

Chiswick Horticultural and Allotments Society

Affiliated to:

The Royal Horticultural Society
The Royal National Rose Society
The London Gardens Society
Thrive



Minutes of the Chiswick Horticultural and Allotments Society AGM held on 1 March 2009 at 3.00pm at Dukes Meadows Community Association Hall, London W4

In attendance:

Committee Alan Belcham, President
Alastair Britten, joint Trading Hut coordinator
Philip Cole, Publicity Officer
Rosemary Day, Chairman
Jane Featherstone, committee member
Diana Graves, Membership Secretary
John Hole, Wildlife and Number 1 allotments
Sue King, committee member
Julian Lockett, Treasurer
Jill Morris, joint Trading Hut coordinator
Judith O'Connor, Secretary
Sean O'Reilly, Show Secretary
John Reed, Events coordinator
Andrew Steele, Allotments Secretary
Dawn Walsh, committee member

Members Lilian Baker
Felicity Barwood
Chloë Belcham
Kurt and Margaret Berger
Brian and Daphne Boothby
Geoff Boswell
Rita Chesney
Andy Derkacz
Louise Di Duca
Jean Edwards
Patrick and Rosie Findlater
Henry and Sue Gewanter
Karen Harms
Dr Graham and Mrs Elaine Hughes
Jennifer Jenks
L Kowalewska
Paula Leyburn
Pamela Mayorcas

Aileen Murphy
John and Judith Ormsby
Valerie Pancic
Grace Phillipson
Jenny Plugge
M Posek
John Reed
William Sargent
Sandy Shepherd
Lou Spencer
Doe Tilgner Murray
Linda Tillman
Geraldine Wakeling
Mike Walsh
Cluny Wells

1. **Welcome by the President**

Alan Belcham welcomed all to the meeting and thanked them for coming. He had attended more AGMs than he could remember and this would be his last as President. He thanked all the committee members for their work in keeping the Society going over what had been a difficult year. There would be some other changes to the committee. He was glad that two new members were prepared to join, and he particularly wanted to thank the outgoing Secretary, Judith O'Connor, and Treasurer, Julian Lockett.

2. **Apologies for absence**

Those present noted that apologies had been received from Jill Morris, joint Trading Hut coordinator, and from members John and Nan Owen, Jane Freebairn-Smith and Everard and Alastair Whitehouse.

3. **Minutes of 2008 AGM**

Those present approved the minutes of the 2008 AGM and there were no questions. Any matters arising would be dealt with in the committee reports to follow.

4. **Committee reports**

a) *Chairman*

Rosemary Day reported that 2008 had been very busy with new committee members making their contribution, as well as invaluable work from re-elected members. In particular, Jill Morris and Alastair Britten got the Trading Hut back into operation, Dawn Walsh continued to look after 'the inner man' with show catering and the outer man with successful raffles, Sean O'Reilly and John Reed organised the events and quiz nights, and John Hole continued to develop the Wild Life allotment. Philip Cole continued to get the Society photographed, published and printed and Andrew Steele started finding allotment reps where they were needed and dealing with Continental Landscapes, part of Laings, who had taken over from CIP responsibility for managing allotments in Hounslow.

As members would know, the Society owed a very special thank you to Julian Lockett, the Society Treasurer and an architect, who drew up revised plans for the new CHS Centre, and had been

dealing with the Council regularly over recent weeks. She was glad to report that the Society now had planning permission for the new Centre, and those present would hear more about that later.

The Chairman also thanked Geoff Boswell who, though he was not on the committee, had continued the excellent work on Number One allotment. All those present congratulated Geoff on this.

Last but not least, the Chairman commented that the Society could not function nearly as well without the efforts of Judith O'Connor as committee secretary and indefatigable sorter-out of everything, and Diana Graves, who ensured that everyone renewed their membership and, vitally, organised the Sunday morning rotas at the trading hut.

