

# Westfield Horticultural Society Annual General Meeting

Saturday, 26th October 2024 at 11am  
Westfield Parish Hall, Westfield TN35 4SD

**Present:** Committee members: Dave Miles (DM), Tonia Munns (TM), Maria Wells (MW), Eileen Hurton (EH), Linda Baker (LB), Juni Parkhurst (JP).

Delphine Collins, Sharron Bushell, Tim White, Derek & Jill Edwards, Jo Evans, Pauline Filsell-Page, Jean Hodson, Ann McAllister, Valerie Richardson, Dawn Miles, Margaret Moss, Malcolm & Elaine Shirley, Joanna Thomas, John Brooker, Anthony & Linda Turnbull, Steve of Oak Cottage Plants.

## 1. Welcome

DM opened the meeting and welcomed all those present and thanked them for coming. He started by giving a warning about the ongoing roof works taking place, which meant that there was no access to the back door. Therefore, in case of emergency, he advised everyone to make their way to the front exit. He then asked LB to read the apologies.

## 2. Apologies:

Catherine Collinwood, Robin Redsull, Michael and Jenny Ward, Dave Thomas, Martin & Nicky Briscall, Ralph and Ann Hobbs, John and Hilary Butterworth, Brenda and John Page, Sue Brooker, Pamela and Roger Berden, Samantha Grant and Kate Rogers.

LB stated that some of those mentioned were not well, and that we send them all our best wishes.

**3. Minutes of 2023 AGM:** minutes of the previous AGM held on 19th October 2023, were agreed as correct.

**4. Matters arising from the minutes:** accepted by all, with nothing to be discussed.

## 5. Reports:

### 5a. Chairman's report

*(Copy of full report attached)*

As I also hold the positions of Event Organiser, Newsletter Editor and Membership Secretary, I have combined these four roles in this report.

At the last AGM on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023, Sarah Wilson gave notice that she would be standing down as Chair after the 2024 Spring Show due to work commitments. Maria Wells stood down as Secretary but agreed she would continue as a committee member.

I was elected as Vice Chair, Linda Baker as Secretary, Eileen Hurton (Plants) and Juni Parkhurst (Seeds) as committee members. Tonia Munns agreed to continue as Treasurer and Show Secretary.

A Committee meeting was held on the 6<sup>th</sup> February, at which Sarah Wilson stood down. We thank Sarah for taking over the Chair following Covid, and her help in keeping the Society afloat with Maria Wells as Secretary and Tonia Munns as Treasurer and Show Secretary. At this meeting I took over Chair until the 2024 AGM.

We decided to move the AGM from an evening meeting to a Saturday morning to give more members the opportunity to attend. I think most find it better to attend meetings in the light of day instead of a dark evening in October.

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## **Chairman's report cont...**

In July we heard of the passing of John Page who was president of our society after many years of serving on the committee. Also that of Joan Downing who had also been a long standing and life member of the Society. We also recently heard of the passing of Hazel Redsull, who had been a member of the society for many a year and recently, with her husband Robin, donated 'The Squirrel' cup for art which was presented at our Autumn Show. Condolences have been sent to the families.

In December we participated with other clubs/societies in the village by entering the Christmas Tree Festival by decorating a tree loaned by Little Christmas Tree Farm. Thanks to those that helped. A Festival will hopefully take place again this year.

In late spring several members spent a worthwhile Sunday morning tidying up and making the village garden opposite the New Inn more presentable. Thanks to all that were involved

The history of the WHS can be traced back to 1870 as archives have documented. See report in July's newsletter. Thanks go to Tim White for the research giving us an insight of the past. DM asked Tim if he had found out anymore, and he advised that he was going to continue looking into more of the WHS history. DM thanked him for his time and efforts.

**Events** held during the accounting year 2023/4 consisted of:-

Quiz on 2<sup>nd</sup> March in the Church Hall was well supported and everyone enjoyed a supper of chilli and baked potato (vegetarian was on offer) and a dessert.

On 6<sup>th</sup> April, the Spring Show was a great success. Our first plant sale for many a year with plants mainly grown and potted by Eileen Hurton for which we thank her. The Seed swop also was very popular with Juni Parkhurst organising. See report in April's newsletter.

23<sup>rd</sup> May, 44 members and guests visited Wisley on a fine and sunny day. You would have read the report in the June newsletter. I would like to thank again the guests that joined our society on the coach on the way home.

