

South West Shropshire Gardening Club

Newsletter



October 2023

**“What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare”.**

From the poem “Leisure” by William Henry Davies

I remember our Head standing in assembly one morning and quoting this to us when I was teaching full time and raising a family. I was feeling exhausted and quite cynical about the Head’s suggestion! Several years later, I count myself very fortunate to be retired, having time to enjoy my garden and the beautiful countryside in Shropshire, as the seasons change. I hope you are enjoying the approach of Autumn too.



The most pressing thing on my mind right now is the fate of our committee...and therefore our club. We will have a short AGM before our next talk, when committee members need to be elected (or re-elected), so please read the section below and consider whether you could spare a little time to help our club continue to thrive.

Your Club needs YOU!



At our October meeting, we will have a short AGM before our talk. Sadly, four of our committee members are going to stand down so we will need some new volunteers to join us. I have been assured that this is nothing to do with me being Chair! Those leaving have done wonderful work over several years but feel like having a rest; two have moved further away. They deserve our heartfelt thanks – without their enthusiasm and commitment we could not function.

It would be particularly helpful if you have any level of IT skills – nothing fancy or too demanding and there are kind and patient people able to help you or fill any gaps in your knowledge (I have learnt a lot!)

Myself and Mellie (Chair and Vice Chair) are willing to continue in our roles if re-elected. Mandy could continue booking speakers but is happy to swap. Sandy could continue as Treasurer but is also willing to swap. Sue is looking into the role of Membership Secretary. Potentially we need a Secretary, Publicity Officer and Trip Organiser but nothing is set in stone until we see who comes forward to help.

Our constitution allows us to have ten members on the committee and two extra people could be co-opted for specific roles such as managing the teas or the seed order. We have had some offers of help but we need more! If no-one else comes forward, the Gardening Club will fold, which would be extremely sad, especially when it is thriving and so successful.

All the job descriptions can be viewed on the home page of our website. Please have a look at any role you might be interested in if you would like to join us. We meet about four times a year in one of our houses where we enjoy lively chats, aided by tea, coffee and homemade cake.

Please contact me if you have any queries or would like to express an interest.

Here are the minutes from last year's AGM

SOUTH WEST SHROPSHIRE GARDENING CLUB

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

26th October 2022

7.30pm at Lydbury North Village Hall

PRESENT,

CHAIR Annie Frost, Vice CHAIR Mellie Lewis, SECRETARY Eileen Matthey,

TREASURER Sandy Burton, Angie Salmon, Pauline Owens, Sandra Bailey, Mandy Ford, Sara Metcalf

The meeting was held in accordance with the Club Constitution.

MINUTES OF THE AGM 2021

These were circulated and accepted as a true record of the proceedings of 27th October 2021

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman thanked those committee members responsible for arranging an interesting programme of talks over the previous club year and the two summer outings. The numbers attending meetings continues to increase, although attendance is still below pre-pandemic levels. She expressed her hopes that more members would return to the club in due course.

She thanked the few people who had added their names to the tea rota but said that more volunteers would be needed for the club to be able to reinstate refreshments on a regular basis.

Members were advised that committee had decided to designate August 2023 as a 'rest' month i.e., no meeting and no outing, because many members were either away on holiday during August or had family commitments due to the school holidays and therefore unable to participate in club activities. The situation would be reviewed later next year.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Sandy Burton stated that the current balance of approximately £4,800.00 was around £1,000.00 less than the previous year, as the club still had financial outgoings but had not received any membership fees over the period spanning the pandemic. However, funds were still healthy and so membership fees for the year October 2022 – September 2023 were being held at £15.00.

The club now had an online banking facility, together with a card to facilitate cash deposits locally. The new online account complies with probity rules, with payments having to be authorised by two committee members. Membership fees can now be paid via BACs, in addition to the current facility to pay by cheque/cash.

Sufficient seed orders were received last year to qualify for a 50% discount.

