

## **Minutes of WAHGA AGM held on Thursday 13 January 2005**

### **Apologies:**

Apologies were received from Donald Young, Jill Tawney, Priscilla Ellis, Cliff Partridge, Steve Gibbons, Eric Grant, Eric Hearne, Mr & Mrs Wallis and Barbara Hovell.

### **Matters Arising:**

Only one matter arising from last years minutes, Chris Lavender was a plot holder on Clewer Fuel and not Clewer Park as stated.

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

#### **Obituaries:**

Alf Prior, Alf was a long standing member and very supportive of the Association, he was a regular at the Fairground trading shed offering advice.  
Jim Goodman of Fairground.

#### **Committee Members:**

Ralph Green resigned last year as the bar steward, his partner Carol Grey also gave up running the dances. We thank Ralph and Carol for all their efforts.

Eric Grant has decided to give up his position as show secretary. Eric has worked all his life in horticulture and his valuable knowledge will be very difficult to replace, however he is happy to remain as an advisor for the show. I am sure you will join me in thanking Eric for all his hard work over the years and wish him a very happy birthday for tomorrow. Eric has also been, for about 5 years, the chairman of the Slough Federation to which we are affiliated, his chairmanship has now finished but he will continue to represent us at the Federation.

As you will have read in the newsletter, Dick Smith will be resigning his presidency this year. Dick and brother Tom have been presidents of this Association for many years. We have one of the most active and successful Allotment Associations in the South of England, a good deal of this can be attributed to the dedicated work ( not to mention a bit of clever arm twisting of which I have certainly been a victim!), that has been put in by the Smiths over the years. Dick's professional acumen as a chartered surveyor made the building of this hall possible, not something that many other gardening clubs can boast. With twins at the helm we have had a double bond to build this organisation into the success it is today. Any of you with of scientific bent will know that a double bond is much stronger than a single one. As we thank Dick for everything he has done to give us an Association to be proud of and pleased to be connected with the presidency is a difficult act to follow.....

However as you have also read, the committee highly recommend Ted Bailey to take up the presidency. Ted is know as the 'Guru' of the show bench and is a truly dedicated and highly experienced gardener. I urge you to vote for Ted as president when the committee are elected later in the meeting.

As the old saying goes old gardeners don't die they just go to seed. As our current Patron Michael Trend is to resign his position as local MP later this year we needed to appoint a new Patron. The committee has asked Dick Smith to stand as Patron and we are very pleased that he has agreed to take this on.

New members co-opted to the committee during the year are Tony Baldwin of Clewer Park and Malcolm May site manager at Clewer Fuel.

### **Hall:**

The hall is still a popular letting venue, being used on average 40 times per month for clubs and parties.

A dishwasher has been installed in the kitchen, by request of Jayne Rigg, to help with our functions, the clearing up always takes as long as the preparation for any of these activities and this has been a useful addition.

Jayne is continuing to run the Sunday lunches for 2005, these are very popular but please note that payment in advance is required as the food has to be bought in advance and late cancellations are a drain on club funds.

Volunteers to help with the lunches would also be much appreciated, at present Jayne and Pearl are doing this by themselves which is a very tall order when there are generally in excess of 30 diners.

The hall is constantly undergoing running repairs which include this year the replacement of the annex roof covering, repainting of the annex ceiling and the replacement of the guttering which is inadequate for heavy rainfall.

There are many small jobs that need to be done to maintain any building, thanks to Cliff for dealing with the safety and electrical matters that have been carried out. Joe Rigg has been busy doing some necessary clearing, tidying and small repairs, thanks to Joe for those essential but often unnoticed jobs which he has been doing throughout the year.

The bar licence was renewed last February. The licensing authority were particularly interested to look at our visitors book. Please ensure that you sign in all your visitors so that we are in accordance with the current requirements. Even better get your visitors to join the Association.

The beer supplier was changed from our supplier Berkshire Beers back to Taylors who supplied us previously as their prices appeared to be more competitive, this was to keep our prices as low as possible to our members.

The bar is currently staffed by a diminishing number of volunteers, more people are needed to help with the club sessions as well as our own dances and outside functions. Please let someone on the committee know if you are able to help.

