

Committee Meeting - Charlbury Garden Society

Rose and Crown - Thursday 23rd March 2023 - 7:30PM

Committee Members Present:	Hugh Belshaw, Zoe Burton, Alison Derham, Susan Dunstall, Di Gold, Catherine Goyder, Geoff Holmberg, Geneviève Hug, John Moore, Catrin Weston
Committee Members Apologies:	Mathew Franklin Maiden, Stephen Nelson
Chair:	Geoff Holmberg
Host:	Geoff Holmberg
Minutes:	Zoe Burton

1. Agree minutes from last meeting on 4th October 2022

Agreed by the committee members present on 23rd March 2023

Action: Gen to post minutes on website

1.1. Matters arising

1.1.1. Annual Show

Geoff would like to step back from the role of Show Secretary in 2024 and, as a result, would like to assign a Deputy Show Secretary in 2023 to facilitate that handover. Geoff has written up extensive notes covering the details of the role for the Spring Show.

Action: Geoff to contact Mathew to gauge interest in the role.

1.1.2. Annual Show

Decision to be deferred to 2024

1.1.3. AGM and Harvest Supper

See AOB for details on the new format.

1.1.4. Xmas Tree festival

Thanks to all who helped.

1.2. Matters still outstanding from AGM on 20 October 2022

1.2.1 Budget forecast for 2023

Currently underway.

Action: Catrin to send details over to Geoff

Action: Catrin to print spreadsheet and drop at Hugh's

Action: Hugh to complete audit of spreadsheet and files

2. Reports

2.1 Treasury (Catrin)

2.1.1 Hall Bookings

Geoff has sent several emails to resolve issues around rule enforcement for booking and paying for rooms. Rules are due to be rewritten in due course and payment date for invoices revised. This will hopefully address issues in the future.

Today's committee meeting was originally scheduled for the Corner House but again found the room to be too cold to be usable. This is not the first time the room has been paid for for this purpose but could not be used. Noted that the Green Room is reportedly warmer and could be preferable for future bookings, even if more expensive.

Alison has made a Memorial Hall booking for a personal event on 8th May using the Garden Society account and will reimburse the society.

2.1.2 Tree for Stationmaster

Catrin has contacted GWR for possible funding for a tree for John, the stationmaster, but has received no reply. Committee is still keen to drive this forwards and therefore will continue to chase, or, use more of the Garden Society's reserves. Committee debated planting a rosebush instead of a tree for easier placement on the far side of the station but concerns it may not be visible from where the majority of commuters wait. Tree creates challenges due to the shadow cast on plants underneath.

Action: Susan to review plans for tree placement.

Action: Catrin to contact manager at GWR about funds again and to notify of agreed plans.

2.2 Membership (Gen)

From Gen: We have 211 members joined/renewed so far for 2023, giving a total amount of £1212 for subs. This includes 22 new members, and 115 joint members.

At the end of last year, we had 257 members, so the total so far is less, but I can see that quite a few people who will most likely renew haven't done it yet. They probably will when the gardening season really kicks in!

2.3 Projects (Susan)

Plans for the far side of the station paused until April due to weather.

2.4 Junior gardening and growing (Alison)

Pre-School approached Society about help. Alison suggested a couple of people and have now got their parents involved. Would like to continue giving them money. They were very grateful for support.

3. Events

3.1 Spring Show - 1st April

Hall booked. Committee reviewed the rota and assigned roles to each job.

Action: Geoff to circulate rota in the week leading up to the show.

The Arts Society is having a Private View on 31st March from 6.00 to 8.00, to which they are inviting all 200+ Garden Society members! This was included in our most recent two mini newsletters.

Children's prizes are usually chocolate easter eggs. These will be purchased on the day from the Co-op depending on the number of entrants. Although cheaper to buy from elsewhere in advance, unable to predict the number of entries, the Society has good reserves at the moment.

Discussed homemade cakes but agreed that Co-op cakes were easier and generally well received. These will be purchased on the day. Homemade cakes to be made for the Open Gardens event.

Alison will provide a basket (to be returned) for a hamper, for which Patrick and Stephen will sell raffle tickets for cash. Last year's homemade and local produce was very popular. This year will combine homemade produce with an Easter theme (hot cross buns and eggs).

It was noted that last year there weren't as many entries as expected and Committee members rushed to collate displays themselves. In the unfortunate event that this happens again this year, Committee members should consider in advance anything they could exhibit in order to fill the room and make an appealing display. This year, the timing of the show is likely to be too early for tulips and that climate change makes the timing of the show challenging with winter temperatures so variable.

Action: Geoff to purchase cakes from Co-Op for refreshments.

Action: Alison to bring laminated signs for prices of teas and coffees.

Action: Alison to provide rhubarb for the hamper

Action: Catrin to buy hot cross buns and Easter themed treats for the hamper.

Action: All Committee members to source items for the Raffle (chutneys, jams, produce etc)

Action: All to take photos on the day to include in mini-newsletter

3.2 Plant Swap – 20th May

Hall booked. Committee agrees to organise over email rather than having an additional meeting as the event is simpler to run than the sale.

