

# 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  
Annual General Meeting  
held on Sunday 07 March 2010 at 3.00pm at  
The CHS Centre, Staveley Road, London W4**

**In attendance:**

Committee and Trustees

Felicity Barwood, President  
Kurt Berger, Vice President  
Geoff Boswell, Vice President  
Alastair Britten, Joint Trading Centre Coordinator  
Philip Cole, Publicity Officer  
Rosemary Day, Chairman  
Henry Gewanter, Treasurer  
Diana Graves, Membership Secretary  
John Hole, Number One and Wildlife Allotments Liaison  
Paul Lynch, Vice President  
Dan Roberts, Events Secretary  
Andrew Steele, Allotments Secretary  
Catherine Steele, Secretary

Society Members

Alan Belcham	John Duberry	Pamela Mayorcas	Corinne Sadeghi
Chloe Belcham	Sue Gewanter	Alison McMichael	Brenda Sadler
Brian Boothby	Christine Hall	June McNaughton	William Sargent
Daphne Boothby	Karen Harms	Christina Meiklejohn	Lou Spencer
Louis Boroditsky	Graham Hughes	Aileen Murphy	Linda Tillman
Andy Derkacz	Colin Ingram	Grace Phillipson	Rosemary Webb
Louise Di Duca	Peter Isaac	Lesley Anne Reynolds	Cluny Wells
Edith Duberry	Caroline Lees	Tom Reynolds	Philip York

**1. Welcome**

The Chairman, Rosemary Day, welcomed the Society members to the meeting, the first to be held at the new CHS Centre.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Jill Morris, Joint Trading Centre Coordinator, Seán O'Reilly, Show Coordinator and Dawn Walsh, Vice President

### **3. Minutes of the 2009 AGM**

Copies of the minutes of the 2009 Annual General Meeting were available at the meeting and would also be posted on the CHS website.

Those present approved the minutes and there were no questions.

Any matters arising would be dealt with in the Committee reports to follow.

### **4. Committee Reports**

#### Trading Centre (Alastair Britten)

In 2009, while expenditure on stock for trading had increased, so too had revenue from sales resulting in an overall increase in profitability.

The acquisition of stock at reasonable prices, managed by Jill Morris, is not always easy. As the quantities purchased are relatively modest, getting the best price for items is an ongoing struggle, especially for smaller items which, we appreciate, can often be got for less elsewhere. It is hoped, however, that the majority of our prices are competitive and that we are getting it right most of the time.

It is hoped that Society members will agree that the opening of the new Centre has added to the shopping experience and that the essential atmosphere of trading Sundays has been preserved, if not enhanced.

Thanks were extended to Angela Brown and Rita Chesney for their hard work in the greenhouse, cultivating and growing on plants for sale through the Centre, to Diana Graves for her contribution organising the rota of volunteers who staff the Centre on trading Sundays, to the volunteers themselves for giving up their precious free time and to all Society members who, by continuing to support trading, contribute to our fund raising efforts

It was noted that, since Diana is standing down from the Committee, organisation of the trading centre rota will be taken over by Alastair.

#### Allotments (Andrew Steele)

There are approximately 600 plots, spread over six allotment sites in the Chiswick area. Of these there is currently almost 100% occupancy although we are aware of six plots on the Chertsey Road site that remain unallocated, pending the clearing of these by Continental Landscapes.

In 2009, there continued to be security incidents with thefts, fly tipping and graffiti. Allotment holders are therefore urged to be vigilant, ensuring that any valuables taken onto the plot are locked away. We are pleased to have forged excellent contacts with the Safer Neighbourhood Police Teams during the year, with visits to the allotment sites to advise on security and safety.

They have also been kind enough to provide us with some graffiti removal materials which can be borrowed from the Centre if required.

The Homefields SNT covers the area to the south of the A316 encompassing Dukes Meadows, Chertsey Road and Promenade while the Riverside SNT looks after the north side covering Burial Ground, Staveley Road and Thames Road.