Finally, the Chairman said, the Society was about to go into a very exciting year, with much good work providing an excellent foundation for development. She thanked everyone for making it possible.

b) Trading Hut

Alastair Britten introduced himself as one of the new Trading Hut coordinators along with Jill Morris, who had sent her apologies. He had loved the atmosphere of the hut over the past eight years and said that he and Jill had been happy to take over the running of it in May of last year. Neither of them had any previous experience of buying or selling but they resolved to try to buy what the members wanted at the cheapest possible price. This was not always easy, as they discovered to their cost early on. Nevertheless, Alastair said, it was important for them to know from members what products they would like the hut to stock. Jill and Alastair were at the hut regularly but, if members could not get hold of them, a suggestion book was available in the hut.

Alastair wanted to thank many people involved in assisting with the running of the hut. They were very grateful to Fred Wakeling for chopping down the trees obscuring the light to the greenhouse, to Angela Brown and Rita Chesney for their loving care in providing seeds and spring plants, to Diana Graves for doing a terrific job in organising volunteers to help in the hut, to the volunteers themselves (more would be welcome) and to Philip Cole for doing the laminating of signs and for the regular e-mailed newsletter and trading hut newflash, and for consequently bearing the brunt of members' feedback, both positive and negative.

Finally, Alastair commented that several members said they would be sorry to lose the spirit of the old trading hut when the new Centre became available. Alastair was sure, however, that within a couple of weeks of the new trading area opening, things would be back to normal with the spirit, organised chaos, humour and bonhomie of the original hut. He encouraged all present to volunteer to help in the trading hut on a Sunday morning – it would be on an occasional basis only, and was great fun.

c) Allotments

Andrew Steele, Allotments Secretary, said that most members would be aware that, in 2008, the contract to manage allotments within the London Borough of Hounslow passed from CIP to Continental Landscapes, part of the Laing group. Continental Landscapes had been awarded a ten-year contract and it was likely that during that time they would want to discuss the principle of self-management with the various allotment societies in Hounslow.

Their Allotment Officer, Jim Buchan, had visited all allotment sites in Chiswick and, where plots were not being maintained, had issued "notices to cultivate" orders. Mr Buchan, in discussion with CHS committee members, had agreed to revisit all sites after Easter. This would give any allotment-holders who had been issued with notices to cultivate the opportunity to get their plots in order. If their allotments remained untended, Continental Landscapes would serve final notice. A definition of what constituted "cultivation" remained to be agreed formally between Continental Landscapes

and the allotment societies. In principle, it was agreed that at least 50% of a plot should be weed-free and cultivated.

The waiting list for allotments in Chiswick far outweighed the number of plots available. Concerns had been raised at the last AGM regarding uncultivated allotments. The committee hoped that the measures implemented by Continental Landscapes would address this issue and ensure that all allotments are used to their maximum potential.

Andrew wanted to take this opportunity to remind allotment-holders that they must clearly display their plot numbers to avoid any confusion, particularly during this exercise. It had been agreed with Jim Buchan that members of CHS would assist in this process in the first instance to ensure that all allotments were clearly numbered.

The issue of the dumped rubbish at the entrance of the Chertsey Road site remained an ongoing subject of discussion between the Society and Continental Landscapes. Mr Buchan was aware that this problem remained to be resolved. However, no action would be taken to clear the rubbish until an acceptable alternative for the area had been agreed to minimise the risk of further dumping. **Members were reminded that the site had been cleared two years ago but had almost at once accumulated piles of rubbish.** Allotment-holders on Chertsey Road should be aware that this area should not be used for waste disposal.

Vandalism and fly tipping had again been a problem on allotment sites in 2008. Andrew requested that everyone be vigilant and report any such activities to their allotment representative or to him, so that the neighbourhood policing team can be kept informed. A full list of allotment representatives could be found on the CHS website.

