

### 3.1 MINUTES OF THE 2023 AGM – SUMMARY.

Minutes have been agreed as a true record by members of the Committee on April 12<sup>th</sup> 2023

#### Present

Committee plus 34 members total 42.

#### Election of officers

The meeting unanimously approved the extension of The President's tenure.

The following were elected to act as officers:

**Chair** – Tim Gale; **Hon. Secretaries:** Tim & Sibyl Gale; **Hon. Treasurer:** Susan Solomon;

**Membership Secretary:** Maggie Postle. Elected on to the committee were: **Shows co-ordinator:** Anne Bark and **Monthly meetings co-ordinator:** Vikki Jeffrey.

#### President

Monique thanked retiring Chair Margaret Genender for 5 years in the role. She welcomed 2 new members, Anne Bark (Shows) and Vikki Jeffrey (Monthly speakers) and asked for more volunteers for other roles including Membership Secretary and Outings Co-ordinator.

#### Chair

Retiring Chair, Margaret Genender gave an overview of the previous 12 months highlighting how the Club had come back from the Covid lockdown with our usual calendar of events but including the Bridport Charter Fair. The Club had donated nearly £400 to the Beacon Church Soup Kitchen from Plants sales.

#### Treasurer

The Treasurer reported an increase in cash at the bank by £1,240 and an excess of receipts over payments by £113.

#### Membership

There were 333 households in March 2023.

#### Shows

Anne reported that both Spring and Harvest Shows took place successfully after a pause caused by Covid. Anne thanked core team of Monique, Gill StJohn and Sue Baker, and Celia Evans for Plant Stalls.

#### Outings

Sibyl reported a full programme of Outings had been held with capacity numbers to most. She reported that Swards our long term coach providers were giving up and were to be replaced by two companies. Sibyl announced that she was retiring from this role during this year.

#### Monthly meetings

Vikki reported that a full programme of meetings with a variety of topics had been held.

#### Publicity

Lyn reported how publicity about our calendar of events is sent to five local publications

#### Secretary

Tim Gale summarised the aims of the Club and listed our achievements including bulb planting for the Community but also highlighted those tasks needed to be done particularly the Town Planters. He thanked the outgoing Chair Margaret Genender for her long service to the Club.

## **REPORTS**

### **5. Chairman - Tim Gale**

It's been a busy year for the Club.

After the official business we will be showing a slide show of various activities and events.

We have made contributions to our town, with support from Groves and BTC, by **planting daffodils** in Riverside Gardens and donating bulbs for local groups to plant elsewhere. This year we planted "Early Sensation" which lived up to their name, appearing in January when we most need a boost during the long winter days.

Several of us, led by Monique have been working with Bridport Town Council to improve the **Town Planters** with the intention of achieving year-round interest with pollinator friendly perennials. After our initial work in April with help on plant selection from Becky Groves and assistance on planting day from the "outdoor team" at BTC, we have added bulbs which are now in flower. Following our work in April which included the planters in Bucky Doo Square, East, West and some in South Street the remaining 'sponsors' have asked us to include theirs. We will also be working with 'Bridport Food Matters' to improve the planter outside Natural Life. It's still a work-in-progress but attracts positive comments from passers by and the bees like it.

In May, we joined other societies in support of this wonderful town for the **Bridport Charter Fair** where the Club's tombola drew in the crowds. Thank you to Margaret Genender for organising our stand.

The Club also contributed to the **annual Christmas Tree festival** and contributed £50 to Perennial but with Pam Cant's retirement we need a new organiser.

#### **Shows, Meetings Outings and our own Christmas lunch.**

Others on the Committee will report on the main programme of events which we organise each year for members interest and enjoyment. Gordon Smith will be talking about our very successful recruitment day last Saturday when we recruited 23 new members. The Christmas lunch this year held for the first time at the Ivy House was an enjoyable event where we had the opportunity to thank the Genenders, Margaret and Alan for their long service and Sue Langdon for her organisation of the raffles – a significant contribution to the Club's coffers. Our patrons Di and Clive Groves joined us once again; we are fortunate to have the strong and continuing support of our local family-run nursery and garden centre.

