



Sandhurst and District Gardening Club
Minutes of the 61st AGM held at Sandhurst
Community Centre on Wednesday February
21st 2024 at 7.15 pm

1.	Welcome	Sheila Davenport
	All were welcomed to the meeting.	
2.	Apologies and previous minutes (2023 AGM)	Julie Sheppard
	Apologies were received from Gill and Graham Coe and Gill Clarke, The minutes of the 2023 AGM and the subsequent SGM (19.4.23) were accepted as an accurate record. Proposed: Pat Roome Seconded: Hilary Corio	
2.	Matters arising	Sheila Davenport
	<p>The members were informed of the amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Trustees and to the club rules relating to this, as previously agreed by the management committee. These were on the agenda for this meeting.</p> <p>From the 2023 AGM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. membership fees – there will no longer be different fees for single/joint memberships. All fees are £7 per person for the year '24 - '25 d. include tea/coffee in membership fees – this was rejected as being unfair to the large number of members who do not attend club nights e. members to bring their own mugs/cups to club nights to remove the need for washing up – this was rejected. 	
3.	Chairman's report	Sheila Davenport
	<p>2023 was a year of change for our club. Our committee of twelve was reduced to six as some members retired and others stepped down. Those who stayed became the Management Committee. We were able to do this because teams of members had come forward to run the shows, the trading hut, the coach trips etc. The committee of old who ran all parts of the club could finally hang up their hats. The shows now have a slightly different format including the photographs being online and I feel this is positive going forward, the trading hut is running well, some teething problems with bagging up I understand. We still need help with the trading hut and the show teams. Lydia has taken over the coach trips and they are running successfully.</p> <p>We, the management committee, want to thank all of you for being behind the changes and especially those members who have made it possible.</p> <p>Sunil and Gareth once again provided the location for our plant sale. With the help of members, it was a huge success and we want to thank Sunil and Gareth for making it possible.</p>	

The 60th birthday was a huge success in my opinion and we had lots of thanks from you. Following on from the committee standing aside from hands on, the party was put out caterers leaving everyone a chance to enjoy the event.

Unfortunately, we did not win the King's Award, but we made it through the first round and we were presented with a certificate. I think we should still be very proud of ourselves and our club.

Looking back is fine, but it is 2024 and we need to move forward. Our main aim this year is to boost our membership and in doing so hopefully have more members entering our shows. On Good Friday we plan to have an open day at the Trading Hut where children will be able to plant up beans, peas, sunflowers etc. All with the view to showing in September show including photographs of Sunflowers in bloom. For the adults we hope to recruit there will be Q & A table, one demonstrating taking cuttings, planting seeds and pricking them out. Not everyone knows how to deal with seedlings, I certainly did not when I started out and I just tried to keep everyone of the seedlings, just don't get me started on lobelia. We will need some help. It should be a fun event and a bit Blue Peter.

Proposed: David Hunt Seconded: Chris Dresler

There were no questions from the floor.

4. Treasurer's report

Steve Roome

1. Hut Sales were slightly down by £248, however the profit margin increased to 14% from 10% which resulted in an increase in profit of £750 to £2,253.
2. Subscription income increased by £365 to £1,711 following the increase in the rate.
3. Interest received was up from £9 to £87 following higher interest rates on the Building Society account.
4. These changes meant the total income grew from £2,950 to £4,051 or by 37%. However, there was also a significant increase in expenses from £2,720 to £3,410 or by 25%. These increases were largely across the board including insurance, postage, hut maintenance and equipment and trophy engraving. In addition, a one-off cost of £125 to purchase the card reader was included in sundry expenses and a new cost of credit card transaction fees of £287 was included for the first time.
5. The deficit on Activities increased by £2,733 (Deficit of £3,494 compared to £761) The deficit on Club nights was £806 (up £737) with the costs of Hall Hire and Speakers increasing and the additional costs of the new afternoon meetings, however these costs were partially offset by the surplus on refreshments and the raffles of £430 together with the fantastic amount of £589 raised by the Plant Sale. There was no Christmas Party last year and the deficit this year was £194. The deficit on Shows was £1,096 compared to £697 last year. Both Judges fees and hall hire increased whilst the surplus on refreshments and the raffle decreased. The surplus on Coach trips was £81 compared to £35 last year. There was a one-off deficit this year on the 60th birthday party of £1,480 due to the use of professional caterers.
6. Overall income over expenditure moved from a deficit of £531 to a deficit of £2,853 or £1,373 excluding the 60th party.
7. Cash & Bank Balances decreased from £16,835 to £11,866

Overall, the Club is in a good financial position with adequate reserves to cover any unforeseen circumstances, however we are very dependent on the profit from the Trading Hut and plant sale to subsidise the Club's other activities and without these Membership Fees would need to be around £20 to £25 per head for the club to remain financially viable.

