Twyford & Ruscombe Horticultural Association

Minutes of the 65th Annual General Meeting
Held on 27th January 2022 at St Mary's Church Centre, Twyford

Present:
Paul Humphreys; Diane Thirtle; Jenny Wager; Jenny Benger; Bridget Carr; Carol Rose; Graham Starkie; Irene Starkie; Marion Jones; Myrddin Jones; Mike Yeates; Ken Fostekew; Jean Fostekew; John Wager; Rosemary Pratt; Mary Smith; Audrey Curtis; Richard Trorey; Noreen Choules; Olivier Drap

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Hugh Ranscombe; Pam Pearce; Janet Robson; Frank Moore; Tony White; Caroline White; Fergal O'Conner

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Diane Thirtle said that, as we don't have an elected Chairman, she would be chairing the meeting. She welcomed the attendees and said that in view of the Covid restrictions we were unable to hold an AGM in 2021 but the committee had held an informal meeting in the Store garden. The Treasurer presented the Audited Accounts so we can assure members that everything is in order financially.
The minutes of the last AGM in 2020 have been emailed to all members who had email addresses. The Chair said that unless there were any comments, it was proposed that these minutes be taken as read.

3. Matters Arising

Because of Covid restrictions we were unable to undertake any of the proposed activities in 2020/21.

4. Report from the Chair

Our Chairman and Treasurer resigned at the AGM in 2020 and the Secretary had already resigned. We were very lucky that Bridget Carr volunteered as Treasurer as we wouldn't have been able to continue to operate. She has done a splendid job keeping our finances in order and we would like to thank her.
Paul Humphreys volunteered as Secretary at that meeting. It turned out to be one of his many hats. Our website was poor, and Gerry Wises's package was more suitable for our needs, so Paul has rebuilt and updated it and it has proved a boon. Our thanks go to Paul for all his efforts.

We had to stop all activities during the first lockdown but, as soon as the garden centres were allowed to open our brave volunteers opened the store for business. We have to thank our very able Trading Manager, Jenny Benger, who works hard to keep the store so well stocked. This involves not only ordering goods but taking deliveries, sometimes at inconvenient times, and pricing them. She tried very hard to get compost when it was universally unobtainable. I am sure she would like to thank her staff, Paul, who acted as cashier throughout the difficult time, Malcolm, Olivier, Neha, Marion, Myrddin and Mick and Jenny Wager who set up a safe operating practice during the worst time.

Our wonderful Membership Secretary, Jenny Wager has kept the Membership in touch with our activities. She organised the Virtual Shows with the help of Paul who put them on the website. We thank them and all of those who participated in the Shows. Jenny also organised a very successful plant sale last year.

Those Members who don't have access to a computer have been kept informed via our Newsletter thanks to the Editor, Graham Starkie. I am sure he would like to pass on thanks to Hugh Ranscombe for his reliable and informative contributions. Graham welcomes any input to the Newsletter and would like more contributions from the Membership.

We managed to have an informal show at the Store last autumn and it proved to be a success judging from the comments. All the committee rallied round and, with the help of the Twyford Art Group, turned the store into an Aladdin's cave. Our thanks to Claire Clark who did the entry spreadsheet.

As we have limited facilities at the Store, we had to run teas from the Youth Centre kitchen. We have to thank Carol Rose and her ladies Irene, Marion, Pauline and Brenda for their work on the day

As the Autumn Show was a success, we hope to run slightly more informal shows this year and will have some classes judged by popular vote. We will be monitoring this format and would like your comments. There will be qualified judges for the Flower, Fruit and Vegetables, Floral Art and Domestic Classes. We didn't think it was advisable for the baking to be tasted by the visitors!
The Shows will be held in Loddon Hall as we can't rely on the weather being good.

It has been a difficult two years but I think the volunteers must be congratulated for keeping things going.

5.Treasurer's Report

A copy of Bridget Carr's report is appended to these Minutes and copies of the accounts were handed out on the night.

6. Membership Secretary's Report

A copy of Jenny Wager's report is appended to these Minutes.

Membership Subscriptions for 2022

Jenny Wager proposed that the Memberships subscriptions should be increased by £1.00 across the board making a standard subscription of £8.00, per annum, per household, £7.00 per annum for seniors. Diane Thirtle said this was still very reasonable and it was accepted by the floor.