*Post meeting note: Contact numbers for the Safer Neighbourhood Teams are, for Homefields, 020 8247 6415 and, for Riverside, 020 8247 6415.*

We continue to have a team of Allotment Representatives who can be contacted with regard to any general questions or minor issues on the allotment sites. The Allotment Representatives are:

- Burial Ground: Lilian Baker
- Chertsey Road: Andrew Steele
- Dukes Meadows: Sue Black and Geoff Boswell
- Promenade: Danny Kelly and Sue Shepherd
- Staveley Road: Pam des Baux
- Thames Road: Philip York

#### Shows and Events (Rosemary Day in the absence of Seán O'Reilly)

Both the summer and autumn shows in 2009 were a success with a good quality of entries.

It was disappointing, however, that only ten percent of Society members actually entered the classes and we hope to improve on this in 2010.

This year there will be three shows which it is thought will better coincide with the seasonality of produce therefore allowing members more choice for entries. The allocation of prizes has also been adjusted to enable more trophies to be awarded to first time entrants and novices.

The shows will be held at the Centre on Saturday 19 June, Saturday 31 July and Sunday 12 September. Staging of entries will be from 11.00am to 12.30pm with judging taking place between 12.30pm and 2.00pm. The shows will then open at 2.00pm with the presentation of prizes at 3.30pm and auction of produce at 4.00pm. Full details and the schedules of classes can be found in the Society handbook.

The focus for the Committee in 2009 was the construction of the new CHS Centre. In light of this few events were held. We intend to rectify this situation in 2010.

#### Number One Allotment (John Hole)

Number One Allotment is an organic gardening project for people with learning and physical disabilities based at the Duke's Meadows allotment site. The Society started the project in May 2005 in partnership with the Hounslow Learning Disabilities Service. The aim is to provide a communal environment where service users can 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.

The gardening team, under the guidance of six volunteer mentors, has had a very productive 2009. The team grew broad beans, leeks, potatoes, peppers, tomatoes, aubergines and butternut squashes which were shared out for everybody to take home. One of the successes this year was growing rhubarb from seed to mature plants, now bearing tasty stalks. The team won several first prizes in the Society's horticultural shows and were presented with four cups.

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.

This year the team has benefited greatly from the community cabin, which was funded by a grant from the City Bridge Trust and installed in 2008. This provides a sheltered space for the team to get together to discuss the day's gardening jobs, have lunch and rest breaks, use as a workshop for indoor activities in bad weather and a store for clothes and boots. The cabin is proving to be a tremendous asset, helping to engender a lively team spirit and sense of belonging.

During the year, the team took the opportunity to learn carpentry skills by rebuilding several of the raised growing beds, where the wood had rotted away

and, when the weather was bad, making bird boxes and hedgehog houses in the new community cabin.

The service users always look forward to their weekly gardening session on Number One Allotment. For most, it is the only outdoor activity open to them. It is evident that team members, many of whom have been coming since the beginning of the project, enjoy and respond to the challenges of gardening. Over the years they have become more motivated and sociable, they take more responsibility for getting things done and they work together helping each other.

In March 2009, the project was fortunate to receive a grant of £490 from the Chiswick Area Committee of Hounslow Council to purchase a new polytunnel. The Society gratefully acknowledges this award.

The project was also grateful to receive a further donation of £200 for new gardening tools from the Hounslow East Society, which is a local charity working to enhance the lives of children and adults with learning disabilities and their families. In addition, the project is indebted to the many allotment visitors who have given donations.

The Society continues to be very grateful for the continuing commitment and dedication of the gardening mentors and for the active involvement of the care workers.

