

Fleet and Church Crookham Garden Society

Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday 2nd February 2024 at Willis Hall, Church Crookham 7.30pm

In attendance: Caroline Morris (Treasurer), Helen Howard (Show Committee), Kevin Morris, Robert Brook, Celia Brook, Linda Dart, Peter and Margaret Edwards, Jayne and Robert West, Margaret Stinchcombe, Jennifer Kelly, Pauline Bennetts, Sandra Douglas, Sue Meek.

Apologies: Liz Kirton, Jo Wilson, Alec Grant

1. Minutes of 2023 all agreed.

2. Chairman's Report

In Alec's absence Caroline read out the Chairmans report. It was noted membership had declined and there was the need for a new Trading Secretary to replace Kevin, who was stepping down from the role. A Vice Chairperson was also needed, and adverts would be placed in due course.

The Society talks were well attended, with around 40 people attended the Hosta talk. Wreath making, photography and flower arranging workshops also took place.

On 26th February there will be a talk by Gillian Taylor at the Crookham village WI hall 'For the love of roses'.

Ideas for increasing membership were discussed. Robert advised Fleet Greening Project were going to have an event at The Views on 9th March. Is there a possibility we could get a stand to advertise for members or join a table with another Garden or Allotment Group. This will be looked into, and seems like a good idea. Facebook pages were also used but have a limited audience. Many members are not on Facebook, and it is easy to miss messages.

3. Treasurer's Report

Caroline reported on the trading figures for the year, and overall the finances were generally good. The trading shed had done well with plant sales, a welcome boost.

Raffles at all the events had been good

Fixed costs were covered by the Membership. Given no losses as such, it was agreed to keep membership fees as they were at £5.

The shed was now all fixed with the insurance paying out £1100 for repairs. A vehicle had driven into it, which resulted in it needing some structural repairs. Many thanks to Kevin who managed to get it all sorted in time for reopening again this year.

Bank charges of £60.40 with NS&I were commented on. A possible alternative was Metro (Community Account) or Santander which has no business account charge. This will be investigated.

4. Show Secretary Report

In Jo's absence Caroline reported that it was encouraging to see the Summer Show had 131 entries with 20 members taking part.

New entries from local allotment groups and other garden groups was also good to see. In both the Spring and Summer show the entries in the domestic and childrens classes were low.

All members need to be encouraged to have a go and enter as many classes as possible. We need to attract younger gardeners who may have fresh new ideas and approaches. In response to this the shows this year will be open to all, and the childrens classes will be for under 13.

There was a discussion on the shows advertising. It needs to be better advertised. Facebook and the website have a limited range, as only likely existing members will see it. And not everyone is on Facebook. More flyers or posters should be displayed. It is too late to get an entry into the monthly Runabout free magazine, but would be good for the Summer Show.

Robert mentioned Church Crookham Parish Council run the Allotments on Naishes Lane and it may be possible to advertise through them. Rebecca and Clare are the contacts.

5. Trading Secretary Report

Although Kevin has stepped down as Trading Secretary, he read the 2023 report in the absence of others. Overall trade had been reasonable for the year. Many items needed price revisions given the increase in costs.

It was difficult to compete with the big garden centres and retailers. Some products were not popular or out of date. Alec had highlighted items on Facebook and on the website that were for sale which may have helped. Plant sales were popular as well, with thanks to Liz for providing many of them.

With Kevin stepping down the future of the Trading Shed may be in jeopardy. There is a need to encourage new members and involve existing new members.

Peter advised he would be happy to help 2/3 times a year.

Pauline Bennetts of Gally Hill Road, said she could help with unlocking the shed for any deliveries, as she lives 100 yards away.

Jayne and Robert West advised they could help with the shed as did Margaret Stinchcombe.

On behalf of the Committee Helen thanked Kevin for all his efforts with the trading shed over the last year and helping get the damage repaired.

6. Election of Officers

With only two committee members in attendance Kevin Morris proposed, seconded by Pauline Bennett and unanimously agreed that the current committee members are to be re-elected:

Chairman: Alec Grant

Secretary: Liz Kirton

Treasurer: Caroline Morris

Trading Secretary: vacant

Show Committee: Caroline Morris, Jo Wilson, Helen Howard and Jill Thomas

AOB

The quiz will be postponed as some members needed to leave.

It was suggested a social event should be arranged, such as a quiz or a BBQ when the weather is warmer and nights lighter.

Gardeners question time could be held as an event with the more knowledgeable amongst us on the panel!

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.