

Surrey Chrysanthemum & Dahlia Society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held at Cobham Village Hall on 4th December 2023

The President welcomed the members and asked the Secretary to read the notice convening the meeting.

Apologies for absence:- Mr and Mrs Roy Lomax, Mr and Mrs Alan Bridger, Mrs Brenda Taitt.

Chairman's Address:- Owing to the Halls reconfiguration, we now only have access to a small kitchenette and therefore we would be offering tea/coffee and cakes after the meeting as opposed to the usual buffet.

Our Treasurer for over 30 years Tony Field, President Emeritus Tim Pierce and founding member John Coombes have all passed away within the past 3 months, respects have been paid.

During the year we were very pleased to welcome Lorraine Morgan as a new committee member.

Secretary's Report:- We held a meeting in March at the Arbor, Pyrford where we once again covered the first six months of the dahlia grower's year including propagation. These morning talks are popular and are well attended. This year's demonstration was followed by a tuber sale which helped raise much needed Society funds.

Fred Austin and I were invited by Lightwater Gardening Club to give our talk "An introduction to dahlias". We were able to raise more funds by selling pot tubers and perlite. We will not be doing these talks in future, so this stream of income has ended.

A plant sale was held once again at West Byfleet in May, this is our biggest fund raising event during the year. Thank you to all those that came and purchased plants, also those that grew and donated plants, but a special thank you to Anne and Jim Adams for their help on the day. Being such a small committee it does put a huge onus on us to come up with a large number of plants for sale every year, in addition to those that are required for our own needs. It would be very helpful if a few more people could grow a few extra for the Society's stand. In addition to dahlias and chrysanthemums we also sell annual bedding, herbaceous and vegetable plants.

Five shows were held during the year, but I will leave the details of these events to Kevin our Show Secretary to cover in his report.

Whilst sadly we have lost a few longstanding members I am pleased to say that 10 new members have joined this year and our current membership stands at around the 70 mark. The new members have all joined by contacting us via our website.

I would like to thank Jean Clark who has up until very recently run the Ton-up Club.

I also wish to mention that we are extremely fortunate to have storage facilities at Abinger Hammer at no cost to the Society, this facility is solely down to Alan Bridger, so a special thank you Alan.

The committee have been working on our show and events programme for 2024 which will be our Diamond Jubilee year. Not wanting to give too much away at present, what I will say is that we will once again be holding a meeting at the Arbor, Pyrford during the morning of Saturday 23rd March which will include a tuber sale. We will also be hoping to have a limited supply of some useful accessories, e.g. seed trays, tray inserts, flower pots, labels, perlite etc. All are new and will be priced extremely competitively. Details will be in the Newsletter nearer the time.

Show Secretary's Report:- This year my report will not include any facts or figures about the shows. I can report that all of our shows are continuing to remain steady in both exhibits and exhibitors. The one exception was the dahlia section at the September Members Show with low entries and exhibitors. This was mainly due to an early season for dahlias and many exhibitors had finished. The Committee are always reviewing the shows and due to next year being the Society's Diamond Anniversary we will again be holding the same number of shows. We did hold an extra show this year. A single bloom show was requested by exhibitors who were new to showing and the Committee decided to trial a show. This show proved very successful, with 50 entries, and it has been agreed to hold this again. One thing the Committee has decided is that the Premier League has run its course and will not be held in 2024.

There are a few thank you's I would like to make. Firstly I would like to thank the exhibitors who travel many miles to support our shows with ever increasing costs. Thank you to the judges who again have travelled many miles to carry out the judging. I would like to thank the Committee and many others who have helped set up and break down the shows. I am not going to name them as I am bound to miss out someone but I would like to thank Alan Bridger who helps with all the shows at Abinger Hammer and looks after the Society's equipment at our store. A large amount of time and effort goes into providing lunch at our Main Show and I would like to thank Clare Cooper and her girls for doing this. I would also like to thank Sarah Cooper who logged all the results on a computer which provided the amount of prize money for each exhibitor, much easier. Thanks to the Cooper girls who sell the flowers at the end of the Main Show and make a large amount for Society funds. Thanks to Lynn Everest for being on the show desk writing prize cards etc. at all the shows. Also thanks to Brenda Taitt who did the morning refreshments at the shows and Karyl Weighill who provided lunch for our judges and others at both members shows and the Late Show.

To celebrate the Diamond Anniversary the Main Show will have 2 extra classes for dahlias and an extra class for chrysanthus. At the Late show an extra class will be added.