Members were then asked for a show of hands to approve the accounts and they were approved unanimously. The Treasurer extended her thanks to Ed Cooper, who once again had audited and verified the accounts free of charge.

ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE

The Chairman advised that, in light of the difficult situation during the Covid pandemic, all members of the committee had offered to stand for another year, unless anyone else put themselves forward for election. This would result in some committee members continuing in their current posts beyond the usual three-year period stipulated in the constitution. However, having completed her term as Chairman, she would be standing down, to be succeeded by Angie Salmon.

The committee was currently one member short, following the resignation of Avril Dickinson. Sue Farrell was proposed as a replacement and her appointment was unanimously approved by a show of hands. Key committee posts are therefore as follows:

Chair: Angie Salmon
Vice-Chair: Mellie Lewis
Treasurer: Sandy Burton
Secretary: Eileen Matthey
Membership Secretary: Sandra Bailey
Also: Annie Frost, Sara Metcalf, Pauline Owens, Mandy Ford and Sue Farrell

NOTICES

Sandy Burton provided details of the Christmas event, the format of which would be different from previous years. A one-man, hilarious play 'Old Herbaceous' was being staged, with tickets now available, priced at £7.50 for members and £12.50 for non-members. A bar would be provided by the village hall committee.

Angie Salmon invited members to take a copy of the latest seed catalogue from D J Browns. The company is offering a 30% discount on seed orders totalling £300, increasing to 50% on orders of £500.00 or more. Order forms should be returned to Sandy Burton no later than 23rd November, which is the date of the next club meeting.

The incoming Chairman, Angie Salmon, said that she was aware that many people missed the social element associated with having refreshments prior to the meetings but whilst sufficient volunteers had come forward to provide refreshments at the November and February meetings, only one person had put their name down for the January meeting, so members were urged to add their names to the tea rota, located on the desk by the hall entrance.

The formal meeting was then concluded, with the introduction of the guest speaker, Gavin Stoneystreet, who would be giving a presentation on 'Plantsmen's Gardens'.

Ed Cooper

Many thanks again to Ed for checking our accounts this year. He gives his time without charge, for which we are very grateful.

Seed Order

Please remember to give your seed orders to Eileen at the October meeting or ensure that you post them to her by 10th November. We receive 30% discount with orders over £200. Last year we received 50% with our collective order over £500. This is one of the perks of membership so please make the most of it if you would like to.

Seonaid/Shona

Talking of committee members: someone who gave many hours of enthusiastic and cheerful support in the past, is Seonaid Wootton. Sadly, she is unable to attend our meetings due to being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She is undergoing treatment which makes her very tired but she still sounds her usual positive, calm, friendly self on the phone. She is endeavouring to carry on as normal, still enjoying the vegetables from her garden and doing crosswords.

After her diagnosis, she received wonderful support from Pancreatic Cancer UK. Her husband Tony is raising funds to “give something back” to this charity by doing a witnessed gym endurance test of plankholding and pushups at Ludlow Teme-Leisure Centre on 21st October. He says: “That’s quite an effort for an oldie (most of us that age can’t do a single one) but backed by your generous donations I will get there.” Tony will be 83 next week! Funds are badly needed to support research into early detection; better treatments and enabling symptoms to be spotted earlier. If you would like to support Tony and Seonaid, please go to fundraiser.pancreatic.org.uk/fundraisers/tonyakkermans. Thank you so much.

Membership Subscriptions due this month

Due to the increased cost of speakers, we have had to raise the cost of membership to £20 per year. We still believe this is excellent value, covering attendance to all our meetings; early access to trips and events with subsidised tickets; seed offers and plant sales. We are also affiliated to the RHS and a member of Plant Heritage. If you would like to join, you can come along to a meeting at Lydbury North Village Hall and give your details and payment to our Membership Secretary Sandra Bailey, who sits at the door ready to greet everyone. Alternatively, you can pay by transfer, using the details below. Please ensure you email your name, address and phone number to Sandy.

