

## **Minutes of WAHGA AGM held on Thursday 8 December 2005**

### **Apologies:**

Apologies were received from Donald Young, Jayne Rigg, Tony Baldwyn, Eric Grant, Barbara Hovell, Mike Lamprill, David Hickman, Ian & Carol Wallace, Norman Thompson, Bill & Doreen Birch, Julia Bird.

### **Report from the Committee – Presented by Trish Weller**

#### **Obituaries:**

We are sad to report the loss of Ursula Badger who was one of our Vice Presidents for many years, Frank Lappen who was a long serving committee member and held the office of treasurer during this time. Mrs Stewart of Bolton Road and Kingsley Williams formerly of Clewer Fuel have also passed away this year.

#### **Committee Members:**

New members joining the committee this year are Jemma Whitehouse of The Glebe and Harry Greasley from Fairground.

We are sorry that some of our committee members have decided to stand down. Peter Hughes was the Show and Fete manager for some years was Chairman as well as being a longstanding committee member helping to promote the Associations activities. Peter will continue to help out at Clewer Fuel.

Cliff Partridge has decided to retire after more than 20 years on the committee. Cliff has held various offices over his years of service, having been the chairman on several occasions and will be handing over the roles of hall letting officer and show secretary. Cliff's contributions have been of great value to the Association and he will be missed.

Jeff Ayres will be moving from the area and is giving up his office of Allotment Secretary. Jeff has been at the forefront of letting plots and site maintenance for some years. He has also helped Dick with council negotiations to obtain necessary funding for improvements on the sites such as additional security, self filling water tanks and roadway refurbishment.

Barbara Hovell is giving up the reins as Membership Secretary. Barbara originally took this office as a temporary post to fill a gap and six years later has decided to hand the work on.

We would all like to thank Peter, Cliff, Jeff and Barbara for their dedicated work on behalf of the Association.

#### **Hall:**

The hall remains a popular letting venue and is in use most days for a wide ranging variety of activities. The revenue from the hall lettings enables us to have additional funds to spend on capital projects such as equipment for site maintenance and plot clearance.

Bill Hibbert and Ray Castle who instigated the Friday night opening have resigned from their bar duty. Thanks to Bill & Ray for introducing and running the Friday sessions which are well used by our members.

Margaret and Peter Bund have taken over staffing the bar on Fridays.

Thanks to Jayne for all her time and effort for making the Sunday lunch club a continuing success, this years programme concludes this Sunday with the Christmas lunch, the dates for 2006 are displayed on the notice board. Lunches are subject to enough helpers being available.

The list of volunteer bar staff for Sunday lunchtimes and outside functions is still rather sparse, if you know anyone who may be able to help share the load we would like to talk to them.

### **Events:**

The outings for 2005 included the ever popular Kneller Hall trip. We were fortunate to be placed back in our regular seats near to the front. Dick has run these trips for some years but will not be carrying on this year, as there were no volunteers forthcoming we will not be going to Kneller Hall next year as the tickets need to be booked in October. If anyone would like to take on arranging the Kneller Hall trip for 2007 please let us know.

Karin Lohr arranged two outings to Wisley and Highclere Castle this year. Karin has kindly agreed to arrange two outings for 2006, Loseley Park house & gardens on 15 June and Wisley in July. Seats can be booked with Karin with a £5 deposit.

Full prices for the trips will be available when the cost of the coaches has been confirmed.

The RHS regional lecture by Kate Garton in March was a great success. Thanks to John & Lesley Spence for accommodating Kate.

Future talks are planned for 2006. Conservation in the Borough is planned for 17 March by Trevor Smith the Council Conservation Officer.

Eric Grant will be giving a talk in February on Flowers for all Seasons.

Other talks will be advertised when confirmed.

The dance programme continues to run and the next dance is the New Years Eve Party. Future dances are dependant on helpers and support from dance goers. Dates for future dances are to be found in the membership card.

To complement the dances, we have introduced some family social evenings to appeal to a wider range of our membership. A quiz night last month was a success. The next social in March is to be a skittles night, further details will follow soon. A barn dance is planned for May.

### **Show & Fete:**

After requests from exhibitors, the decision was made to move the show & fete to a week earlier. This was an experiment that worked extremely well, produce displayed was at its best and the show did not clash with other events which quite often happens, particularly if the last Saturday of August falls on the bank holiday weekend. The Show & Fete for 2006 is also planned to be a week early, on Saturday 19 August.

