Twyford & Ruscombe Horticultural Association

Members present: C.Rose; D.Thirtle; M.Yeates; P.J.Humphreys; I.Starkie; B.Carr; N.Patchin; S.Clark; J Fostekew; K.Fostekew; J.A.Benger; C.Clark; J.Moody; G.Starkie; J.Wager; P.Campbell, R.Trorey; M.Moore; J Poulter; M.Jones; Marion Jones; G.Elphick; O.Drap; T.Jones;

1. **Apologies for absence**: Bobbie Crickmore; A.Curtis; T & M Davis; J.Buchanan; M.Bray; F.More; H.Ranscombe;J.March; P.Stephenson
2. **Confirmation of minutes** – unfortunately these were not available
3. **Matters arising** – action point from previous AGM – to increase social media activity has been addressed
4. **Officer's Reports:**

**(i) Chair's Report**

Welcome to this years AGM where we will look back on the performance and activities of the Association in 2019 and look forward to 2020.

This evening you will hear from myself as Chair, Philippa Campbell our treasurer and Jenny Wager our membership secretary. We present the accounts and vote in the committee members and then at the close of the meeting we hope that you will all join us for drinks and nibbles.

Chairs Annual Report for 2019

This will be the last AGM for myself and our treasurer Philippa. It has been a challenging but good 4 years and I think we are ending on a better note than we started certainly in relation to our financial status.

Less so unfortunately with our membership which is sadly continuing to decline. We are looking closely at patterns around new membership and repeat renewals as this will be critical to slowing the decline.

But moving on to the positives – we set ourselves a goal to join with other village activities in order to raise our profile and reach a different audience. The spring show was joined with the Twyford Easter Egg hunt, we joined the wildlife safari and the village fun run. Our shows continued to be popular and have now begin to turn a small profit. With the loss of one of our main exhibitors we were delighted to see some new exhibitors and new winners!

We worked alongside Twyford Together to finally be awarded a Gold for Twyford in Bloom. This award is as much about community as it is about horticulture and Twyford is a hotbed of small businesses wanting to work together as well as some excellent community groups and schools.

We also wanted to improve our presence on social media and Paul one of our committee members has helped us with this.

2020 will need to continue this focus however I truly believe that our best hope to achieve this is with more new committee members who can support our current team and bring fresh ideas. The 3 shows in the year although we will need to find a new show secretary in 2020 as I am unable to commit beyond that.

As ever none of this could be achieved without the input from a small band of workers who put in a lot of time to keep our many activities going. On behalf of the members and myself I would like to say thank you. We really couldn't function without you.

Thank you to Graham for the newsletter, the handbook and everything else in between! Thank you to Jenny Benger for keeping us in line and for making the store work week after week, to Jenny Wager for maintaining our membership and for the Jurassic Garden! To Paul for keeping our website running and bringing us up to date with social media and for manning the cash desk at the store, to Carol and co for keeping us refreshed at our events, to Diane for always thinking of the nice touches and for keeping us socialising together, to, to Mike, Malcom and our store volunteers and to all of our family members who equally get sucked in to help. Paul Bromley has decided to step down from the committee and so I would like to thank him for his contributions to the committee and for his links with community groups. I am delighted to say that Paul will continue to help out at the shows.

I would like to say a sincere thank you to Philippa for the time, analysis and thought that she has put into all of our activities. I have learned a lot from you – be curious, ask questions, think outside the box, but most importantly I think your input has steered us through a tough time when we have had to make some difficult decisions. You have always brought useful data to the table that has helped us to make sensible decisions and equally you have challenged us to think differently. I think we are in a stronger position as a result. Thank you.

Finally but by no means last thank you to Jean for having a steady hand on the tiller.

Over the past 4 years our focus has been on understanding our finances, our membership and our role in the community. We've achieved this and I am delighted that our finances are starting to move in the right direction as a result.

