Twyford and Ruscombe Horticultural Association – Treasurer's Report 2016

First I would like to record my thanks to John Humphreys for his services over many years as the Association's Treasurer. John has been immensely helpful to me during my first year as Treasurer. It took us many months to sort out the signatories for the bank accounts which meant John had to carry on signing cheques for quite some time! I am pleased to say that everything is now sorted and John can enjoy a quieter retirement.

The accounts have been presented in a slightly different format to previous years. Hopefully everyone is able to follow the new format.

On the face of it, the Association had a difficult year making a loss on £659. However, included in this figure is

- £2,133 for maintenance at the Trading Store (new lighting and repairs to the guttering)
- £280 for a new laptop for the Shows

The committee agreed not to capitalise any of these costs.

Adjusting for these one off costs, the Association would have made a surplus of £1,753.

Membership income was down in 2016 by 23%. We had 476 members: 282 senior members, 125 family members and 69 exempt members (Newsletter Reps and Honorary Vice Presidents). The committee members and other volunteers do not receive subsidised membership fees. We receive an average of £4.59 per membership (senior, family and exempt). The decline in membership income has been offset by significantly lower costs for newsletter production in 2016. We are continuing to increase the number of members who receive the newsletter by email and this is starting to have a positive impact on the costs of producing the newsletter.

In 2016 we spent £329 keeping in touch with our members via the newsletter, email and the website. We spent £526 running the Association (cost of the AGM, hall hire for committee meetings and subsidising a dinner for committee members and Trading Store volunteers). Keeping in touch and running the Association costs £1.80 for each membership. The remainder of our membership income goes to subsidising our outreach to the community via our Shows and Garden Club talks.

Income from the **Trading Store** was down 14%. The Trading Store made a gross profit of £1,322 and a net profit of 10% or £773. The profit on the takings were affected by the need to write off a quantity of old bulk fertilisers. It must be remembered that the Trading Store is so much more than just a money making enterprise. The Trading Store is a community hub for our members. It is a place where members come to socialise, to buy and sell produce and get advice on

gardening. It is also a haven for wildlife thanks to the efforts of our volunteers to create and maintain the small garden area adjacent to the road.

The **Excursions** organised by Doreen Scott made a surplus of £560. This was down considerably from 2015. However, the feedback from those attending the excursions has been very positive.

Our three **Shows** lost money again this year. The losses of £849 include the £280 for the new laptop, but even removing the cost of the laptop they were still loss making. The Association has known for many years that the Shows do not make money. However, they are a vital link to the wider community and attract a loyal following. In 2016 we introduced some categories to attract more participation from the local schools. This is an initiative which we will be building on in 2017. The Shows lose money because the cost of judges, trophies and prize money greatly exceeds the income we get from the exhibitors. However, without the judges, trophies and prize money we would not attract the high level of exhibits and therefore over time we would not attract visitors to the Shows. There are no easy solutions to the fact that the Shows lose money, but this is an issue which the committee is well aware of.

The **Garden Club** talks also lost money this year. This in no way reflects on the quality of the speakers from the tireless efforts which Bobbie Crickmore makes in organising each event! The cost of speakers has been steadily increasing at the same time as the number of people attending each talk has been declining. The committee has agreed to reduce the number of talks for 2017.

The Association ended the year with just over £17,000 in the bank. In 2017 we will be obtaining quotes to quantify our liability if the Association were ever to have to fold. Our lease for the land which the Trading Store occupies requires us to return the land without a building (or hard standing) to the council if the Association were to be wound up. Although your committee does not see this happening, we do need to ensure we build up sufficient reserves to cover this situation.