#### Wildlife Allotment (John Hole)

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

The former abandoned and overgrown plot is being transformed into a variety of wildlife habitats. A pond with submerged, emergent and marginal plants is now well established and attracts a dazzling variety of wildlife. A maturing tree and shrub border along the southwest boundary provides shade for many woodland plants whilst tall wayside perennials share the sun along the northern border. Quivering grasses, plantains, vetches and ox-eye daisies form the central meadow and the southeast boundary is protected by a grassy bank adorned with broom, dogwood and roses. Around 250 species of native plants are now growing on this 500 m<sup>2</sup> triangular-shaped plot of land attracting a growing range of insects and other wildlife.

In 2009, volunteers from the Society continued with the horticultural development of the site. They cleared a stand of brambles and bindweed and planted the area with cornfield annuals that gave a colourful display until late autumn.

In 2010, as part of the development of its educational programme with local schools, the Society plans to improve the presentation of the reserve and to provide educational material so that visiting schoolchildren can learn more about nature in support of the school curriculum.

## **5. Chairman's Report**

Rosemary Day reported that the main project of 2009 was the building of the new CHS Centre. After so many years of planning and fundraising, it is finally completed and the Society has so people many to thank:

- John Hole and Graham Hughes who, as previous Chairmen helped to raise substantial funds;
- Felicity Barwood who helped to get permissions and agreements with the Council;

- Julian Lockett and Judith O'Connor who project managed and undertook the huge task of getting the construction actually carried out;
- All the Society's members, without whose support and contributions it would not have been built.

We are now in the position that some snagging has to be completed, and there are some things that we would like to add, like improving the front area for access and display, but it is fully useable. Apart from trading and Committee meetings, which have all been here since November, the first social event took place on Saturday 27 February – a very successful quiz night – following on from the well attended opening party on 20 December.

It is planned that all the shows and events for 2010 will be held at the Centre, making it the real heart of the Society. The timetable will be on display and full details and dates will be confirmed as soon as possible.

This year we would like to start the education programme, with more school visits to the Wildlife allotment, getting local residents more involved with gardening and vegetable growing and starting a Young Gardeners' club. News about all this will be in the weekly emailed newsletter with copy in the Centre for members to consult when they come for trading mornings and talks.

Several familiar faces will not be on the Committee this year and the Society would like to express its sincere gratitude for their work and commitment.

- We will be sad to lose John Hole who has held almost every position on the Committee and guided the Society through some difficult times. However we are delighted that he wishes to continue to lead the work on the Wildlife allotment.
- We are also saying goodbye to Geoff Boswell in any official capacity but again he will be carrying on leading the invaluable work for those with learning and physical disabilities on Number One allotment
- Julian Lockett and Judith O'Connor have relocated to Rye in East Sussex;
- Diana Graves has been Membership Secretary for many years and will be sorely missed. She will however continue to support the work of the Society.
- Others who have been on the Committee for shorter periods of time but have nevertheless made an impact are also standing down.

The Chairman concluded by encouraging all members of the Society, including those present, to contribute their ideas and comments – both positive and negative – to the Committee so that it can continue to expand and improve the services provided.

## **6. Treasurer's Report**

During 2009 the Society had three Treasurers and this, compounded with our auditor being on holiday and computer problems, has meant that we haven't been able to get a final audited financial statement from Rebecca Bower.

The draft accounts are, we believe, accurate and we know that all payments, with invoices and receipts, have been properly recorded. Some key points can be confirmed:

While the investment money has been used, the Society has sufficient funds to manage the normal inflow and expense of trading and, to subsidise, if necessary events, shows, etc that are important to the Society's members

The Society shall be saving quite significant sums by using the CHS Centre for meeting, shows and events and this, together with trading surplus and fund raising, will enable us to pay off the interest free loan in reasonable time

There is a continuing grant from Fullers for two years for education purposes and it is hoped that this will be used to set up the education programme.

If any new programme is developed that needs funds, we will seek partners, grants or other support rather than call on the Society's funds.

Please note that approval of the accounts is subject to audit. The report and accounts, when complete, will be put on the website and a reference copy will be available in the Centre for members to view. Copy will also be sent by email to those members with that facility at which time the procedure for approval of the accounts will also be confirmed and communicated.