(Post meeting note: the allotments reps are:

Burial Ground = Lilian Baker

Chertsey Road = Andrew Steele

Dukes Meadows = Sue Black

Promenade (3-66) = Sue King

Promenade (69-124) = Judith O'Connor

Staveley Road = Andy Derkacz

Thames Road = Philip York).

d) Shows

Rosemary Day, who had looked after the Society shows in 2008, told those present that, following the success of the autumn show in 2007, the management committee took the decision in 2008 to move the Summer Show there as well, to both keep costs down and encourage visitors to Number One allotment next door. Both shows attracted a good number of entries, with a colourful display of roses and sweet peas in June and, despite the poor weather and rain on the day, a good display especially of fruit, beans, peas and potatoes at the autumn show.

The close proximity of the allotments encouraged gardeners to exhibit their produce for the first time and several new entrants won trophies. However, Rosemary said that the Society still needed **very** many **more** members to enter. If anyone had ideas about how to encourage more members to exhibit at the Society's shows, they would be very welcome.

Despite the committee's best efforts, the shows cost £1277 to put on in 2008, compared to £877 in 2007. This was due in part to bad weather, but also to rising costs and fewer entrants. The plan was to continue with two shows this year. In the future, the new Centre will give the opportunity to review shows in general and to have more smaller shows, which could be better for exhibitors and cost less. Rosemary asked members to let the committee have their views. They could either e-mail via the web site or make comments at the trading hut.

e) *Membership*

Diana Graves told those present that the Society ended 2008 with 368 paid-up members as against 390 at the start of the year. There were 40 new members but 62 who did not renew, which accounted for the reduction of 22. This was disappointing but Diana was glad to say that the number who failed to renew was down by 14 on 2007; she hoped that the Society could improve on that in 2009. Membership renewals had got off to a good start; so far, 265 members had renewed their subscription.

About two-thirds of members now received the newsletter by e-mail, saving both time and money. Reminders of events or special messages could be distributed quickly via e-mail, so she encouraged anyone who had an e-mail address but still received their newsletter by hand or post to let the Society have their e-mail address. If members acquired an e-mail address or their address changed, they should let Diana know.

Diana wished to thank everyone who had helped distribute those newsletters which did not go by e-mail - this was great help and saved postage. Diana was also grateful to those who helped with renewals in both the Trading Hut and elsewhere, particularly Pamela Mayorcas.

Finally, Diana wished to thank all of those on the trading hut rota, who were prepared to turn out in terrible weather conditions to help. Without them, the trading hut could not survive. She hoped that, by this time next year, working conditions would be improved with the new Centre.

f) *Events*

Sean O'Reilly reminded those present of the events which had been organised in 2008. These were:

2 February	Quiz Night
2 March	Annual General Meeting
8 March	Visit to Kew Gardens, (Henry Moore Sculptures)
10 & 11 May	Plant Sale
3 June	"Exhibiting to Win" talk by Judge P Mazillius
15 June	Summer Show
28 June	Annual Dinner
1 August	Visit to RHS Wisley
6 August	Visit to Highgrove & Througham Court
7 September	Autumn Show
18 October	Quiz Night
7 December	Christmas Party: Trading Hut

A list of some events planned for 2009 appeared at the end of the AGM agenda.

g) *Publicity*

Philip Cole reminded members that publicity was all about communication - both communication from "us" to "you" and, conversely, from "you" to "us". It had been pointed out that he might receive adverse comments from members in response to items in the newsletter, but he preferred to hear about anything of concern rather leaving issues unreported and unresolved.

The Newsletter was produced four or five times a year to keep the membership informed of Society events and activities. It was distributed by e-mail where possible or by hand or post. 285 members (35 more than last year) received the newsletter by e-mail. Anyone with e-mail who did not receive their newsletter this way should send Philip an e-mail so he could include them in the distribution list.

The 2009 Members' Handbook had been updated to include relevant information to help new and existing members of the Society enter their fruit, flowers, vegetables and home-prepared cakes, breads and jams into the two annual shows. The 2009 membership card was smaller (now credit card-sized) so it would fit conveniently into a wallet or purse. Eight commercial adverts from high-profile local businesses filled the inside front and the inside back covers of the Handbook, raising half the cost of producing the Handbook. If any members knew of potential advertisers for next year, Philip asked them to let him know.