### **Events:**

The dances continue to be popular, these are currently being run by Bill and Doreen Birch and Tom Smith, tickets for the dances can be obtained in advance from Bill & Doreen or Tom. Bill's phone number appears in the membership card under show secretaries, unfortunately there is no note of Tom's number in the card but Tom has a knack of being readily available when he is looking for volunteers or dance goers. A volunteer is required to take up the running of the dances.

The outings for 2004 included the ever popular Kneller Hall trip. The seats were not as close to the front as in previous years however the music was excellent and a good evening was had by all. We are assured that our usual front block seats are available for this years trip, seats can be booked with a £5 deposit with Dick Smith.

Karin Lohr arranged two outings to Wisley and Kew last year. Despite the weather everyone enjoyed their visits. Karin has kindly agreed to arrange two outings for this year, Wisley on 7 June and Highclere Castle on 5 July. Seats can be booked with Karin with a £5 deposit. Thanks to Karin for taking on the task of arranging these outings which are a popular addition to our calendar of events.

I would like to point out that Karin's phone number was incorrectly published in the newsletter, it should read 840651, this can be found in the membership card.

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

The Association displayed a stand at a Flower Festival held at the Parish Church in June. The stall was unmanned, however the festival was well attended and gave us another outlet for publicity.

We displayed a trade stall at the Windsor Rose Show which celebrated its centenary last year. The show was better supported than in previous years.

An RHS regional lecture by Kate Garton is to be staged here on Wednesday 16 March at 7.30. The title is colour all year round in the garden. An interesting subject and not, as I have recently read, planned for all year round colour means includes a heather garden and a holly bush.

Kate is a designer for gardens of various sizes and a consultant for some large estates.

Tickets are available at £3 to RHS members and affiliates, £4 to non-members, these will be on sale after the meeting.

### **Show & Fete:**

We were yet again fortunate with the weather with another sunny afternoon for the show & fete. The exact gate is always difficult to estimate but the show ground and hall were packed with visitors.

The show attracted fewer exhibitors than previously. Last year the growing conditions were very wet and some produce was disappointing, the year before was too dry. Let's hope that it isn't too cold, too windy, too lumpy or too salty this year – has anyone seen my porridge and favourite little chair!

We usually send show schedules to the previous years exhibitors, we intend to distribute the schedule more widely this year to encourage more entrants.

A frequently heard comment around the show benches is 'Mine were better than that', so don't be afraid of having a go and encourage your fellow gardeners to show as well. There are several novice classes for the uninitiated.

Ted Bailey is currently putting together some instructions for growing show class produce.

The childrens classes were not well supported last year and much as the silver cup looks lovely on my dresser, we need some competition.

The show schedule is in preparation and should be ready for early spring. Could I ask the compilers to include some additional novice classes because I have run out of cups to win!

The fete had some new attractions for 2004. The chair-o-plane was a hit with the smallest visitors while the older children, including many over 18 years of age, had great fun climbing on the army tank from Combermere Barracks.

Thanks to Caron North for bringing two ponies for the children to ride, always one of the most popular attractions.

We had several requests from outsiders asking if they could have a stall at the fete, the committee decided that we have always maintained this as our own event and not a craft fayre so apart from the Datchet Village Market who have joined us before these other requests were declined.

One of the helpers said that the fete was like stepping 50 years back in time, it is really like an old fashioned village fair. As the saying goes every village has one, there is a vacancy for a vacant position – any names forthcoming.

We decided last year to write and thank all the helpers of which we have about 60, by the time the list had been put together the total came to over 80 and some people who we weren't sure about missed from the list. If you did help and didn't get a letter, please accept our belated thanks and apologies.

We were short of adult helpers on the day, the children did a great job but need more support.

Thanks go to the stalwarts of Show and Fete that made the day possible and to Jayne Rigg for a long day in the kitchen providing the refreshments.

The date for Show & Fete this year has been moved forward by one week and will be held on 20 August, not 27 as stated in the membership card. This is because we have had requests to move the show so that the produce is of better quality, also that many people are away on the bank holiday weekend.

As always we need as many volunteers as possible, there is always plenty to do. Please let us know if you are able to help in any way.

### **Membership:**

Total membership for 2003/2004	591
Total membership for 2002/2003	596

The figures, although not displaying an increase are encouraging, as we do appear to have a lot of new members joining. This years membership has started well and I hope to be able to report an increase in numbers for this year.