13<sup>th</sup> July we held a Cream Tea where 40 members and guests attended at "Tea besides the Orchard" on the Ore Rye Road at Ickelsham. It was an interesting afternoon as a member of staff did not arrive for work so a few of our members came to the rescue and helped. One other hiccup was that the place was a little cramped, but we all made the most of it. We were able to fund the cream tea for members as the bank balance is very healthy and I think the members that have supported the society should benefit.

On Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August, Dawn and I paid a visit to Sarah Ravens Garden at Perch Hill. We were hoping a few members at least would have joined us to enjoy but unfortunately this did not materialise. DM and his wife are planning to attend again in the Spring and offered that anyone who would like to join them would be welcome, and DM would be happy to offer a lift.

7<sup>th</sup> September Autumn Show was a success again with more entries than the previous show. Footfall was a little disappointing which we attribute to the road works on the A21. I had the opportunity to advertise the show on Radio Kent/Sussex at 11:45am and managed to cover all elements of the show without any questions being asked. Several visitors that came had heard the broadcast and one couple from Tunbridge Well said it sounded so good they had to come and see, and they were not disappointed. Again, write up and trophy winners are to be found in September's newsletter.

I and the committee would like to thank members that have supported our events this year especially the help given in setting up and being on hand in both our Spring and Autumn shows. John Brooker was very successful in selling raffle tickets at both shows for which we thank him. Also to the businesses and members that donated all the prizes.

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**Chairman's report cont...**

We arranged with 4 local nurseries for members to receive a 10% discount on plants, being Ed's Nursery at Staplecross, Oak Cottage Plants, Kent Street, The Rose Nursery at Northiam and Rotherview Nursery near Three Oaks. So far this year very few members have supported these nurseries. It's a great opportunity that we have been offered to receive 10% discount on plants only. If you compare prices, quality and variety of plants etc with larger garden centres I think we are better off all round. It would be nice if more of us could support the smaller businesses next year. LB suggested members don't feel embarrassed to ask for discount, as the nurseries were willing to offer it in return for our support.

**Newsletter:** It was started in July 2023, with two pages which as you know continues to this day with 5/6 pages every month. I try to keep the publication as informative and interesting as possible but at times I dig deep for content. I'm sending out a plea to all members for their stories, interesting gardens or places they have visited, questions for our Garden Wizard and anything else you think our readers would like to read and enjoy. Please help me before I run out of ideas. Jean Hodson commented that she found the newsletter very interesting, and DM thanked her.

In the May newsletter there was a very interesting article on a garden in Marrakech that was visited by Maria and Matt Wells.

**Membership:** has increased during the year which now stands at 31 paid single memberships, 4 Life members and 45 paid dual memberships, giving a total of 125 members. At last year's AGM it was reported we had 82 members.

## **5b. Secretary's Report**

How nice it is to see you all. My name is Linda Baker and I joined the Committee at last year's AGM as secretary. Dave asked me to increase our social media presence, which I've been doing via FB and Instagram, and of course emails. We also hope to have our own website up and running by the end of the year. This will help us to share more details and information on our events, results from the Shows etc. I will also be including some of the history I've found out about the WHS and past winners, committee members etc. If anyone has any memories they'd like to share, please let me know. If anyone here isn't being included in our emails, please let me know so I can add you to our list. This work will be ongoing.

Events for next year are the Wicker Obelisk Workshop on 8th February. We have a couple of spaces left if anyone is interested. We have a talk on 4th March by a local beekeeper who, as well as explaining beekeeping, will include what to plant to attract bees, an update on the dreaded Asian Hornets and how to identify them. The Wisley trip is in September next year, to see the beautiful gardens at a different time of year.

Additional events being considered are Tulleys Farms Tulip festival which I've been told is a wonderful display and a must see. Possibly another cream tea if we can sort a hall. Also, we've had a suggestion of organising visits to local private gardens, not only for the interest of seeing other gardens but also a nice social event. If anyone has any other ideas of events or visits they would like us to arrange, please let us know.

Eileen, who organises our plant sale, has asked if any members would be willing to donate some cuttings or some seeds that she would be happy to bring on for the Spring Show's plant sale. It is a lot of work for one person, and any donations would be gratefully received. These can be left with Dave, 102 Westfield Lane, or we would be happy to arrange collection. Also Juni, who organises our Seed Swap, has sorted through last year's seeds and removed those out of date. She would also like to ask for any donations of unwanted seeds for next year's Spring Show. If you have any spare, please bring to the hall on the morning of the Spring Show.

If anyone is interested in joining our committee and helping us with our aim to make the WHS the best we can, please let us know when we get to that part of the meeting. Our events have been greatly supported by a new sub-committee that Nicky Briscall organises. These members are those who don't have the time to commit to all events and meetings, but who are willing to give their time when they can to help support us with cake baking, tea making etc. If this is of interest, please speak to me after the meeting.

