

## **Stoke Poges, Wexham & Fulmer Horticultural Society – Chair's Report**

### **AGM – Saturday 16th November 2024**

**Firstly please accept my apologies for not being here this afternoon and my thanks to Rich for chairing the meeting and Ruth for reading the chairs report on my behalf.**

Founded in 1884 the society is still achieving its objectives, as stated in the constitution, *the advancement of education in the subject of horticulture and the promotion, encouragement and improvement of horticulture for the public benefit.* The Annual Show at which exhibitors within a 50 mile radius are entitled to compete; the various community cups and trophies awarded at the time of the Show, for example **the** Most Colourful Pub, Best Front Garden, Best Allotments; the Annual Plant Sale, the lecture series and last but, by no means least, the work done with the local schools all contribute to our meeting these objectives.

### **Annual Show**

It was a very special year for us this year with our 130<sup>th</sup> Annual Show and our 140<sup>th</sup> year. What an achievement! Held on 27<sup>th</sup> July in the grounds of The Stoke Poges School. we were once again blessed with perfect weather for both the set up and the show day despite the preceding weeks being cold and wet. It was particularly well attended and with a very full showground with visitors and stalls and attractions. Despite the poor growing season, the number of entries and quality of exhibits was high. We added an extra marquee this year to create a centralized area for information, membership, raffle and entries which worked well.

We were honored that our special guest for our anniversary year was the Countess Howe, His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire who attended along with her husband the Earl Howe, who judged the Classic Cars. Countess Howe presented the cups and trophies at the conclusion of the show and enjoyed chatting with the winners.

Johnny Ball joined us again during the afternoon and kindly drew the raffle.

We are grateful to The Stoke Poges School for the use of the school grounds for the Show and to Stoke Poges Parish Council for the use of the Recreation Ground for parking.

Our thanks to all those who came in to the Show and who exhibited, but most of all, an especially big thank you to our committee, volunteers and the many people who worked together to make it happen for the enjoyment of all.

We are very much looking forward to continued success and enjoyment in 2024.

### **Social Evenings**

These include an informal table show, to exhibit seasonal produce, an illustrated talk, seed swap, gardening lending library, a light buffet, and a raffle

Spring 13<sup>th</sup> March –Graham Talbot from the Berkshire College of Agriculture gave us useful tips and advice on how to get the most from an allotment or vegetable garden throughout the year.

Autumn – 16<sup>th</sup> October – There was an interactive talk and discussion on the art of bee keeping from Eddie Pires.

### **Lecture Evenings**

On 11th September, Jon Mason , a naturalist, photographer and teacher gave an illustrated talk on creating a wild garden .

Many thanks to Tracey Clark for organizing the speakers this year. Thanks must also go to Jon Homan and Rich Huckle for organizing the table shows and to those who brought the food and exhibits.

### **Annual Plant Sale**

The Annual Plant Sale was moved to the May Bank holiday weekend this year to allow a little more time for the plants to grow and to be closer to when tender plants can be planted out. It was the first year that all the plants on offer were grown by members of the society and this year a new sub-committee worked together to make improvements to the layout of plants to improve the overall experience for purchasers. The plant sale continues to be a popular event, with a reputation for selling high-quality plants at reasonable prices, with a popular sale of home bakery and refreshments. Thank you to all involved. Plants left over from the sale were sold or distributed to local schools. The income raised makes a vital contribution towards the costs of running the Show.

### **Fuchsias and Society Membership**

We are continuing with our tradition of handing out fuchsias to members for a member's competition at the Annual Show in memory of the late Ray Birt.

The Society is a member of the National Sweet Pea Society, the British Fuchsia Society, the National Vegetable Society, the UK Rose Society and is affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society

### **Schools**

Last year the committee decided to invite three other nearby primary schools who are now involved in the Schools Cup Competition and supported by the society. In Spring seed packs, plants, and gardening vouchers were distributed to the schools.

The schools now involved are Farnham Common Infants and Junior Schools, St Marys School Farnham Royal alongside Stoke Poges School, Wexham Court and Fulmer Infants.

Wexham Court Primary School were the winners of the Schools Cup. Once again there were photos and themed scarecrows on display and the popular potato weigh in at the show.

Many thanks to Becky Godley who has risen to the challenge of including double the number of schools supported by the society this year.

## **Publicity**

Our publicity sub-committee continues to promote the society to the wider community. We are now implementing feedback from our Membership Survey, adding to and improving the website and regularly use social media, member newsletters and local area magazine articles to promote our events and inform the wider public of our activities.