7. Allotment report

Mick Yeates, who has been monitoring the allotment usage for some years, said that all 167 of the Hurst Road Allotments are let. They are in various states of cultivation, 70 well cultivated, 74 partially cultivated and 23 uncultivated. This compares favourably with past years. During the Covid epidemic there has been an increase in overall usage of the site. The number of uncultivated plots reduced from 31 in 2019 to 17 in 2020 but now stands at 23.
The threat of part of the site being partially taken over for station car parking has abated.
Jenny Wager said all the plots at the London Road site were taken but she hadn't done a personal survey. On the whole the plots are well cultivated.

8. Maintenance on Store

Diane Thirtle said that during the past two years we have been doing some much needed maintenance on the Store and compound. We rent the site from the Parish Council for a peppercorn rent and I had reported that the fence between us and the doctor's car park had been damaged by poor parking. TPC have replaced fence. The posts to our gate in Loddon Hal Road were leaning making them difficult to use so we used the Council's contractor to replace the posts and have applied to the Council for a grant towards the cost. This contractor also erected the posts for a new noticeboard which was bought to replace the old one, which was leaking.
The Store roof is also leaking and we have had some not altogether successful work done to alleviate this. The contactor has been asked to return and also give us a quote for sealing the leaking gutters, which are impossible to replace.
Mike Perry, one of our members, has volunteered to replace the facias on the Store. The materials have been purchased but the weather has precluded outdoor works and there is a problem as the roof is asbestos. Mike has made us a table top, with the help of Malcolm, and Jenny Benger and I have varnished it. We are very grateful to Mike for giving his time and expertise.
Paul has done a lot of work improving the store furniture and he and I had a blitz on the garden at the Store in 2020 as it had become overgrown with invasive perennials. Paul kept things in trim during the last year.
I asked Winson Woodcraft for a quotation for removing all the self-set trees which were affecting the compost store. They did the work without charge for which we are very grateful.

9. Election of Auditor

The auditor, who was also a member of the Association and was elected at the meetings, resigned in 2020.

Bridget Carr employed a qualified accountant, who has been known to Bridget for some years and that she can vouch for, to audit the accounts.

10. Election of Chair, Officers and Committee

i) **Chair**

Diane Thirtle has been chairing the meetings during lockdown as she was the only one on the committee without portfolio and the knowledge of the workings of the Association. She has no desire to be elected to the post and there were no volunteers from the membership. Diane said that it would be difficult to chair a committee one wasn't already part of but, hopefully, we will get more volunteers for the committee soon otherwise the Association will not be able to continue.

ii) **Officers and Committee**

The following members were proposed and elected en bloc:

Treasurer: Bridget Carr agreed to remain as Treasurer.
Secretary: Paul Humphreys agreed to be Secretary but is hoping to live abroad for, at least, part of the year. We need a volunteer to shadow him and take on some of the work to ensure continuity.
Website Manager: Paul can operate the website remotely and will continue to be responsible for this part of our activities. Myrddin Jones is helping him and has taken over the Twitter account.
Membership Secretary; Jenny Wager will continue as Membership Secretary.
Store Manager: Jenny Benger agreed to continue to manage the Store.
Newsletter Editor; Graham Starkie will continue as Newsletter Editor and Show Schedule/ Handbook publisher.
Show Secretary:Claire Clark has said she will organise the administration for the shows this year but the post of Show Secretary is unfilled.
Social Secretaries: Post(s) vacant
Publicity Officer: Post vacant
Newsletter Distributers: Sarah and Colin Lawley
Other members of the committee: Diane Thirtle; Carol Rose; Richard Trorey.

11. **Election of President and Vice Presidents**

i) **President**

Jean Moody wanted to attend the meeting in person, to thank everybody for their hard work in difficult times, but accepted that it would not be sensible. She wanted to continue as President if elected.
Jean Moody was proposed by Diane Thirtle and seconded by Jenny Benger.

ii) **Vice Presidents**

The current Vice Presidents are:
Mr R Trayling; Mrs S Trayling; Mr J Sumner: Mrs C L Potterton; Rev Pugh; Mr W Barnes; Mrs J Buchanan; Mr Broughton; A & C Beck; Mr N Patchin; Mrs J Jones; Mr I Simpson; Mrs G Roberts; Mr W Crane; Mr H Ranscombe; Mrs D Beddingfield; Mr R Spivey; Mrs S Spivey; Mr G Shillabeer; Mr J Evason; Mr J McMahon; Mrs J Puzey; Mr B Maule

There were no changes to the list.

12. Constitution

It was accepted by the floor that we have not been able to comply with the Constitution for the last two years but there are no proposals to amend it.

13. Any Other Business

Bridget Carr thanked Diane Thirtle for stepping into the role as Chairman but appreciated that she didn't want it to be a permanent role.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

Signed _____ Date_____