

HURST HORTICULTURAL & COTTAGE GARDEN SOCIETY

WASH-UP AND GENERAL MEETING

Minutes from the meeting held on October 12th 2021 at The Castle Inn

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.

1) Minutes of the last General Planning Meeting – 29th July 2021:

There were no matters arising from this meeting as most of the plans had been included in the show.

2) 2021 Show Finances:

Ann distributed a detailed breakdown of the show finances which showed a £192.91 surplus. A question was asked about the make-up of a miscellaneous show expenses figure of £251.65 and she gave a detailed analysis of this figure. Simon observed that the two key income streams of raffle and Chris Bowman's hand crafted metalwork donation were not possible this year which if compared to the last show held in 2019, would have increased the surplus to nearly £1,000. Ann stated that the Hurst Horticultural and Cottage Garden Society had a total of £7,686.97 in its bank account and considered the 2021 show, considering the difficulties in staging it, to have been a financial success.

Keith and all present agreed and he continued by thanking Ann for the quiet and efficient manner in which she conducted the Society's finances and stated the Society's finances were in good health.

3) 2021 Show Wash-Up:

Entry and visitor numbers – entry numbers for horticultural items were at a similar level to the previous show and home industries entries were down by some 20% as were visitor numbers. Considering the short notice and difficulties in staging the show this year together with the dire weather forecast, these numbers were considered to be well above those expected.

Horticultural section – Janet said the revised table layout and the one-way flow for visitors to facilitate Covid precautions worked well. Rowena Turner the horticultural judge was thorough and professional and was impressed by the high standard of entries.

Home Industries section – Julie said to accommodate Covid restrictions this year the art section was omitted to allow for more circulation space and a one-way flow for visitors. The number of entries was less than the previous show mainly due to this however the standard of entries remained high.

Cashless payments – Chantal had persuaded the committee to introduce contactless payments for the first time, which she organised. This was considered by all to have been a great success and

accounted for some 35% of all income and was used for exhibit entries, gate entry, bar, teas and auction.

New exhibit entry and results system – another first was the rebuilding and operating of the show entry and results system which is the powerhouse behind the scenes that makes the show work. Suzy Watt's son, Alexander, was instrumental in building this together with Keith which Simon and Chantal fine-tuned and ran on the day. Simon said it worked well and he would be tweaking it for the 2022 show. Additionally, Simon had built and introduced an online show entries system, yet another first, which removed the need to complete and deliver the paper entry forms to the nominated addresses. For the 2022 show he will develop this further to enable online payments to be made and will consult with Ann to link in with our bank. It was agreed by all that these new initiatives were very beneficial to the show but there will always be a need to retain paper and cash entries, which will be done.

Refreshments – Bar – Martin said the flow of customers was steady and busy at times but with the additional help from John and David queues were avoided. Opening earlier was beneficial, particularly to stallholders. Ann said the contactless payments worked well and encouraged additional spend. Next year Martin will order less draft beer and have more canned beer in reserve.

Refreshments – Teas – This year teas were relocated to the St Nicholas Pre-School leaving more space in the main hall for Covid distancing. Sheila said it was made to work but far from ideal and she would prefer to move this service back to the main hall if conditions allow in 2022.

Refreshments – Hot food – Matt from The Castle Inn provided this service once more and it was popular with a number of complimentary comments about the quality of the hot dogs and burgers.

Music arrangements – The EMC jazz band was as popular as ever and it was agreed Keith would provisionally book them for the 2022 show on Saturday August 20th.

Publicity – Facebook was used for the first time this year to create awareness of the show amongst the local community. This was driven by Louise Kendal and Chantal Roberts and was considered to be a necessity for spreading news about The Society and the show in the future. Keith thanked both Louise and Chantal for their hard work in doing this. Publicity in general was discussed and it was agreed there was a need for banners, posters and the return of a printed schedule which was absent this year due to time constraints. A discussion took place about how many visitors we wanted to attract and could comfortably accommodate and the conclusion was some 500 was enough in order to retain the relaxed atmosphere and 'village feel' of the show.

Show set-up – Frank said the arrangements went well, helped in part by the use of new, more portable tents to accommodate the band in place of the large 'band tent'. Additionally, the use of Simon's trailer reduced journey numbers and loading times. Frank mentioned it was necessary to rebuild the rear steps leading from the Scout Hut in order to facilitate a one-way visitor flow for Covid purposes. Frank thanked the team of helpers who helped with the set-up and in particular Simon Chand for his assistance and cooperation in accessing the equipment store at Stanlake Park.

Auction – This was particularly well supported this year partly due to it starting shortly after the prize giving. David Lochman was in fine voice and engendered enthusiasm amongst the crowd which in turn prompted lively bidding.

Other topics/A.O.B – Chantal made a number of observations and suggestions for consideration for future shows:

- Link cashless payments directly to our bank account to increase cash control and assist the treasurer.
- Promote the availability of online entries and pre-payment in all our publicity outlets.
- Make clear on all entry forms; paper, online and website the deadline time for entries.
- To assist any visitors with queries at the show and to help show organisers find each other quickly, the main show organisers to be clearly visible in some way (arm bands, tee shirts).
- To assist and speed entry of results, judges need only record on the judging sheets the entrant`s number and not their name.
- For presentation of trophies print the trophy list in entrant name order to assist the presenter.
- Locate a number of dog drinking bowls around the show, these are available in the equipment store.
- Whilst maintaining the current 1:00pm entry into the show halls, open the show grounds to the public 30 minutes earlier at 12:00noon to allow them to visit the stalls and refreshments and purchase more.
- Increase efforts to encourage younger entries by linking earlier and more closely with the PTA, teachers and youngsters to establish what they would like to see at the show.
- Link in more closely with other Hurst organisations, particularly the Hurst Show and Country Fayre for mutual assistance and to share ideas.

K
e
i
t
h

c
l
o
s
e
d

t
h

e
3 |

m
e
e