## **7. Election of Committee members for 2010/2011**

As stated, Diana Graves, John Hole, Julian Lockett and Seán O'Reilly have decided not to stand for re-election. During the year, Andy Derkacz, Jane Featherstone, Sue King and Judith O'Connor resigned. A mixture of ill health, relocation, personal and professional pressures has led to these changes and the contributions of each of the Committee members will be sorely missed.

Especial thanks are due to John for his many years supporting the Society as a member of the Committee and as its Chairman after a time of exceptional change. Diana has also given long and sterling service to the Society and Judith and Julian have, in particular, made an outstanding contribution to the building of the new Centre. The Committee is delighted that Andy, Jane, Sue and Seán will all continue to work for the Society over the coming year in various capacities and hopes to see many of the other retiring members on trading Sundays and at other events.

All other existing Committee members have put themselves forward for re-election, together with Henry Gewanter and Dan Roberts who were appointed as Committee members on 10 May and 16 September 2009 respectively.

Those present unanimously approved the re-election of Committee members for the next twelve months.

Those present unanimously approved the election of Rosemary Day as Chairman, Catherine Steele as Secretary and Henry Gewanter as Treasurer.

The Committee is therefore comprised of the following.

Alastair Britten, Joint Trading Centre Coordinator  
Philip Cole, Publicity Officer  
Rosemary Day, Chairman  
Henry Gewanter, Treasurer  
Jill Morris, Joint Trading Centre Coordinator  
Dan Roberts, Events and Show Secretary  
Andrew Steele, Allotments Secretary  
Catherine Steele, Secretary

## **8. Election of President and Vice Presidents for 2010/2011**

Those present were asked to approve the election of President and Vice Presidents for 2010/2011. This approval was duly unanimously given.

Felicity Barwood, President

Kurt Berger, Vice President  
Diana Graves, Vice President  
Paul Lynch, Vice President  
Dawn Walsh, Vice President

Felicity Barwood expressed her delight and pleasure at continuing to be involved with the Society, stating that any Society gatherings were always most enjoyable.

## **9. Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2010/2011**

It was reported that Rebecca Bower had agreed to continue to act as the Society's independent examiner for another year. She was unanimously re-elected by those present.

#### **10. 2010 Diary Dates**

Dan Roberts presented the events planned so far for 2010.

- Plant sale - Saturday 08 and Sunday 09 May;
- Summer party - Saturday 03 July
- Christmas party - Sunday 19 December

It is intended to stage several talks on relevant topics at the Centre which will be held at weekends. There will also be a trial of a talk on a week day to gauge which format is preferred.

A number of garden visits will be organised with firm dates and destinations to be finalised. A second quiz night is planned for October.

All dates and details for events will be publicised, both at the Centre and in the Newsletter, nearer the time.

The aspiration to host Radio 4's Gardeners' Question Time was voiced and Rosemary Day advised those present that this idea had been discussed with members of the Chiswick House and Gardens Trust and, in the event of a successful application, they would be happy to offer the use of the marquee as a venue.

Any other ideas for events from Society members would be welcomed and should be communicated to Dan Roberts.

#### **11. Any Other Business**

A member asked whether it would be possible to arrange with Continental Landscapes and London Borough of Hounslow for wheelie bins to be located at the exit to each allotment site to allow for easier disposal of smaller, non degradable items. It was felt that this was highly unlikely to be agreed but the matter would be raised with Continental Landscapes.

*Post meeting note: Continental Landscapes have confirmed that this will not be possible.*

A member asked whether there was an intention to hold a Society dinner in 2010. The dinner was seen to be restrictive in terms of both numbers able to attend and cost. This therefore was being replaced by the summer party which would be open to more members and less expensive. Once this has been trialled, if it was not popular with members with more demand for a formal dinner, this decision would be reviewed.

There being no further business, the meeting was called to a close.