The show dates for 2024 are as follows :-

Single Bloom Show 3rd August at the Arbor Centre, Pyrford.

August Members Show 18th August at Abinger Hammer Village Hall.

Main Show 8th September at the Arbor Centre, Pyrford.

September Members Show 22nd September at Abinger Hammer Village Hall.

Late Show 3rd November at Abinger Hammer Village Hall .

Treasurer's Report:- Following the death of Tony Field, our Chairman Mr Fred Austin, volunteered to take on the role of Treasurer as at the time we only had a Committee of three. It has taken quite a while and a lot of work to get on top of matters. For some considerable time we had been trying to add Kevin Taitt and Howard Cooper as signatories onto the Barclays Bank account, as two signatories were required for any payment and we were extremely concerned that if one of the two existing signatories should become incapacitated, we as a Society could not operate financially. As an insurance against us being in this position, a savings account with Skipton Building Society was opened with all four (at the time of opening) signatories being able to access the account.

To make life easier and to be able to make electronic payments, it was decided to close our account with Barclays and transfer it to Lloyds Bank, which would also allow us to make electronic payments. Balances were given for the Lloyds account, Skipton B.S. and cash at hand. We were extremely grateful to receive a donation of £1,000 from NCS Southern Branch during the year. No Society accounts are available due to my having just taken on the role of Treasurer and the complex matters that were inherited and have had to be clarified.

In the theme of trying to make life easy for the Committee and myself as Treasurer, it has been agreed that the financial year will run 12 months @ 1st January for all activities, commencing 1st January 2024. Previously the financial year ran from 1st October, Membership from 1st January and Ton-up 1st March!

The cost of the Annual Show this year was £1055, however after the monies taken for raffle and bloom sales were taken into account, it brought the net cost down to £554. We are not immune to rising costs and we would continue to have a firm grip on finances.

The Treasurer asked if there were any questions, there were none.

Election of President:- Bryan Everest was asked if he would continue as President, and was unanimously re-elected.

Election of Vice Presidents:- Both Mo Dixon and Kevin Taitt were re-elected.

Election of Officers, Committee & Auditors:- The Officers and Committee had agreed to stand and were re-elected. However Mr Ron Hedge has recently resigned as Auditor.

Determine the subscription rate for 2024:- It was unanimously agreed that the subs should remain at £5 per annum, but should be reviewed next year.

Presentation of John Woolman Medal to the Society's Person of the Year:-. Not awarded in 2023.

Presentation of John Court Trophy to the member gaining the most points in the Members classes for Chrysanthemums and/or Dahlias at the 2023 shows:-

1st Bryan Everest 2nd Darren Everest 3rd Fred Austin

Presentation of the Award for cumulative points in the 2023 Premier League classes over all 2023 shows:- Winner Bryan Everest.

Any Other Business:- The Chairman raised the subject that the Society's Constitution needs amending to reflect the current activities and changes within the Society. Copies of the existing Constitution were circulated to all those present.

Item 2-2nd line amend Chrysanthemums, Dahlias and Daffodils to Chrysanthemums and Dahlias.

Item 7 to be amended to read " All Monies received by the Officers or Treasurer shall be paid into financial institutions currently used to the credit of the Society. The Treasurer shall keep an account of all monies received and expended on account of the Society and shall place each account in the hands of the Committee at each of the Society meetings. All cheques shall bear one signature being that of the Treasurer or nominated Officer approved by the financial institution concerned. The accounts of the Society shall be closed the last day of December each year.

Item 10 – line 3 to be amended to read, "the balance shall be divided between various Charitable Organisations"

The changes were passed unanimously.

From January 2024 there will be changes to some to the Ton-up prize money awarded. The yearly total prize pot will remain the same. The regular monthly draw (10 times a year) will no longer have a third prize, but the prizes for 1st and 2nd will remain unaltered at £10 and £5 respectively. However the two superdraws which have a first prize of £100 will see the prizes for second, third and fourth increase to £25, £15 and £10 respectively. The superdraws will now be drawn in June and December. The Treasurer will be writing to each Ton-up member to explain the changes. Six Ton-up numbers have become available, anyone wanting to enter the Ton-up or increase their holding are asked to contact the Treasurer as soon as possible but by the end of January at the latest. The spare numbers will be allocated on a first come basis.

It has been decided to no longer issue Membership cards as they serve no purpose these days and will save a considerable amount of money on printing and postage.

It was reported that two late Chrysanthemum growers who were going to give up have decided to continue for next year as it is our Jubilee Year.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.59 p.m.