In response to a question from the floor, the club's current back balance was reported as £11,860

Proposed: Sandra Hooper Seconded: Jane Heritage

5.	Trading Hut report	Trading hut group
<p>As you will know Jane handed over the running of the trading hut at the beginning of 2023. She did a lot of work with us to help with the handover, but we've still had a very steep learning curve. This was made worse by the closure of our major supplier, Horticultural Supplies, in July last year. We have found an alternative and are now getting used to the way they work.</p> <p>The new system for collecting the keys for hut duty on Sundays & Wednesdays is working well so will be continuing.</p> <p>We've seen an increase in prices again this year but are working hard to source goods at the best price available. The increases are not however at same the level as in late 2022, early 2023.</p> <p>The hut has been reorganised to give us more storage space at the back, this allows us to make larger, less frequent orders and obtain the best price for products.</p> <p>Sales have been brisk this year, the money raised by the trading hut is essential as it supports other aspects on the club – speakers, hall fees, etc. and allows us to keep the membership fee as low as possible.</p> <p>The decision had already been taken to no longer take trading hut goods to club nights due to the low level of interest. Last year we did continue with taking stock to the shows, but sales have been poor, with the exception of bulbs at the Autumn Show. Going forward we will continue to take the bulbs to the Autumn Show, but are we are unlikely to have a table in the Summer Show.</p> <p>To our members, a thank you for supporting the club by using the trading hut. Our thanks go to all the volunteers who help to run the trading hut, from those that man the desk, operate the gate, lift items to members cars, re-stock the bird food and last but not least our 'lifting team' who are always on hand to help with the deliveries.</p> <p><i>There were no questions from the floor.</i></p> <p>Proposed: Liz Crow Seconded: Sandra Hooper</p>		
6.	Election of committee	Sheila Davenport
<p>There were no nominations from the floor to join the committee. The current committee were willing to re-stand and duly re-elected.</p> <p>Proposed by: Pat Roome Seconded: Jane Heritage</p>		
7.	AOB	Julie Sheppard
<p>a. Trophies: 3 possible options were put forward for members to consider and discuss.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. To continue as we are at a cost of about £350 for engraving and about £100 for new plinths and metal bands or, i. To continue to award trophies, not to engrave them and record the names in a special book for the purpose or, i. To reduce the number of cups and continue to engrave as now. This is an information item only and a decision will be made following feedback from members tonight and in a survey that will come out again this year. <p>Claire Shenton-Taylor pointed out that with the current approach, apart from perhaps a photo, you have no record after the end of the year when you hand the trophy back that you won it, and suggested a certificate (similar to those for best exhibit) be presented to trophy winners.</p> <p>Richard Cox suggested writing winners' details in a book, publishing these on the website, and awarding a card or certificate to recognise the winning of a trophy.</p>		

Peter Radband was strongly in favour of continuing with engraving and presentation of trophies appropriate given the effort involved in exhibiting. He stressed the trophies are a part of the club's history and suggested the return of class entrance fees at 25p per class to go towards the cost of engraving. Further suggesting the club should seek other revenue sources. He disputed the idea that members would look at a book recording previous winners.

Betty Wilson pointed out the prestige of winning and believed having your name engraved on a trophy was an incentive to enter the shows, and that engraving was a historical record. She supported carry on as is but with the possibility of asking winners to make a donation, perhaps £5, towards engraving. Chris Dressler also stressed the importance of the trophies to the history of the club and suggested looking for an alternative, cheaper engraver, and that reverting to having all the trophies engraved at one time in bulk would be more cost effective.

There were further points from several members on reducing the show deficit to offset the cost of engraving. Charging more for visitors and ideas for class entry fees ranged from 25p, 30p to 50p. A show of hands saw an overwhelming majority for sticking with the status quo, awarding all the trophies and for them to be engraved at the club's expense, 3 members supported the idea of an awards book and presenting the trophies but not having them engraved. None of the members present supported the move to reduce the number of trophies.

b. Should we continue with a separate daffodil and spring show, or combine the 2 into one show?

Members recognised the declining entries but several felt it depended on the weather in a particular year. There was discussion on if we went for the earlier date there would be no tulip entries but the later date would mean very few daffodils as was the case in 2023. A show of hands was approximately 45% stick with 2 shows & 55% to combine them.

Both of these items were for information and discussion. Members were informed that a survey will come out again this year and a decision will be made following the results of it, combined with the feedback from members tonight.

- c. With regard to increasing the membership several points were raised/suggestions made:
- Increase the club's presence on social media
 - Possibility of doing a leaflet drop to houses in Sandhurst
 - Putting the banners out advertising the shows a few days ahead of the shows

The committee will be looking at ways of managing the communication of the club and any volunteers to support this role would be welcome. It was recognised that the future members are likely to be very media savvy and therefore a leaflet drop unlikely to be successful. Banners are put out on the day of the show; before that and they could be damaged/removed. Every home in Sandhurst receives a copy of the SRA magazine (and similarly the Crowthorne Eye in Crowthorne) and there is an article in each edition about the club. This has perhaps a greater reach than leaflets would. Leaflets are available from the clubhouse.

Hilary Corio thanked the committee for their hard work, recognised Carole McGowan for her sterling job welcoming the speaker on the afternoon sessions, Lydia Stonestreet for the trips and Chris Dresler for her past work for the club.

8.	Presentations	Sheila Davenport
	<p>Presentations were made to 3 committee members who had served the club for a considerable number of years and left the committee following the re-structure: Ruth Page Derek Dolling</p>	

	Carol McGowan
9.	Close of meeting
	The meeting closed at 8.25 pm

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