#### **Contributors, volunteers and helpers.**

On behalf of the Club I would like to thank both Maggie Postle and Lyn Streeter for their long service on the Committee, Monique will be making a presentation at the end of the meeting. Many thanks are also due to Susan Solomon who has decided to stand down after 5 years as Treasurer; Susan will work with the new Treasurer, Ian Bark to ensure a smooth transition.

The fact you are here tonight demonstrates your support for the Club - Thank you. I know that many of you already are actively involved with the Club or have been over the years.

But we need more help if we are to continue our activities and contributions to our local community. As I wrote in my recent Chairman's letter, there only 6 of us on the Committee compared with 15 ten years ago. You don't have to serve for 38 years like Jessie Barrett or even the collective decades contributed by Maggie and Lyn but please think about how you can support and contribute – its good for the wider community and it's fun to be part of a friendly group of people who share their love of gardens and gardening and the good it can bring.

## 6. Treasurer - Susan Solomon

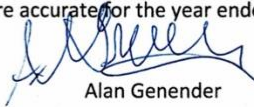
### BRIDPORT DISTRICT GARDENING CLUB

#### Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

##### Receipts and Payments Account

|                                  | Total 2023          | Total 2022          |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|                                  | £                   | £                   |
| <b>Receipts</b>                  |                     |                     |
| Subscriptions                    | 3200                | 3250                |
| Raffles                          | 339                 | 243                 |
| Christmas Tree Donations         | 0                   | 85                  |
| Outings                          | 7037                | 4685                |
| Christmas Lunch                  | 1000                | 1167                |
| Garage Rent                      | 388                 | 386                 |
| Shows                            | 931                 | 1207                |
| Donations                        | 255                 | 10                  |
| Plant Sales                      | 0                   | 623                 |
| Miscellaneous                    | 58                  | 0                   |
| <b>Total Receipts</b>            | <b><u>13208</u></b> | <b><u>11656</u></b> |
| <b>Payments</b>                  |                     |                     |
| Subscription refunds             | 110                 | 10                  |
| Meetings                         | 1037                | 1043                |
| Shows                            | 835                 | 1188                |
| Donations                        | 385                 | 1395                |
| Fees                             | 135                 | 172                 |
| Outings                          | 6232                | 3164                |
| Christmas Lunch                  | 1205                | 1148                |
| Garage Rent                      | 806                 | 771                 |
| Miscellaneous                    | 0                   | 20                  |
| AGM                              | 150                 | 0                   |
| Postage & Stationery             | 1811                | 1007                |
| Bank charges                     | 161                 | 169                 |
| Raffle                           | 0                   | 17                  |
| Insurance                        | 160                 | 160                 |
| Christmas tree festival          | 0                   | 28                  |
| <b>Total Payments</b>            | <b><u>13027</u></b> | <b><u>10292</u></b> |
| Excess of receipts over payments | 181                 | 1364                |
| Cash at bank 01/01/2022          | 5418                | 4206                |
| Adjustment for uncleared cheque  | -27                 | -108                |
| Cash at bank 31/12/2022          | <b><u>5562</u></b>  | <b><u>5462</u></b>  |
| <b>Statement of Assets</b>       |                     |                     |
| Bank current account             | 5562                | 5418                |
| Cash                             | 0                   | 44                  |
| Bank savings account             | 2187                | 2170                |
|                                  | <b><u>7749</u></b>  | <b><u>7632</u></b>  |
| Cups and trophies held by club   | 2500                | 2500                |

I confirm that accounts and records are accurate for the year ended 31 December 2022

  
Alan Genender  
Hon. Auditor

8th Feb '24

## 7.1 Membership Secretary – Gordon Smith

When we moved to Dorset in July 2022, from Hertfordshire we decided that we needed to integrate and make friends. Therefore, we joined B&DGC and as Maggie Postle was retiring from the role of Membership Secretary, I offered to take on the role. For the first 6 months Maggie assisted whilst I shadowed the role. Since last Summer I am Membership Secretary Designate.

Considering the financial climate, membership figures have stood up well, but there had, unfortunately, been a slow decrease in membership. At last year's AGM it was reported that there were 333 members. However, on March 16th 2024, BDGC were given permission to have a stand at Groves Garden Centre in Bridport to promote the club. Considering the weather was damp and cold, this was a big success, with 23 new members joining. There are 351 current members of the club.