Members will be asked for telephone numbers and e-mail addresses so that they can be easily contacted, this may also cut down on some of the paperwork if newsletters and other correspondence can be e-mailed.

### **Committee Activities:**

I am delighted to report that procrastination has been eliminated from the committee during the past year. Some issues that have been long talked about and not actioned have now come to fruition.

A welcome leaflet for new and existing plot holders has been compiled, this gives a brief history of the Association, some frequently asked questions with answers and contact details for the site stewards and committee members.

We now have a website, the address is [www.wahga.org.uk](http://www.wahga.org.uk), this is still under cultivation but has some useful information including some from the welcome leaflet. Thanks to John Spence for his hard work in getting the site up and running and

putting the information in. The website can be accessed through a link on the RBWM site and can be picked up from the search engine Google.

The Association has purchased a database to manage membership and allotment tenancies, input of the data is ongoing and when complete it is hoped that some of the longhand administration can be simplified.

We need a logo for our website and promotional material, there were only two entrants to the competition so we have decided to defer a decision on this until some more ideas are forthcoming.

The review of the rules was high on the agenda in 2004 with a revised set of rules compiled with a view to changing the status of the association to a limited company. The EGM on 24 September detailed the thinking behind the change of status as well as running through the rule revision. The motion that the rules be adopted and the change of status be actioned was carried. These rules have now been sent to the relevant bodies for approval.

Thanks to all who helped with the review, particularly to John Filmer who spent a great deal of time reworking the document to meet current guidelines within our specific requirements.

### **In Conclusion:**

As the AGM approaches each year I think what am I going to talk about. Every year the list gets longer once I get started. I think I have excelled myself in running in to 5 pages this time. The upshot of this is that it has been a very busy and successful year for the Association.

There seem to be a lot of new faces around and some of the sites are almost fully let. Thanks to the site stewards for their hard work in maintaining the sites and making them more attractive to new plot holders, the results speak for themselves.

We have a functioning website and a nearly complete database, we are now multimedia!

Hopefully the new status of the Association will come in to force during this coming year.

Thanks to all who have helped in the trading sheds, on the sites and with the show & fete during the last year and we hope that we can rely on your continuing support for the coming year.

Thanks also to all the hard working committee members, the input of these dedicated volunteers keep this Association the success it is today whilst looking forward to improve things for the future.

Lastly, the Association is totally run by volunteers and as some of our members move on, we rely on new people taking over to keep things running smoothly. A job shared is a job halved. If you are able to help with any of the activities you have heard about even in a small capacity we will be happy to have you on board.

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

The annual accounts were presented.

Reg Renn asked why the Council tax has gone down.

Frank deferred the answer to this until he has looked into the matter.

Tom Smith stated that the bar committee will have to look separately at the bar accounts.

John Filmer said that the shed stock figure has gone up and reflects our trading profits. Frank added that these figures include the supply of black polythene.

Thanks were expressed to Frank for his report and for all the work he does as treasurer throughout the year.

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

Another busy year which, for the most part has been successful although not without its difficulties. Trading remains highly competitive in the area, as it does, have many competitors. We continue to hold our own particularly in our own specialities.

Last year the sale and purchase of seed potatoes was largely in balance. Our aim is to sell out and this was achieved. Similarly the bulb sale have been good. We will however continue to review the figures to ensure the balance is maintained.

The Association has traded with Nursery Trades (Lea Valley) Limited for many years but that association has ended with the sale of this firm to a large national organization called SPREAD based at Norwich. The manner in which this purchase was carried out has led to some objection from a number of shareholders leading to a meeting being called in order that the board may be asked to explain there actions. The timing and location f this event does not enable us to be represented, will seek a report after the event. For the moment a decision as to what steps should be taken with regard to the Associations share holding is in abeyance. This is a recent event and thus far we have had no business dealing with them. It is likely that their location will create delivery problems for us. We have had very little information from this firm.

Our recent dealings have been with a firm called Fargo and has, so far proved satisfactory both in terms of price and service. We have contact with another supplier called Avoncrop who provide an alternative for bulk purchases. Ted and I try to keep an eye on the market hopefully to the Associations advantage.

The seed purchase and sale arrangements have now reached a final stage in that all seeds are purchased in bulk and bagged up by us. We have endeavored to provide a suitable range of seeds but would appreciate hearing from you if you have alternative suggestions. We would like to hear from you with your experience with the cultivation of the seeds.