Committee discussed a children's activity to bring a wider audience to the Plant Swap. The Pre-School have been keen to support the society and, if they could devise a small potting activity, the Committee would provide compost, seeds and pots. It was agreed that we would not proceed with the activity if the pre-school did not want to support it.

Action: Alison to email pre-school to see if they would support us in this activity.

Last year's plant swap had some very high quality, expensive plants donated by Cornbury Park. Committee discussed "recommended donations" and pricing of the highest quality plants but, it was generally agreed that, donations were usually generous and the feeling of goodwill fostered from the free swap outweighed the financial gain from charging, especially given funds are high at the moment.

Publicity would be circulated, as normal, in the form of posters and a mini-newsletter a couple of weeks in advance of the event. Without the Plant Sale, the Committee discussed purchasing a few trays of annual plants to provide at the Swap. To create a clear distinction between the Swap and the Sale, the Committee decided instead to circulate a mini-newsletter, immediately after the Spring Show, to encourage members to grow annuals from seed now to swap at the event.

Action: Zoe to create mini-newsletter after Spring Show encouraging members to grow plants to swap.

Action: Zoe to create mini-newsletter and poster at start of May for Plant Swap

3.3 Open Gardens

6 gardens confirmed and the route coming together nicely. Catherine to contact Lisa from the Town Council to propose inclusion of the allotments (pending agreement from allotment holders). Subcommittee of Catherine, Alison, Gen and Zoe will meet before June to prepare. No immediate actions.

3.4 Self-Drives

Sue Cox has suggested South Newington Gardens. Hugh Goyder volunteers at Chastleton House and could arrange a private (paid for) tour with the current Head Gardener as they are currently reviving the old rose garden. The National Collection of Walnut Trees at Upton Hall has also been suggested by Tony Lloyd.

3.5 Talks for 2024

Hall booked for Bob Brown talk on 16th November.

Requests from a couple of members about practical talk – containers, borders, winter colour, easy veg growing, cut flowers etc. Both Daylesford Florist and Soho Farmhouse kitchen gardener could be potential options along with Edward Aitken (head gardener at Cornbury).

Continuing Zoom talks gives a broad range of potential speakers for a low cost. Monthly Zoom membership is ~£15 (and can be cancelled after a month). Also likely to be popular in January when the weather is bad and people can join in from home.

Gardeners' Question Time was quite poorly attended, primarily due to Half Term and, with future bookings, including the Harvest Supper and AGM, the Committee needs to be mindful of local school holidays.

Also noted that the number of talks during the Winter Season has increased from 3 to 4 putting extra pressure to find speakers. Reducing the number of talks back to 3 gives easier scheduling with half term.

With a packed calendar, it can also be difficult to find enough Committee members to support all our events. Sometimes there is a risk that there are not enough volunteers to staff the events causing pressure on the existing committee. Proposed that we develop a network of volunteers that help with events but are not on the Committee - see AOB for proposed solution with The Big Help Out.

3.6 Coach Trips

Maggie Tran's talk on Bramdean House was very popular and she previously invited the Garden Society Members to visit. Likely to be popular as a follow on from a previous talk and, at 1.5 hours away in Hampshire, is not too far to get to. Attendees would be invited to bring a packed lunch to make a full day out. Previously coach trips have been felt to be risky financially, with people paying on the day. Going forwards, asking for a small deposit upfront would help mitigate the risk.

Action: Alison to email Maggie Tran (previous speaker) regarding potential visit.

Action: Catrin to price up coaches

4. AOB

4.1 The Big Help Out

Alison has booked the Hall using the Garden Society account on 8th May for The Big Help Out. Will reimburse.

This event promotes volunteering in the local community. If the Garden Society had a small stall with leaflets and a children's game, it could be a way of recruiting a team of helpers to help the main committee at events (without need to attend meetings and participate in the ongoing running of the society).

Action: Alison to email Committee for potential volunteers

4.2 Modernising You Garden Society

Tender Shoots are offering a series of talks on Modernising Your Garden Society. The first talk was so well attended that there was insufficient capacity and will be re-run.

Action: Alison to forward Tender Shoots email to Zoe

Action: Zoe to attend talk and take notes to circulate to the Committee

4.3 Quarterly Newsletter

Due to the enormous amount of work in creating the newsletter (on top of ongoing publicity and the Chronicle articles), these will be discontinued for the time being.

4.4 Harvest Supper and AGM

Proposing to restart the traditional Harvest Supper prior to the AGM; long tables, array of local produce and 2 course meal with entertainment. Catherine is prepared to take the lead in organising this with the support of a subcommittee of Catrin, Susan and Di. Proposed date 12th October (to avoid half term).

Action: Catrin to research alcohol licensing at the Memorial Hall.

4.5 Bee Friendly Bowls Club

Society by Katherine Holmes who is working with Wild Oxfordshire and Charlbury Town Council to develop a bee-friendly planting project near the Bowls Club Car Park. Committee agrees to provide some funding as a part of local greening initiatives and in the initial planting but will not support ongoing maintenance or ownership of the design/plan.

5. Other matters

5.1 Date of next meeting

Next meeting **Thursday 24th August**

5.1 Items for discussion at the next meeting

- Summer Show
 - 1st September - Hall Booked
- Deputy Show Secretary
- Donations
- Harvest Supper and AGM