Colourful posters were created for events and the Annual Show. The large banners advertising the Show continue to be very effective. Many thanks to those who put them up and also to those who distributed the posters, fliers and schedules.

Many thanks to Rich for his creativity improving our newsletter and website.

## **The Society in the Community**

Many of our members are involved in gardening projects in the wider community. Community gardening initiatives play an important part in improving well-being and the appearance of the local area. Members have been involved with the maintenance of the Bells Hill Green, Volunteered at the Memorial Gardens, The St Andrews Eco Garden and a group have created a wildflower meadow and reclaimed and replanted some overgrown land near the shops in Stoke Poges.

On June 10<sup>th</sup> The Horticultural Society had a stand sat the Stoke Poges Village fete giving advice, selling plants and hosting a successful Rose Show. It also provided a great opportunity to promote the Annual Show the following month.

Thank you to Rob Wood who judged the rose entries and brought a large number of plants for us to sell.

## **Containers and Show Storage**

This year due to the continued deterioration of our containers, kindly stored at Pinewood nurseries the committee decided to research acquiring a new container to store all our show equipment and other items which we use for events. The Parish Council was approached and permission was granted to place a new container on the Stoke Poges allotments site. A brand new container was purchased and installed in May, ready to be used for the show. A team of volunteers sorted through and cleared out the old containers and removed anything not fit for purpose. The Society has also recently purchased some new trestle tables to be used at the show which are being stored by the Stoke Poges Fete in their container.

## **Membership**

We have 352 members including vice presidents and life honorary life members although some subscriptions are still outstanding. We are sad that, inevitably, we have lost members who have passed away this year.

We would like to encourage members to pay their subscription by standing order and, if they pay tax, to sign up for Gift Aid.

## **Officers and Committee**

We are fortunate to have a very dedicated and enthusiastic committee but we are always looking for new people to join us as this brings new perspective and ideas to move us forward in our aims.

Many thanks to Andy MacDonald for his military precision and good humour in organizing the showground set up and build. Sadly, this was his last show after 4 years and he has now stepped down from this role to spend more time travelling. We wish him well but Andy's will be big boots to fill and we are now eagerly looking for a new show supervisor or maybe two people who can share the role and head up the team. Please speak to a committee member if you are interested.

On behalf of the Society I would like to thank Ruth Rooley, our President, and Jon Homan, our President Emeritus, for their continued support and active involvement in the Society.

Liz Tierney for her calm, efficient and professional support as Secretary and for engaging and organizing the stall holders for the Show.

Thanks to Janet Cottrell, our Show Chief Steward who does a very difficult job with a great attention to detail.  
and Heather Homan our Show Entries co-ordinators for their time and commitment in the run up to the show.  
Our thanks to Pat Rofo, Membership Secretary and Heather Homan our Show Entries co-ordinator for their time and commitment in the run up to the show.

Thanks to Rich Huckle for producing the colourful members Newsletter, working on updating the website and producing new posters for events and the Annual Show. Most newsletters are now delivered by email with a few still hand delivered to those who do not have email. Many thanks to those who have helped with this.

A big thanks to all our other committee members, who may or may not have been mentioned - Liz Tierney, Tracey Clark, Brian Jeans, Andy MacDonald, Pat Rofo, Janet Cottrell, Maria Brennan, Saran Judge, Becky Godley, Rich Huckle, Cath Smith, Heather Homan, and Alan Coombs. All of whom make a huge contribution to the Show and our many other activities. If I were to try to list all the things they do I would be in danger of leaving something out! So, a great big thank you to all.

We have a very strong committee at present but please get in touch if you would like to join the committee or help with the show and other events throughout the year. You will receive a warm welcome.

### **Patrons, Sponsors and other Supporters**

We thank our patrons The Mobbs Memorial Trust, Pinewood Nurseries, Grundon waste management and Stoke Park for their long standing and continued support. Thanks are also due to Pinewood Nurseries for allowing the Society to keep storage container on their land and Stoke Poges Parish Council for permission to keep our new container on the allotment site. And to the Stoke Poges Village Fete for their loan of their marquees for show day and the storage of our new tables in their container.

I would like to thank all those who sponsor, provide raffle prizes or help in any way, and so ensure that the Society has successful events and continues to flourish and serve the community.

## **Finance**

Last and by no means least I am pleased to be able to report that the Society's financial position is secure. After their trial last year, we have embraced the use of card readers at the plant sale, events and at the show and now have 6 to use at Society events. This has proved very successful.