The annual subscription falls due for everyone on April 1st. For those paying via Standing Order, there is nothing further to do. If you paid last year via BACS, then please check your arrangement with your bank as this method isn't recurring. Those paying by cheque or cash, please arrange to pay by April 1st.

Membership Cards will be sent out either by hand delivery by your Distributor or sent in the post.

Lastly I would like to say thank you not only to Maggie, who has helped me settle down into the role, but also to all the club members I have met since we arrived here in Bridport.

## 7.2 Shows co-ordinator – Anne Bark

The Club organised two successful Shows in 2023. Two changes were made to the previous arrangements. The Schedules have been formatted as A5 size booklets which include advertisements by sponsors and supporters; secondly prize money has been withdrawn in line with most other Clubs in the region. Both these measures have helped with our finances.

The Spring Show attracted over 175 entries for the 55 classes with some magnificent daffodils and other spring flowers from Mimosa to primroses. Perhaps the most eye-catching flowers were the unusual lime green Hellebores exhibited by Kiera Roth. Other entries ranged from intricate sugar-craft figures, photographs, homecraft, vegetables and the decorated Easter eggs.

Outside on East Street, Margaret Genender and helpers' plant stall raised nearly £220 from sale of plants donated by members which this year went to the Beacon Church Kitchen.

Back in the Hall, Alan Finch, mainstay of the baking and preserves section was just pipped to the winning post by Sibyl Gale whose range of daffodils and photographs collected the highest aggregate mark.

Our Harvest Show held in the heatwave, drew record entries and several new stars. Sales from the plant stall organised by Celia Evans raised another £175 for the Beacon Church Kitchen. Inside the hall, there was a buzz among the entrants bringing their produce and products, ornamental and edible. Overall show winners were Mark Read, new to our show, for his wonderful roses and vegetables with runner up Dee Trott whose pot plants and vegetables excelled. Mayor Dave Bolwell presented the silverware; he kindly promoted the Club in his blog and joined himself. Special thanks go to the judges, particularly Cyril Whitlock who had three of the largest categories to scrutinise. Thanks to all those who helped on the day with stewarding, tallying, catering led by Pat Cornick, carrying and tidying but in particular to the organising team - *Sue Baker, Gill Fitzjohn now joined by Anne West* led by *Anne Bark* with support from *Monique Pasche*.

Looking ahead, preparations are complete for the Spring Show this Saturday and the Harvest Show on September 7<sup>th</sup>.

As Monique has already announced, the prizes at the Spring Show will be presented by the celebrity gardener **Joe Swift** who has recently been converted to the delights of living in this beautiful corner of Dorset. Phil Frampton has contributed generously to the costs of printing the schedules and kindly agreed to present the prizes for the Harvest Show.

### **7.3 Outings co-ordinator - Sibyl Gale**

The 2023 programme of visits began in March –a challenging month for all gardens. However, we were able to combine a return visit to the popular Yeo Valley Gardens with a Plant Fair run by the Hardy Plant Society. It was pleasing to see plants and seeds being ferried back on to the coach ready for planting out to be enjoyed later in the year.

By coincidence April offered another chance to shop for plants and garden related items at *Toby's Garden Festival* held at Powderham Castle. It was disappointing that the whole of the property was not open on the day. Hopefully the interesting talks and displays made up for this in some part. Toby Buckland and Joe Swift gave a very entertaining talk together.

Coaches were full and we had to ask for larger coaches for all visits except the first one.

| <b>DESTINATIONS 2023</b>                | <b>NUMBER ON VISIT</b> |
|---|------------------------|
| Yeo Valley/Hardy Society Plant Fair     | 32                     |
| Powderham Castle/Toby's Garden Festival | 40                     |
| Bicton Botanical Garden                 | 45                     |
| RHS Wisley                              | 43                     |
| Tyntesfield                             | 38                     |
| Antony Tor                              | 40                     |
| Hillier Gardens                         | 40                     |

Once again, we were fortunate that Sarah Herring was able to attend most outings and recorded those magical moments in her descriptive prose and selection of photographs.

The happy memories our visits can be found on our website [bridportgardeningclub.co.uk](http://bridportgardeningclub.co.uk). thanks to Sarah for her travelogues and Chris Senior for getting everything on to the website for everyone to enjoy.