There were more exhibitors than in the past few years and due to the high number of entries in the floral art, we ran out of staging. Due to the number of entries, the show secretaries worked long and hard to get the class cards and benches prepared in time, thanks to Jayne Rigg, Cliff Partridge and two retired show secretaries who came to help, Eric Grant and Bill Birch.

As a result of the last minute rush we intend to ask for the entry forms to be submitted by the Wednesday before the show so that there is adequate time to do the administration.

The fete was very well attended and even though the army and police were not in attendance, we were safe in the knowledge that Super Dog was patrolling the show ground.

In a break with tradition we opened up the Fairground site to take advantage of the open area at the bottom of the site. This enabled the public to walk past cultivated allotments as well as giving necessary space for some of the attractions. A new innovation which was situated at the bottom end was 'Welly Throwing', this was very popular. Thanks to those who ran the stall and donated wellies. Apologies to Colin whose gardening wellies ended up in the ditch! More wellies please, but only those that you don't want back.

The ponies were also sited on the open area, this gave them more space and was a better position to work in. The pony rides were not advertised on the literature or in the local press. Caron North brings the ponies from the farm in Old Windsor where they rehabilitate rescue horses, a very worthwhile and sadly necessary service. Thanks to Caron for bringing the ponies, we'll make sure you get an extra special mention next year!

We were fortunate enough to borrow some straw bales from the farm to provide additional seating around the fete area. Thanks to Bob Regan for the loan of these. One visitor thought that the bales gave the fete a very country feeling.

One of our members came along with a couple of large snakes which received a mixed reaction, but certainly added to the fun.

We are most grateful to the Army Cadets for helping to set up and man some of the stalls. Without their help the event would not be as successful. I would like to see more of our members coming forward to help.

All the regular features were well supported, many thanks to all who helped to set up, run stalls, provide refreshments and clear up afterwards. Some of our visitors even rolled their sleeves up at the end of the afternoon to help the effort.

The fete is run to support the show and it was the feeling of some members that the fete is a community activity and is very worthwhile.

We are in the position of not having a show secretary for 2006, we need to appoint a show secretary for the coming year as a matter of urgency, please can you pass this request to your fellow members to see if there is a volunteer out there.

### **Membership:**

Membership remains at around the 600 mark. Although the numbers do not appear to be going up, allotments are continuously being let, so the members that we do have seem to be active.

We would like to collect e-mail addresses from members so that newsletters and other correspondence can be distributed more efficiently and keep costs to a minimum. If you have an e-mail address, please can you send an e-mail via the website so that you can be added to the list.

### **Committee Activities:**

Since the introduction of the website, there has been a small but steady flow of traffic. The site is updated on a regular basis and more detailed information will be added when available. We have received enquiries about the association and have let a couple of plots as a direct result of the site.

The website contains details of allotment sites and other general information including the seed and potato lists and sundries available from the trading sheds.

All future events will be listed on the site.

The Association has now changed status and has become a Limited Association. Share certificates will be issued to all members. These are non transferable and are owned solely by the member during the period of membership.

### **Finally:**

Our thanks go out to everyone who has given their time over the last year to help with the many activities of the Association. The activities include maintaining allotment sites and equipment and clearing plots for letting, trading shed helpers, organising outings and socials, manning the bar, catering, administration, finance and distribution. This list is by no means exhaustive.

The Association always needs help with this broad range of tasks and would appreciate any help available. We are a totally voluntary organisation and are most grateful for the skills that we have available to us, however these can always be built on and enhanced by new members adding their expertise to the Association's portfolio.

Half of the committee are working and have limited time available to exercise the necessary management functions of the Association. We hope to see some more members taking an active role in the Association over the coming year. Anyone interested can contact officers via the website, through the trading sheds or in the bar on Sunday from 12 till 1.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy and fruitful new year.

### **Treasurers Report – Presented by Frank Hovell**

The annual accounts were presented.

Questions to the Treasurer from the floor:

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Tom Smith proposed that the accounts be approved, seconded by Harry Greasley.

Thanks were expressed to Frank for preparing the accounts.