Inevitably though our costs have risen over the last few years with rising prices of everything we need to purchase to run the society from room hire to printing, cost of speakers, marquees etc has all gone up. Without your subscriptions, investments and donations things would look less optimistic.

Brian Jeans has continues to be a very efficient treasurer. He has prepared our accounts for the Financial Examiner and will be making the Treasurer's Report

We would also like to thank the Reverend Gordon Briggs for performing the duty of Independent Examiner, which he has done for many years.

## **Finally Moving Forward**

It is now 2 years since I took over as chair of the Horticultural Society and I have very much enjoyed it although it's certainly kept me very busy! I have been keen to move the society forward and modernize but always with great respect for its long history.

As we look to the future, we are keen to develop more community initiatives, strengthen our ties with local schools and the wider community to promote gardening, and inspire the next generation. By nurturing a love for gardening and nature, we hope to create enjoyable and educational experiences for everyone.

In conclusion, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all our volunteers who give their time to help the Society, to our sponsors, and to our dedicated committee members. Your efforts have ensured the Society continues to thrive, bringing joy and education to our community through horticulture.

Maureen Barton Chair

November 16<sup>th</sup> 2024



# **STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS for the YEAR ENDING 30.09.2024**

<b>Payments</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Receipts</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
Show Day Costs	14,565.01	<b>15,535.79</b>	Show Day Receipts	7,210.34	<b>8,523.52</b>
Container Purchase	-	<b>3,904.78</b>	Plant Sales	2,160.86	<b>3,080.67</b>
Subscriptions	158.60	<b>142.60</b>	Membership Subscriptions	561.00	<b>636.00</b>
Administration	30.05	-	Membership Subscriptions	841.00	<b>983.56</b>
Public Liability Insurance	220.00	<b>240.00</b>	Investment Income	2,595.00	<b>2,656.43</b>
Lectures & Memberships	283.10	<b>364.79</b>	Co-Op Donation	1,387.63	-
Presentations/Gifts	221.25	<b>126.00</b>	Lecture Donations	397.06	<b>343.15</b>
Bursary	-	-	Donation-Mobbs M	500.00	<b>750.00</b>
Hall Hire	460.72	<b>880.82</b>	Donation-Stoke Poges	6,000.00	<b>6,000.00</b>
Jubilee / Tree Planting	1,504.99	-	Donations-other	1,050.00	<b>3,114.00</b>
Sundry	50.40	<b>62.44</b>	Gift Aid Recovery	292.65	<b>103.00</b>
GDPR & ICO	35.00	<b>35.00</b>	Bank Interest	253.03	<b>410.00</b>
Web Site	100.30	<b>114.23</b>	Parish Council Contribution	601.00	-
Schools	241.47	<b>193.93</b>			
Plant Sales	438.56	<b>49.69</b>			
Tables	869.80	<b>1,339.85</b>			
Zettles (Card Readers)	357.60	<b>894.00</b>			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,536.85</b>	<b>23,883.92</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23,849.57</b>	<b>26,600.33</b>
Excess of Receipts over Payments		<b>2,716.41</b>			

## **BANK RECONCILIATION for the YEAR ENDING 30.09.2024**

Cash in Bank-Current Account 01.10	1,261.38	Cash in Bank-Current Account 30	2,693.69
Cash in Bank-Reserve Account 01.10	28,963.41	Cash in Bank-Reserve Account 30	30,247.51
Excess Receipts over Payments	2,716.41		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32,941.20</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32,941.20</b>

## **Independent Examiner's Report to the Stoke Poges, Wexham & Fulmer Horticultural Society**

This report on the accounts of the Stoke Poges, Wexham & Fulmer Horticultural Society for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024, is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011, as updated by the Charities Act 2022.

### **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

As members of the Society, you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements, and you consider that the audit requirements of Section 144(1) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) do not apply. You have elected both to prepare the accounts on the receipts and payments basis - Section 133 of the Act, and to subject them to independent examination under Section 145 (1) of the Act rather than audit. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those financial statements in accordance with the terms of the Regulations, and your stated election.

### **Basis of Independent Examiner's Report**

My examination is carried out in accordance with general directions given by the Charity Commission. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Club and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements and seeking explanations from you as trustees (via your Honorary Treasurer) concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

### **Independent Examiner's Statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of section 133 of the 2011 Act;

(2) also in connection with my examination, there is no matter to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn, in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



The Reverend Gordon J Briggs FCPFA MAAT Dip TEM

A Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy [Section 145(4) 2011 Act]  
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23 October 2024