

Minutes of the 74th Annual General Meeting of the East Reading Horticultural Society held at St Peter's Church Hall on Tuesday 17th February 2015.

Present: Mr R. Field (President), Mrs M. Stockwell (Secretary), Mr J. Gardner (Treasurer), Mr J. Peacock (Chairman), Mr M. Iosson, Mr G. Ruffles, Mr N. Stockwell, Mr M. Fewtrell and about 30 other members.

Apologies: Mr R. Howard, J. Dils, F. Palmer, P. Palmer.

Opening

Ray Field opened the meeting at 8 p.m. and welcomed those present and thanked them for attending. The minutes of the previous meeting, which had been made available beforehand for those present to read, were approved. They were accepted and signed.

Matters Arising

Mrs C. Begg had completed the audit and it was approved by the committee at their first meeting after the A.G.M.

Mr D. Palmer asked if there had been any progress by the council in allocating empty allotments. John Peacock said he had no further news and Ray Field expressed concern that some councils were selling off their allotments.

The minutes were approved by a show of hands.

Chairman's Report

John Peacock welcomed everyone to the AGM and said he had thoroughly enjoyed his second year as chairman of the society and supplied a written report including the following points:

- The trading shed is successful and a rewarding experience.
- Lecture evenings are varied and enjoyable.
- Visits have been successful.
- The society's finances are sound and skilfully managed by Jeff.
- Neal's editorial work on the newsletter and Malcolm's distribution of it, as well as organising the annual membership card, are important aspects of our service to members.
- He thanked Geoff Ruffles, Roger Howard and Roger Blay for their tireless work in the shed and particularly Roger Howard for organising the seed orders this year.
- Mike Smith's planning and contacting speakers is always a very smooth and ordered affair for which we are grateful.
- He thanked Mary for her excellent recording of our meetings, for preparation of the minutes and for dealing so efficiently with correspondence.
- Other members thanked were Margaret Thomas for the raffle and Mary, Dorothy and Angela for providing refreshments.
- We have been fortunate to receive some cups from the now defunct Woodley Horticultural Society and he thanked Roger Blay for passing them on to us. We have decided to use 2 of them in the summer show for sweet peas and roses. *(Roger then gave a brief resume of their origins.)*
- The committee's target this year is to increase membership and gave details of plans to do this.
- Next year is our 75th anniversary and a prestigious speaker, Tom Hart Dyke, has been booked to mark the occasion.
- Ruth Palmer was invited to be a vice-president of the society for her service over a considerable number of years. She has been pleased to accept.

He wished us all a successful and productive gardening year.

Treasurer's Report

Jeff Gardner presented the accounts, together with a written report making the following points:

- Sales had increased by £1,524 and purchases were down by £1,012 giving the lowest year-end stock figure for a few years of £9,733.
- During the year he took over the job of Trading Secretary and stressed how much he appreciated Roger Howard's assistance, saving him considerable time, over the winter, by dealing with the Sutton's Seeds orders and doing the weekly banking.
- He explained the Balance Sheet and the Profit and Loss account and concluded that the membership subscription could remain at £2 for the 14th year, but noted that it might need to be increased by £1 next year if we are not successful in expanding membership.
- Lecture overheads have increased. Raffles help to defray the costs. Again, it was asked whether the suggestion that we charge an entry fee could be reconsidered.
- Rewards for helpers will be deferred for a further year.
- He thanked Cathy Begg for carrying out the audit and said she had agreed to continue next year.

Elections

Ray Field agreed to continue as president for another year.

Proposed: Neal Stockwell, seconded: Jacquie Botting - agreed with none against.

The following members agreed to continue to serve on the committee:

Chair: Mr J. Peacock

Vice-chair: Mr M. Smith

Treasurer: Mr J. Gardner

Secretary: Mrs M. Stockwell

Others: Dr M. Iosson, Mr N. Stockwell, Mr G. Ruffles,
Mr R. Howard, Mr M. Fewtrell

Proposed: Don Palmer, seconded: Jacquie Botting - agreed with none against.

Once again it was asked if anyone would like to join the committee.

Auditor: Cathy Begg. Approved by a show of hands.

A.O.B.

- Gwen Barton and Ruth Palmer suggested that we charge for refreshments at lectures, John thanked them and said it would be discussed at the next committee meeting.
- Jacquie Botting suggested that a mail shot to 2 new developments in the area could be fruitful.
- It was also asked whether a delivery service for the trading shed could be feasible.
- John Peacock reinforced the need for shed stewards who can lift heavy items and Mike Smith said he was trying to ensure that members worked in pairs where one was able to lift. Any willing helpers should ring Mike Smith.

Ray Field thanked everyone, once again, for attending and the meeting closed at 8:42 p.m., after which cheese and wine refreshments were served and the raffle was drawn.