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### 5c. Financial report

Tonia Munns talked through the finances of the society for the year (please see accompanying spreadsheet).

Overall, the society made a profit of £709.11. This is a good profit considering that WHS purchased several items this year, including a new water heater for future events as the hall heater kept cutting out; new banners and metal pins as the old ones had become tatty; refurbishment of old trophies.

As requested by the Chairman, £1,000.00 was transferred to the main bank account. The balances at 30.09.24 were:

Current Account - £4,267.12

Reserve Account - £383.09

Petty cash - £80.00

### 6. Matters arising from the reports – accepted overall.

### 7. Election of new committee and officers

Re-election of the committee as per the Constitution.

1. **Chair:** DM stated he was happy to continue in the position, unless anyone wanted to step forward.  
**Proposer:** Linda Turnball                      **Seconder:** Margaret Moss
2. **Vice Chair:** now vacant.  
DM asked if there were any proposals? None
3. **Secretary:** LB advised she was happy to stand again.  
Agreed overall
4. **Treasurer:** vacant due to Tonia stepping down. LB has volunteered to take on the position.  
**Proposer:** Jo Evens                                      **Seconder:** Ann McAllister
5. **Show Secretary:** TM happy to stand again.  
Agreed overall.
6. **Committee members:** Eileen Hurton, Juni Parkhurst, Maria Wells; all happy to stand again.  
Agreed overall.
7. **New member:** Malcolm Shirley  
**Proposer:** Valerie Richardson                      **Seconder:** Dawn Miles  
DM welcomed Malcolm to the team.

### 8. Future Events

Those soon on the horizon being the Beetle drive on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November, in the Church Hall at 7:00pm and the Seasonal lunch at the New Inn on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December. If you have not already booked, please do so as numbers are restricted, again all the details are in the newsletter.

DM said he would like to thank Linda, Tonia, Maria, Juni and Eileen for supporting me since taking over as chair. At our inhouse events i.e. Shows, Quiz etc, the food for these events has been provided by Nicky and her ladies of the sub-committee, so a very big thank you to them also. See future newsletters for all future events which will be listed as they are arranged.

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## 9. AOB

**Constitution:** Due to the Autumn show being on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2025, there will not be enough time for the accounts to be prepared and certified, so we need to change the date of the 2025 AGM. Accounting period is 1<sup>st</sup> October to 30<sup>th</sup> September. At present the constitution under NOTES item 3 states 'The AGM should preferably take place within two months of the end of the financial year'. If we keep to this statement for the AGM it would fall in the winter months which is not ideal. Normally an AGM must be held no later than six months after the financial year end.

I propose that we move the 2024/5 AGM to early March 2026, do we have an overall agreement?  
Overall agreement.

Membership Subscription for 2025 – to be set as per the constitution.  
Recommended no change ie £5 & £7. Can I have a show of hands to accept? Overall agreement.

2025 DM advised that the new Show Schedule/handbook would be emailed in early December and a hard copy in early January.

DM also advised that the 2025 Membership Cards will be delivered with the Show Handbook in January, for those that have already paid.

DM asked the attendees if there were any other business:

MW reminded DM of the WHS's involvement with the village Cubs, Scouts and Beavers. DM apologised for omitting this from his report and stated that with Eileen's organisation and some of the committee's help, we had been able to encourage contributions of hand-made cards and painted stones to the Shows this year. EH advised that she had spoken with the leaders of the group about a similar project this year, and they seemed to be very enthusiastic about this. All agreed this was a good idea. TM asked if this could be linked to their badges and EH advised that this is what she is basing her future plans on.

Jo Evans stated that she wanted to encourage her grandchild to make a cake for the Show, but there did not seem to be any categories for children. TM explained that children could enter any category but that we ask that anyone who is under 16 years of age, make this known on their entry form. This way, we can identify them for judging separately. LB advised that new childrens' categories would be included in 2025.

EH advised the meeting that she was also organising a friendly competition for anyone wishing to take part. She would prepare 150 onion sets by planting them in the same sized pot, using the same compost in all. The idea is for anyone attending the Spring Show takes an onion home and grows it on using any method they prefer, and these will be shown at the Autumn Show to see who has grown the largest. This is open to all ages and just a bit of fun.

DM closed the meeting by thanking TM for her dedication to the treasurer's position since she took it on when the Society was reformed after Covid and stated she had done a great job.

**Meeting closed at 11.57am.**