As shown on the annual audit we made a profit in 2023. This was due to the increase of people attending the visits. Average prices have been based on fewer people attending in the past. This year, 2024, we have changed the price formula so that we can pass on the benefit of increased numbers to help in keeping prices down. Costs of coaches and entrance fees have increased over the years and we are doing our best to keep costs down where we can.

I ended my report last year with a plea for someone to replace myself and Tim as Outing Coordinators. As you can see I am still here hanging on by fingernails...this is only because our new Membership Secretary, Gordon Smith and his wife Vivienne gave their support for 2024 to help keep the outings going. "Thank You" to them both for bringing their support and enthusiasm to the Club, it is very much appreciated. I am still hoping that there are people out there who will at least consider speaking with me to find out more about organising the outings , going forward, before the Club really does have to end them. It would be a huge shame considering the popularity of them and the pleasure they bring. If you can't do it perhaps you have friends or neighbours who might be interested. Organisers tend to get in free to most properties if that helps to incentivise anyone. The 2024 Outings list was distributed, in January, by our valiant team of distributors, Gordon Smith, Membership Secretary and Committee members. The programme is also on the Club website. A very big thank you to everyone involved. Hopefully everyone has now received the Outings list. If anyone hasn't we have a few copies here tonight.

The 2 new coach companies Stamps of Honiton and Bluebird of Weymouth both provided a good and reliable service in 2023. We are continuing to use both services for 2024.

Currently many of the outings are full for a 35 or 37 -seater coach but don't let that deter anyone. Waiting lists will be started and if viable we will book larger coaches depending on availability and costs.

Thank you to everyone for supporting the garden visits and may they long continue to be part of the Bridport & District Gardening Club.

#### **7.4 Monthly meetings and publicity co-ordinator – Vikki Jefferey**

We have had a number of varied and high-quality speakers in the last year.

Dave Usher kicked us off in April with his useful talk on bedding plants and in May Amy Ralph told us about her cut flower farm in Abbotsbury. In June Alan Eason gave us lots of ideas on the use of foliage in our gardens.

In July Janette Merillion took us through the plants month by month that will provide colour in our gardens in Dorset all year round.

The planned talk for September was Grasses in the Garden but something has to go wrong once a year at least. Last year we had to cancel January's talk because of bad weather and in September this year the speaker had the wrong date in her calendar and couldn't make the date of the talk because she was showing at Malvern show the day after. She did however arrange an alternative speaker for us called Claire Hart who provided an excellent talk on how to grow vegetables in small spaces including ideas for vertical gardening known as square metre gardening. I have also now arranged for the speaker on Grasses in the Garden to come and talk to us in July this year.

Charles Chesshire provided an insight into Japanese Gardens in October. And Mike Burke provided a topical talk on gardening for climate change as part of our annual Gold Club talk.

In January Simon Goldsack came to tell us about the garden he has developed at Holme Gardens near Wareham and in February Brian Pettitt told us lots about the wildlife of Dorset including the zoo he used to own in Poole.

Planned talks for this year are an in depth look into the garden centre year in April, vegetable gardening in May and garden visiting a very British tradition in June. We also have a local speaker talking to us about dahlias in September.

Just looking at the attendance over the last year we have found the numbers averaging around 30 with the highest being 33 in July and August.

It has been mentioned to me that some people might like a speaker on none gardening subjects say once a year and we wondered if this view was more widespread among members, could we perhaps have a show of hands of those that would be interested in a speaker on other subjects than gardening.

Finally thanks to Geoff Pulman who has helped with all the heavy lifting at every meeting putting the chairs out etc.

#### **7.5 Website editor - Chris Senior**

I continue to input material as it is given to me usually within a couple of hours of receiving it.

The main activities on the site are generated by the Chairman and/or Secretary and reports on outings and shows during the relevant periods. Details for talks are uploaded as they become available. Since Covid there has been very few notifications received from other organisation asking for their information to be included on our site.

The most visited pages in the last 12 months are, in descending order: Home Page; Join Us; Shows; Meetings; Outings.

The site is hosted by our website designer, Jane Taubman (RJT Services) and she continues to respond promptly to any queries I may have.