The Society's relationship with the local press continued to be very cordial. They had carried regular reports of the summer and autumn shows, including excellent colour photographs of flagship events. They also featured Number One Allotment, the Open Days and the social events. Society events were also featured on the Chiswick W4 website and in the newsletters from St Michael & All Angels Church in Bedford Park.

The Society's website (www.chsw4.org) continued to be upgraded as the most effective way of getting information about the Society. The aim was to keep the website up-to-date and Philip would welcome any comments or suggestions about it. Whilst some members did not have e-mail or access to the internet, the majority did and it was essential to take advantage of the potential offered. The number of people who had looked at the website (the "hits") had now reached over 143,000, indicating that the Society was reaching a large section of its public.

h) Number One Allotment

John Hole reminded those present that Number One Allotment was an organic gardening project for people with learning and physical disabilities, based at the Duke's Meadows allotment site in Chiswick. The Society started the project in May 2005 in partnership with the Hounslow Learning Disabilities Service. The objective of the project was to provide a communal environment where service users could learn gardening skills and actively cultivate an allotment to produce fresh fruit and vegetables for themselves, thereby gaining self-confidence and a sense of achievement.

During 2008, the project continued to build on its earlier success with around twenty-five service users regularly coming to the allotment for a day's gardening session every week. Nearly 100 service users from four care centres had attended since the project started four years ago.

The project was now well equipped with gardening tools, a spacious greenhouse, a fruit cage, storage sheds and extensive raised beds enabling the gardening team to grow a wide range of fruit and vegetables. Several of the clients were able to look after their own raised beds and some now attended a gardening course at a local college (funded by the local authority). Participation on the project had boosted clients' capability and self-esteem and had helped two clients to obtain employment.

Four members of the Society supervised the gardening team every week. The Society was very grateful for their continuing commitment and dedication to the project and for the active involvement of the care workers.

This year, with the aid of a grant of £2,800 from the City Bridge Trust, the Society built and furnished a wooden wheelchair-accessible community cabin for the project. The cabin provided a sheltered space for the gardening team to get together to discuss the day's gardening jobs and to have lunch and rest breaks. The cabin also served as a workshop for indoor activities in bad weather and a store for gardening clothes and boots. The cabin was proving to be a tremendous social asset that promoted a strong team spirit and a sense of belonging. The Society acknowledged with gratitude the award of this grant by the City Bridge Trust.

The project was grateful to receive a donation of £200 from the Hounslow East Society, a local charity working to enhance the lives of people with learning disabilities and their families. The money was used to purchase some special hand tools designed to make gardening easier for people with physical disabilities.

During the course of the year, plants and seedlings were sold to allotment holders to raise funds to help cover the day-to-day running costs. The garden was also open to the public on several occasions to publicise the project and for further plant sales.

Thirty-five service users from the gardening team visited the RHS Garden at Wisley in August and a group attended the annual Thrive Flower Show at Battersea Park.

John reported that the majority of the gardening team thoroughly enjoyed and looked forward to their weekly visits to Number One Allotment and were keen to start working as soon as they arrived. For many, coming to the allotment was the only physical and recreational activity open to them. Several clients had been coming since the beginning of the project and had learnt many gardening skills. Whilst some were a little reticent and needed motivating, there had been many encouraging signs that clients were becoming more outgoing and able better to cope with difficulties that have overwhelmed them in the past. The project was also a very positive and rewarding experience for the supervisors and care workers.

i. Wildlife Allotment

The Society established the Wildlife Allotment in 2004 on a derelict allotment plot following the award of an environment grant of by BAA Heathrow and Groundwork, the charity aiming to improve the quality of people's lives through environmental action.

In 2008, volunteers from the Society continued with the horticultural development of the site; nearly 200 species of native plants are now growing on this 500sqm plot of land, attracting a growing range of insects and other wildlife.