Our suppliers of both seed and potatoes are Edwin Tucker & Sons Limited of Ashburton in Devon from whom we get excellent service.

I conclude with my thanks to all those who have helped with the sheds both in service and in off loading of supplies. Again I WOULD ASK FOR HELP particularly to serve in the St Leonards Road trading shed.

Mike Lamprill asked if we had received any dividends from the Nursery Trades shares.

No dividends have been paid, we took the option to obtain more shares.

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

I didn't anticipate giving you another report before leaving the area so hopefully this is my final contribution.

We have improved security on most of our larger sites by installing better fencing and gates. We have asked tenants to co-operate by locking the gates whenever possible when entering and leaving sites but sadly this does not always happen. Thankfully vandalism has been minimal this year.

We have continued the good progress on our Bolton Road and Spital sites and they are virtually 100 % let, so we are indebted to the site supervisors Don Hartridge and John Drewett and their helpers for making this possible. 10 plots have been cleared on Clewer Park and subsequently ploughed so these will be available for letting in the Spring.

We had planned with the Council a re-vamp of the west end of our Maidenhead Road site by introducing a new internal road so that access to the plots is better. For many years the plots on Maidenhead Road were of 20 poles which is far too big for any one tenant's needs. This work should have started in the Autumn but because the Council's annual funding from the Government has been cut again, the Council have put a stop on all capital projects for the time being. We have remonstrated with the Council about this and they have reluctantly agreed that the proposed work is not a capital project and hopefully the work will start on 24 January.

So I am leaving in the knowledge that the Association is in good heart and I hope that others will come forward to continue the good work.

### **Election of Committee:**

Officers:

<b>Office</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Proposed by</b>	<b>Seconded by:</b>
Patron	Dick Smith	J Ayres	T Weller
President	Ted Bailey	T Smith	T Bailey
Vice Presidents	Mike Scott	T Bailey	J Filmer
	Tom Smith	T Bailey	J Filmer
Hon Secretary	Trish Weller	T Smith	F Hartridge
Hon Treasurer	Frank Hovell	D Smith	B Birch
Allotment Sec	Jeff Ayres	T Beard	B Atkinson
Asst Allotment Sec	Mike Lamprill	B Birch	D Hartridge
Purchasing Officer	John Filmer	P Brooks	J Whitehouse
Asst Purchasing Officer	Ted Bailey	M Small	B Birch
Membership Sec	Barbara Hovell	F Hovell	J Smith
Show Secretaries	Jayne Rigg	T Weller	J Smith
Hall Letting Officer	Cliff Partridge	J Rigg	P Jordan
Hall Treasurer	John Spence	P Hughes	M Small

Ordinary Committee members:  
Existing members:

	Proposed by	Seconded by:
Tony Baldwyn	J Spence	T Baldwyn
Bill Birch	J Spence	T Baldwyn
Doreen Birch	J Spence	T Baldwyn
Pearl Brooks	J Spence	T Baldwyn
Ray Castle	J Spence	T Baldwyn
Eric Grant	J Spence	T Baldwyn
Don Hartridge	J Spence	T Baldwyn
John Hemmings	J Spence	T Baldwyn
Peter Hughes	J Spence	T Baldwyn
Karin Lohr	J Spence	T Baldwyn
Malcolm May	J Spence	T Baldwyn
Martin McAleer	J Spence	T Baldwyn
Joe Rigg	J Spence	T Baldwyn
Maurice Small	J Spence	T Baldwyn
Aileen Stacey	J Spence	T Baldwyn

New Members:

Harry Greasley	K Lines	A Stacey
Kay Lines	A Stacey	T Weller
Jemma Whitehouse	F Hovell	T Weller

Ted Bailey thanked Dick for all his hard work for the Association.  
Tom Smith presented gifts to mark his retirement from office.  
There were no Life Member presentations.

### **Any Other Business:**

Tom Smith gave the meeting an update on the current situation at Clewer Fuel. The brambles have now been cleared and the site is 80% let. The site is now secure as far as the Trustees are concerned and they will not be selling any of the land for building.

Malcolm May has taken over from John Hemmings as site manager and has done a good job in promoting the site. A manager is needed for the Trading Shed to bring it up to the same standard as the other two sheds.