We have a replacement for Philippa and will be delighted to welcome… onto the committee, however we do not have a replacement for the role of Chair or secretary. As a short term solution, committee members will rotate the chair position. I was determined to stay on until we were in a stronger position, however I also recognise that the committee needs a Chair who can give more commitment in terms of leadership than I can give.

And so I will sign off with a plea from myself and the committee for all hands on deck – it may be as little as a few hours to help with deliveries or at the store on a Sunday to joining the committee. None of it is at all onerous and dare I say it we do also share many laughs.

**(ii) Treasurer's report** (separate balance sheets)

I am delighted to report that the association has made a surplus of £1,675 for the year. Excluding maintenance we made £1,747 compared to £1,125 in 2018. For the first time in many years all but one of the individual activities covered their costs and returned a surplus to the association. The one that didn't made a loss of just £7.

We took the decision to close the Santander savings account in the year. That money is now held in the main NatWest account. A new savings account will be opened at Nat West.

Membership

Income was up slightly on the prior year, but costs of servicing the members was also up. Overall net income from members after costs of the newsletter etc was £1,446. This represents 86% of our overall surplus.

Trading Store

The Trading Store made a modest profit of £436. Our margin on goods sold decreased to 15% (from 18%) and the cost of electricity has increased. The Trading Store, as those of you who visit it, know that it is a much loved part of the association's community. It is one of our 'public faces' and helps to bring in new members.

Shows

I am delighted that the shows in 2019 returned a modest surplus of £283. This is the first time that the shows have been profitable which is great news. We have reduced costs by limiting the number of horticultural bodies that we are members of. We have also had to take the decision to stop engraving our trophies after our engraver retired this year. We have also seen some great new initiatives at the Shows with a new 'guess the weight' attraction, a revamped raffle and timing our shows to coincide with activities like the new Easter egg hunt.

Quiz & talk

As ever the quiz was a popular evening and made £183. We held one talk this year which just about broke even.

Other expenditure

We charge £42 each year to the I&E for the depreciation on the Trading Store. We also incur some costs in holding the AGM (and to a lesser extent the committee meetings). In 2019 the committee meetings were moved from the church hall to being held at Claire's house. This has been a big saving for the association.

The main costs under other expenditure are for the write off of old stock. Following our refurbishment of the Trading Store we got rid of old stock that had been on the shelves for many years without shifting or, in the case of seeds, had gone out of date. In total we wrote off £542 of old and out of date stock.

