hempstead-essex.org.uk for information on all gardening matters.

It has been decided to grow Halloween pumpkins for this year's Autumn Show. Seeds were handed out and will be distributed to those who sent apologies.

The Chairman announced that the committee had agreed to donate £3000 to the Village Hall Management committee towards the cost of the new patio area being created at the rear of the Village Hall alongside the existing children's play area. This is a large sum of the Club's funds but the committee had agreed 18 months ago to only spend money on a substantial village project where the funds would be used for a benefit of everyone in the village and this scheme was the favoured one. The remaining fund this year is still a strong base of £3678.24 after the donation.

The Annual Show schedule for 2013 is currently being assembled and negotiated with Radwinter Primary School and will be published on the website shortly with a downloadable Adobe version.

The collection of annual subscriptions this year was done mainly at events and by word-of-mouth rather than by door –to-door collection. It generated a lower return of £51. It is proposed to keep subscriptions at their long-standing rate of £1 for annual membership and £10 for life membership but we will try to be more dedicated in our collecting. Membership continues to provide extremely good value with a 10% discount at Springwell's Nursery for purchases on showing a card available from the Secretary. For those of you not already life members, if you would like to pay this year's subs today, please see Tricia after the meeting.

This year's programme includes:

- Wine and nibbles following this AGM
- Annual Dinner at The Bluebell Inn, Thursday 28th Feb (already taken place)
- A Talk on Birds by Barry Kauffmann-Wright here on the 19th April at 8pm
- Gardeners Mart at the bus shelter from 9.00am on Saturday 25th May
- Club Visit to Parsonage Farm, Helions Bumpstead, 2nd June
- The Annual Show on Saturday 13th July
- The Horse & Pony Show at Hill Farm on Sunday 21st July
- The Autumn Show on Friday 11th October in the Village Hall.

John Sladen expressed thanks to H&DGC for its very generous proposed donation of £3000 to the VH Patio project. He also thanked Diana Frost for her efforts throughout the year in maintaining the Village Hall surrounds.

Hanne Greville-Morris commented on how lovely the snowdrops were looking in the Ring o' Trees and the crocus under the signpost at the bottom of Church Hill.

Alan Weedon announced he had leaflets asking for Best Kept Village judges if anyone was interested.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

Signed.....Dated.....

Diana/h&dgcagmmin13