Payment can be made with cash or cheque at our meetings or by transfer to:

South West Shropshire Gardening Club

sort code 20-53-22

account number 80754803.

Please add your name as reference and email sandy_burton@btinternet.com to let her know.

Teas

Happily, we have volunteers for October and November. It’s not too early to sign up for next year on the rota! Don’t worry if you are not sure of your commitments – we can always rearrange nearer the time if there is a problem. It only involves coming a few minutes early (about 6.45) to set out the crockery – the committee bring the supplies of tea, coffee, sugar, milk and biscuits. We will also put on the urn to heat up. We are finding that most people prefer to wash up by hand as they go along rather than using the dishwasher.



Newsletters

If you are having any problems receiving the newsletter, please let me know. We aim to send the notification that it is live about a week before the meeting so news is fresh in your mind. You will also be in the right place to look at the website – if you have any contributions or suggestions that may be of interest, please let me know.

Next meeting

Wednesday 25th October

SOUTH WEST SHROPSHIRE GARDENING CLUB




Top 20 Tips of a former Head Gardener A talk by Pip Smith BSc, MA, MCiHort

Wednesday 25th October 2023 at 7.30 pm
Lydbury North Village Hall


FREE TO MEMBERS (annual membership £20), GUESTS WELCOME: £5
For more information contact Angie Salmon on 01588 661025 or email
angiesalmon@btinternet.com
www.gardeningshropshire.co.uk Also on Facebook.

We are a friendly club of like-minded garden enthusiasts. We meet at Lydbury North Village Hall on the 4th Wednesday of the month: interesting speakers, refreshments, forums, advice, outings, seed offers, plant sales.

We are also affiliated to the RHS. Come & join us!



South West Shropshire Gardening Club:
celebrating over 30 years of gardening in Shropshire



Pip Smith is a Landscape Designer based in Worcestershire. Trained to degree level in horticulture at Pershore College, he has an MA in Landscape Architecture from Birmingham City University. Pip held the post of Head Gardener at several private and public gardens, most recently at the highly-acclaimed Wollerton Old Hall in Shropshire. In this talk Pip will share some of his favourite tips and tricks that he learnt during his role as a Head Gardener.

NB Eileen still has some seed catalogues left which will be available at the October meeting (or ask a friend to collect one for you if unable to attend)

Feeling unwell?

Please can we ask that if you are feeling unwell, you do not bring your bugs to gardening club, especially as we sit in close proximity to each other and there is little ventilation as the weather turns colder? Covid is still circulating and flu is no fun either. Not everyone is eligible for a booster vaccination. Several of our members have vulnerable loved ones at home and we really don't want to help spread more illness this winter. Thank you for your understanding.

RHS affiliation

The club is affiliated to the RHS. We receive the monthly magazine which can be borrowed, as well as back numbers. These are available from the table at the back of the hall where we display other items of interest and news.

Also, we have a discount card which can be used by up to two members of the club to gain 50% off entry to any RHS garden. Please ask me to borrow the card if you are planning a trip to an RHS Garden.

Flower of the Month Competition

This was Helen Brown with her beautiful, winning Mildmay Rose Glyndebourne at our September meeting. Winners of this year's competition will be announced at our October meeting.



Please bring a single cut bloom or spray from your garden, if you would like to join in and start accumulating points for the next year.

Dried Tussie Mussie (or Gussie Jussie, as my auto correct tried to tell me!)

We are having an extra competition in November, for a bouquet of dried flowers and/or seed heads from your garden/ local landscape. Another excuse to "stand and stare" – as if we need one! It's really making me look more carefully at seed heads...

Sunflowers

If anyone has measurements/photos of their Giant Russian sunflowers grown from the free seed I distributed earlier in the year, please will you let me know your results so I can award prizes in October? Some people waved at me from the floor of the last meeting but I only have two names (Dorothy and Rosemary Morris) and 6' 10" to beat.

Hope to see you on Wednesday 25th October at our next meeting.

Angie Salmon
Chair

PS Don't forget we are also on Facebook!