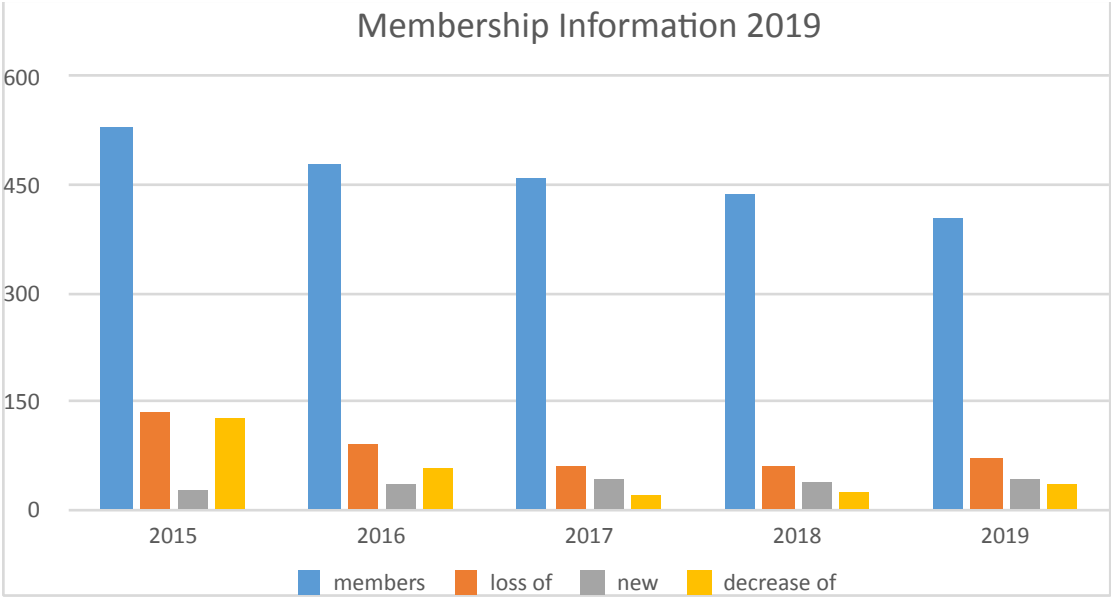
Maintenance

Maintenance this year was minimal having spent over £6,000 in 2018. We can expect to see this figure increase in future years as it is important that we maintain the fabric of the building.

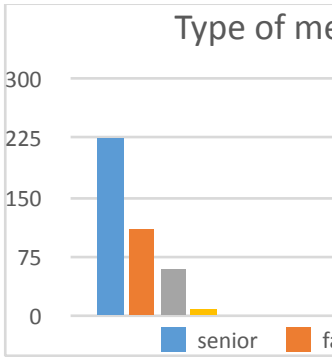
- Action point – create a maintenance plan for future years

(iii) Membership Secretary's Report

The total membership for 2019 was 404, 92.7 % of the previous year ( an overall decrease of 32 members)




- A recruitment drive is still very much needed for new members and to keep members to support the running and work of the TRHA. The membership has still decreased mainly through the number of people who choose not renew their membership (as opposed to those who are no longer around). However over the last 4 years we have had significantly fewer members leaving than in 2015.
- The total of the subscription payments for 2019 was £2,138 and £64 was received in donations. The majority of renewals were again between January and April which is really helpful.
- The charge for posting newsletters should be looked at again next year.
- The membership included 224 Senior members, 110 family members, 61 exempt members and 9 late joiners. Over the course of the year there were 40 new members.
- The number of people who receive their newsletter by email currently stands at 223 (55.2%).
- Thank you to Graham Starkie who sends me the email version of the newsletter promptly, to Malcolm Bray who so efficiently distributes the newsletters to the Reps and a very big thank you to all the Reps who deliver the newsletters, the Handbook and collect subscriptions.




**5. Election of Auditor**

Neil Patchin is standing down after many years and was thanked for his work which has been very much appreciated. A new auditor will be found in time to check the accounts at the end of the next year.

**6. Election of Officers and Committee**

Chair – no nominations were received so in the interim the committee will rotate the position and duties of Chair until a new Chair is found.

Treasurer : Bridget Carr nominated by D.Thirtle and seconded by J.Benger. All voted in favour.

Secretary: Paul Humphreys nominated by J.Moody and seconded by G.Starkie. All voted in favour.

Other Committee members: Carol Rose, Graham Starkie, Jenny Benger, Jenny Wager, Diane Thirtle, Greg Elphick nominated by P.Campbell and seconded by C.Clark. All voted in favour.

7. **Election of President:** Jean Moody nominated by N.Patchin and seconded by C. Rose. All voted in favour.

8. **Membership subscriptions for 2020** – no change: £7.00 Standard membership and £6.00 Senior membership

**9. Any Other Business**

1.Notices – delivery at Store on 29.1.20 help is required – contact Jenny Benger

Quiz night on 5.3.20

Spring Show on 28.3.20

2.A vote of thanks was made to Claire and Philippa for all their hard work, enthusiasm and contribution to the work of the TRHA.

3.Jean Moody was also formally thanked for her excellent contribution as President of TRHA

R.Trorey asked if the categories for the Spring Show could be made available asap to give the artists time to work on their entries. D.Thirtle will liaise.