Most of the former derelict land had been transformed in to a variety of wildlife habitats. A pond with submerged, emergent and marginal plants was now well established and attracted a dazzling variety of wildlife. A maturing tree and shrub border along the southwestern boundary provided shade for many woodland plants whilst tall wayside perennials shared the sun along the northern border. Quivering grasses, plantains, vetches and ox-eye daisies formed the central meadow and the southeastern boundary was protected by a grassy bank adorned with broom, dogwood and roses.

It was planned to do further work on the three remaining undeveloped areas during 2009, to make the reserve more attractive not only to the local wildlife but also to visitors of all ages. In addition to enhancing the ecology, paths would be improved and more plant name labels and signs provided. It was also intended to obtain educational material so that visiting schoolchildren could learn more about nature in support of the school curriculum, as part of the Society's development of its educational programme with local schools.

5. Update on CHS new Centre

Julian Lockett, architect for the new Centre, reminded those present that planning consent was granted in 2003 for a purpose-built new centre. Although the Society made valiant efforts to raise funds, the cost of the proposed Centre continued to outstrip the funds available. In 2008, the existing planning consent lapsed.

The committee therefore decided in 2008 to consider alternatives that could be tailored to the likely available funds and met the requirements of the lease proposed by Hounslow Council, which was likely to be for a period of 21 years though the Society had hoped for 25 years.

A new planning application had been submitted and those present had already heard from the Chairman that consent had been given. The new scheme could be seen on the two coloured drawings, which he hoped members had collected on their way into the meeting.

One of the major changes was that the existing Nissen hut would be retained, which would allow trading to continue during the construction. It will consequently be repaired and repainted to be used as covered storage for compost and other bulk items.

The new Centre would consist of seven steel storage containers welded together with the internal walls removed. It would be divided into two by a sliding partition and would have two WCs, one for disabled use, as well as a small kitchen. Internally, the Centre would be insulated, lined, painted, and finished with a vinyl floor. Heating would be provided by means of electric fan convectors and full power and lighting would be incorporated.

The internal layout had been designed to allow for talks, quizzes and shows to be held at the new Centre, thus reducing the cost to the Society. However, the main activity would remain the Sunday morning trading, but it was hoped to improve this and to provide somewhere where members could sit down, have a coffee and get together.

The siting of the new Centre had been designed to allow the greenhouse to remain in position and the area between the Nissen hut and the new Centre would have a new timber and plastic roof. It was planned to provide a planted roof to the Centre. This would be done by covering the roof with a large pond liner and dropping earth and shingle on to it, which would both increase the insulation and, it was hoped, attract wildlife.

It was planned that construction would commence after the summer show and should be completed by the end of September. During the construction, the area would be cordoned off for the contractor and for safety reasons. The area would therefore not be available for parking at any time. The Nissen hut would continue to be open as the trading centre, but would be accessed from the other end, requiring the supply of "royal manure" to be suspended over the summer period.

There would be some activities related to the new Centre, and members' help would be much appreciated with these, for instance some clearing of vegetation, construction of the timber and plastic roof link and painting. Anyone able to assist should let a committee member know. Julian looked forward to breaking a bottle on the new Centre later in the year.

6. Outlook for the Society

The Chairman thanked Julian for all the work he had done so far on the new Centre. She told those present that the Society still needed about £20,000 to fund the new centre. She had applied on behalf of the Society to a number of trusts and foundations for this, but also hoped that anyone who felt able to contribute would do so. She reiterated that, while construction work was going on, there would be no parking at, near or leading up to the hut site, so allotment-holders working on their plots and Sunday morning shoppers should park on Staveley Road, walk or use public transport. The Staveley Road gate would show warnings of construction activities.

As Julian Lockett had said, keeping the old Nissen hut meant that trading could continue for most of the construction period, as long as it could be guaranteed that people would be safe and secure on site. She asked everyone to look out for coned-off areas and not to cross tapes if these were restricting access.

