

# HURST HORTICULTURAL & COTTAGE GARDEN SOCIETY

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

### Minutes from the AGM held on October 12<sup>th</sup> 2019 at The Castle Inn, Hurst

**Present:** Keith Attfield (Chair,) Julie Attfield, Frank and Sheila Whittaker, Janet Larkin, Martin and Ann Newman, Chris and Val Bowman, John and Jo Penney, Simon and Chantal Roberts, John and Ann-Marie Vimpany.

**Apologies:** Ken and Penny Curry, Edwin and Margaret Jarvis, Pauline MacBrayne, Ted and Betty Smith, Naomi and David Bassett, Mac and Barbara Stephenson

Keith opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and stating no AGM has been possible since 2019 due to the lockdown restrictions, he then gave his Chairman's Annual Report:

**Chairman's Annual Report** This report is below as a appendix 1 to these minutes.

**Treasurer's Report:** Ann distributed copies of the Society's Statement of Accounts for the year ending 30th October 2021 – see appendix 2. She informed the meeting the show had generated a surplus of £192.91 which, given the challenges of staging the show this year was a financial success. The Society had a total of £7,686.97 in the bank. Ann thanked Chantal for the introduction of contactless payments which worked well. Keith thanked Ann for the quiet and efficient manner in which she conducted the society's finances.

#### **Election of Officers:**

Keith in his annual report had already stated that he (Chair,) Julie (Home Industries Secretary,) and Ken (Field Manager) had resigned from their committee roles with the society, albeit they will all continue to actively support and be involved in the Society. He asked if Ann (Treasurer,) Janet (Horticultural Secretary), Frank (Secretary) and Sheila (Joint Secretary) were willing to stand again and each agreed to do so.

Julie thanked everyone for the support given to her over the 11 years she had been Home Industries Secretary.

He then stated that there were therefore vacancies on the committee and asked if anyone present wished to stand. In the absence of volunteers from the meeting a discussion took place about recruiting new people onto the committee. Frank said that the Society was now at a crossroads which reminded him of when the Society was in a similar position some 10 years ago when the committee was similarly depleted. He said that new people came on board then and strengthened the Society with new ideas and energy and the same needs to happen now as we have a 108-year-old legacy to protect. He requested that everyone present gave thought to possible new committee members and spread the word. John suggested we should reach out to the local community via HVS magazine, Facebook and Wooded Hill.

**Questions:** The question was asked that in the absence of a Chair who would chair the following wash-up meeting and it was agreed Keith would chair it.

At this point Keith thanked everyone for their support and closed the meeting.

## Appendix One: Chairman's Annual Report- 2021

I am very pleased to say that the Society has successfully weathered the storms thrown at us since the last AGM two and a half years ago.

A successful show in August 2019 not only received many compliments from visitors and entrants, but also made a good surplus of just over £1,300 which allowed us to again give something to local charities, and we donated to the local NHS First Responders and Twyford Age Concern.

In March 2020 lockdown hit and this posed many challenges to the committee. I am proud to say that we have successfully faced these difficulties and not only put on two virtual shows, but also one extremely successful show this year.

This has all been achieved by the positive approach of the committee and a lot of planning for this year's main show without being sure of it going ahead. Thankfully the show was a great success because of the many willing hands that helped make it happen, together with the fantastic support of the community in and around Hurst who entered classes and came with their friends and family on the day.

The first challenge posed by lockdown was how to hold an AGM in 2020? We actually decided it was not possible and agreed we had to skip a year.

Other events since the last AGM, are that sadly our president, Suzy Watt, resigned having supported the Society for many years and she wishes it well. Also, two committee members have resigned, these are: Heather Howarth who, I am pleased to say, continues to enthusiastically support the Society. Also, after many years Paul Martin wanted to reduce, but thankfully not eliminate, the time he devotes to the August show.

The first event after lockdown was a virtual garden competition which attracted 28 entries, and we have Heather Howarth to thank for pushing the idea forward. This was followed by a virtual show with 92 entries in 9 classes. After this show we decided to give £500 to Berkshire Air Ambulance believing this charity would have been the wish of our supporters as it was a runner up in the charity selection for 2019. Sales of Chris Bowman's metalcraft from the virtual show site contributed more than half of this figure.

With an eye on holding a proper show this year the committee met regularly to interpret the Government's Covid road map, and look at advice from many sources. We were all very keen to put on the August show but it was not until 21 July that we finally decided it was safe to do it.

In the four weeks before the show we not only firmed up the Covid safe plans of: a one-way system; ventilated halls; and avoiding congestion points, but we also adopted three important initiatives. These initiatives contributed greatly to the success of the show and I believe lay the foundation for the future.

The first was the use of social media for the first time to make the local community aware of the show through the Hurst Facebook Group. Not only did this prove to be a great way to spread news,

but we had no real alternative with no time to produce and distribute a printed schedule. I am enormously grateful to Louise Kendal and Chantal Roberts for making this happen.

The second was to introduce contactless payments which was a big success and Chantal Roberts is entirely responsible for the idea and convincing a sceptical committee. I'm pleased to say we are all converts now.

The third was the introduction of online show entries using a system built and managed by Simon Roberts, and this was very popular.

The other hard work behind the scenes was the rebuilding and operating of the show entry and results system which is the powerhouse behind the scenes that makes the show work. This was rebuilt by Suzy Watt's son, Alexander, who did a magnificent job and we are extremely grateful to him and his mother who suggested he did it. It was also taken on by Simon and Chantal Roberts who polished it and ran it on the day.

Also, behind the scenes many worked tirelessly preparing the showground, and organising helpers and judges. I give a huge thank you to them all.

So, against all odds the show took place and was a great success. It also proved the Society is strong enough not only to take on the Covid challenges, but also to successfully adapt to new initiatives that will be a strong foundation for its continued success.

On a personal note, I have decided that the time is now right for me hand over the chair to someone fresh, and better able to build on the new ways brought in this year. Also, Ken Curry has decided that after many years successfully managing the show site that he feels that it's time for somebody else to take on the job. Both Ken and I will continue to enthusiastically support the Society and the committee under its new leadership.

Also, my wife, Julie, will resign today as home industries secretary. She has managed the task of organising home industries classes, their judges and stewards in a calm efficient way and feels that after 11 years she wants to concentrate on cookery and preserves judging. She, like myself, will continue to support the committee and show.

Despite all these changes I feel very confident that the Show will grow stronger from this point, and I also thank the committee and you all for your fantastic support while I have been chair.

Keith Attfield 12 October 2021

## Appendix Two - 2021 Accounts

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