### **Allotment Secretary's Report - Presented by Jeff Ayres**

We have come to the end of the five year term whereby our Landlords, the Council, funded projects to the tune of £20,000 a year for the past 5 years as compensation for the giving up of part of the Spital site for the Trevelyan school car park. So now

we are left with the annual allowance of £8,000 a year for capital and maintenance projects though we are hoping for an increase but as you know our Council is strapped for cash.

The previous funding has enabled us to install better fencing and gates on some of our sites and the latest being at the town end of Maidenhead Road. Sadly we still suffer some vandalism and only recently the fence at Municipal site adjoining Soldiers Lane was cut through and some tenants lost valuable machinery. We always advise tenants not to leave machinery on site.

In addition to the 3 cultivators previously purchased and available for members to use, we have lashed out this year and bought a 15 hp tractor which has proved very useful on the Maidenhead Road site and has enabled us to let plots to 12 new tenants. At the moment 4 members can use the tractor and its attachments and it is possible to train others who are willing to learn. You will have noticed that we have also purchased containers in which to store all this machinery.

Following last year's successful installation of new internal roads on the Maidenhead Road site, we have extended the scheme and again it has proved worthwhile in attracting new tenants.

The sites at Brook Street, Bolton Road, Municipal and Vansittart Road are more or less fully let and an area recently ploughed on the Fairground site has produced 5 more lettings.

This is definitely my last report before I move away from Windsor next year. Last year I paid a tribute to Tom & Dick Smith for their sterling work for the Association over many years and this year I wish to pay tribute to our worthy Treasurer Frank Hovell. We both joined the Committee in 1978 and I am pleased to have been able to help him with banking the weekly takings from our trading sheds and the collection of the annual rents. He is heavily involved with our financial affairs as well as running his own business. I know that our new President and our Chairman are endeavouring to lighten his workload.

### **Purchasing Officers Report - Presented by John Filmer**

Another busy and satisfactory year in which the opposition has been, for the most part, held at bay. Thanks to Ted for his constant comparison shopping which from time to time gave him some difficulty with suspicious staff at garden centres. We do not have the advantage of using loss leaders hence the need to keep a constant eye on others prices.

We continue to have excellent service from our main suppliers, especially Fargro. It is a great help to get a quick response to an order. Unlike their predecessors, we have regular visits from this firm's sales manager who is always ready with suggestions and advice.

We have this year had no contact with Nursery Trades or their successors SPREAD. It would not appear that they are interested in our business.

Our suppliers of seeds and seed potatoes, Edwin Tucker, also maintain an excellent service. Currently we are in the process of 'bagging up' this year's seed. The selection is much the same as last year with a few additions. There has been little variation in price. You will, no doubt, have noticed a few newcomers to us in the

potato list. It has been necessary to adjust some prices for our potato supply but we do not feel such increases are significant, our prices remain highly competitive and of good quality. There was some difficulty with Arran Pilot last year which we have dropped and substituted with Duke of York.

Please let us know if you experience particular problems with any of your seed purchases.

This year we have been able to keep our purchases and sales largely in balance thus avoiding waste and financial loss. You will note from the Treasurers report that there has been a considerable improvement in our profit margins from sales in the Trading Sheds.

Our bulb purchases are from Associated British Bulbs of Spalding and here again the year has been largely successful in that we were able to sell out. Bulb sales are particularly difficult because of the large variation available the both in cultivars and in members requirements. Your comments and suggestions in this respect would be much appreciated. Bear in mind the object is to sell out.

The availability of general products following the imposed restrictions has largely settled down although there are fewer choices. There has been some increase in price in this field. The black plastic sheeting remains popular and is selling well as is the recent addition of fleece. Both of these products are sold at a highly competitive price.

It remains to thank those of you who give up so much of you time to serve in the Trading Sheds both in selling, bagging up and keeping the sheds clean and tidy. MORE HELP IS REQUIRED, please let us hear from you.

### **Election of Committee Members and Officers**

Ted Bailey proposed the following officers:

Don Hartridge	Allotment Secretary
J Rigg	Hall Letting Officer
Lesley Spence	Membership Secretary

Seconded by Trish Weller and carried.

Tom Smith proposed David Hickman as a committee member, seconded by Kay Lines and carried.

### **Any Other Business**

Ted Bailey presented gifts to Jeff Ayres and Barbara Hovell (accepted by Frank) for their service to the committee.

Tom Smith advised that Clewer Fuel is nearly full due to the hard work put in by Malcolm May and John Denny and expressed a vote of thanks to them.