The new trading hut would be clean, warmer and organised but, above all, would continue to welcome and meet the needs of members with a range of seeds, bulbs, composts, canes etc. The greenhouse would supply more vegetable and flower plants for members' gardens and allotments at competitive prices.

The Society would continue to organise familiar events, including quiz nights, outings to gardens and the annual dinner as well as the summer and autumn shows in Dukes Meadows. The committee would review the questionnaires that some members had filled in to make events more attractive.

The new meeting room, small kitchen and WCs would enable the Society to do more for members and to branch out to do more to meet its objectives. In particular:

- providing a space with chairs and some kitchen facilities where members could have a chat, swap news and views and comment on other activities they might be interested in;
- arranging short talks and demonstrations on different aspects of growing fruit, vegetables and flowers, especially on Sunday mornings to coincide with Centre opening for trading;
- setting up times when new allotment holders and start-up gardeners could meet established growers to learn the 'tricks of the trade';
- providing a meeting space where those wanting to share their allotments could meet up with those wanting to start up;
- setting up a children's gardening club with volunteers teaching children of local gardeners and Society members how to sow and grow vegetables for themselves. If the family did not have a garden, they could use the raised beds the Society would build as part of the project;
- holding special exhibitions and a children's horticultural show at the Centre to encourage and give prizes to the children.

New activities that help meet the Society's objectives would include:

- Inviting groups of children from local primary schools to visit the Wildlife Allotment, which will further be developed, to learn about the environment, bugs, birds and butterflies.
- Contacting the five primary schools within 1-2 miles of the centre to initiate and support the development of horticultural activities within the schools themselves. Teachers from local schools would be invited to the Centre to learn about gardening possibilities their own schools, with welcome packs.
- Inviting members of the surrounding communities to the more general talks on different aspects of gardening to promote an interest in horticulture and, in consultation with local community leaders, offering help to develop growing vegetables on ground within estates where residents would like to try this out.

Apart from new opportunities arising from the new Centre, the Society was also beginning talks with other local allotment societies about trade, shows, events and developments proposed by the Council. It was also developing much better and closer working relationships with the Council and their agents, Laings/Continental Landscapes, to get all allotments fully used, keep the sites clear of rubbish and in good shape, and get the waiting list for allotments down to more reasonable levels.

The Chairman concluded by saying that it was going to be a very busy year for everyone; she hoped that many members would be willing to help wherever it was possible.

7. Treasurer's report and adoption of the 2008 Annual Report and Financial Statements

Julian Luckett as Treasurer reported that the Society's net assets increased in 2008 to £59,111 from £54,069. The funds designated for the new Centre increased to £36,159 from £31,774 and at 31 December, £8,034 was held in the current Lloyds account. Over the year, the Trading Hut made a profit of £1,162, representing a return of 18.2%, a significant improvement over the figure for 2007 of 12.5%.

The Number One allotment continued to attract grants and to pay its way through plant sales and other activities.

The Society continued to raise funds through quizzes and other events thanks to the efforts of the events coordinator assisted by other committee members. The cost of running such events had

risen considerably due to increased hire charges. In 2008, the Society spent over £1,200 on the hire of halls and associated costs such as moving tables for the shows. These expenses would no longer apply when the new Centre was opened.

Julian wanted to thank Rebecca Bower for her patience and great assistance as the Society's Independent Examiner and was pleased to report that Rebecca had agreed to continue for another year. She was unanimously re-elected.

There being no questions on the accounts, the Treasurer informed those present that the Independent Examiner had already approved the accounts and, on behalf of the committee, he therefore submitted the 2008 report and accounts for their approval. They were unanimously approved.

8. Proposed change to the Society's Mem & Arts

The Chairman explained that the trustees wished to change the role of the Society's President to an honorary, non-voting position, freeing up one committee place for a "working" member. This had been notified in the January newsletter and no objections had been received. The change could be made by a minor alteration in the Mem&Arts para 41 (2), which would then read "The President (a) shall be entitled to attend and speak at committee meetings; (b) shall not be entitled to vote at such meetings".

A resolution to make this change was put to the meeting and was passed unanimously.

9. Election of committee members for 2009/10

The Chairman informed those present that John Reed had decided not to stand again but the committee was delighted that he would continue to help with and join in the Society's events. Dawn Walsh had also decided to stand down after some 30 years of support for the Society. The committee was very glad that Dawn would continue to participate in Society events and be actively involved in Society affairs. All present thanked John and Dawn for their contributions.

All the other existing committee members had put themselves forward for re-election. The Chairman was pleased to say that two new potential members had come forward - Catherine Steele and Andy Derkacz.

Those present approved the election or re-election of committee members for the next 12 months:

Alastair Britten
Philip Cole
Rosemary Day
Andy Derkacz
Jane Featherstone
Diana Graves
John Hole
Sue King
Julian Lockett
Jill Morris
Judith O'Connor
Seán O'Reilly
Andrew Steel
Catherine Steele.

Those present approved the election of Rosemary Day as Chairman, Catherine Steele as Secretary and Sue King as Treasurer.

Members noted that committee posts would therefore be as follows:

Chairman and Centre fund-raising	Rosemary Day
Treasurer	Sue King
Secretary	Catherine Steele
Allotments Secretary	Andrew Steele
Education programme co-ordinator	Jane Featherstone
Events co-ordinator	Judith O'Connor
Show Secretary	Sean O'Reilly
Membership Secretary and hut rota management	Diana Graves
New Centre project co-ordinator	Julian Lockett
PR and Publicity/newsletter	Philip Cole
Trading Hut co-ordinators	Jill Morris and Alastair Britten
Wildlife allotment manager and No 1 Allotment liaison	John Hole
Committee member	Andy Derkacz

10. Election of President and Vice Presidents for 2009/10

The Chairman informed the meeting that, as they had heard earlier, Alan Belcham had decided to stand down as President after many years service to the Society. On behalf of the trustees, the Chairman wished to express gratitude to Alan for all his support and work and hoped that he and Chloë would continue to be active in the Society. The trustees wished to propose that Councillor Felicity Barwood, a Society member who had supported activities and events over recent years, be appointed President for one year.

She proposed that Councillor Paul Lynch and Kurt Berger be re-appointed for one year as Vice Presidents. Paul Lynch had wished to be at the meeting but was unable to do so. Rosemary also wished to propose two new Vice-Presidents, Geoff Boswell and Dawn Walsh. Geoff was known to many members and had made a significant contribution to the Society over many years, particularly in recent years to the development of Number One allotment. Dawn had an almost unrivalled knowledge of the Society and its history and had also been a strong supporter for many years.

All were elected unanimously. Felicity Barwood as incoming President informed the meeting that she would do all she could to represent the Society and assist with the Council where possible.

11. Independent Examiner

Julian Lockett wished to report that that Rebecca Bower had agreed to continue to act as the Society's Independent Examiner for another year. She was unanimously re-elected.

12. Events for 2009

Members noted some events already planned for the coming year:

Sat 18 April	Quiz, St Michael's Church Hall
Tues 12 May	Visit by coach to Beth Chatto Garden and RHS Hyde Hall
Sat 16/Sun 17 May	Plant Sale, Trading Hut
Sun 7 June	CHS summer show, Dukes Meadows Community Hall
Sat 4 July	CHS Annual Dinner, Café Rouge, Strand on the Green
Sun 6 Sept	CHS autumn show, Dukes Meadows Community Hall
Sept/Oct, tbc	Opening party for new CHS Centre
Sat 31 Oct	Halloween party, CHS Centre
Sat 21 Nov	Quiz, CHS Centre

13. Retiring President

The Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking all for attending. She also thanked Alan Belcham for his contribution to the Society over the years and presented to him a picture frame containing photographs of him and Chloë at various Society events. There being no other business, the meeting closed at 4.00pm. Members joined the committee for a glass of sparkling wine to mark Alan's retirement as President.

JOC
6 March 2009