

EWELL HORTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

12th March 2024

at 7.30pm

PRESENT: David Tarrant (Chairman), Leslie Smith (Treasurer), Tracey Ross (Show Secretary), Dawn Simms (Catering Officer), Jane Hoddy (Talks Secretary), Roger Bellingham (Registrar), Beryl Smith (Domestic Secretary), Monica Turnbull (Publicity Officer), Lynne Mason (Minutes Secretary), plus 17 members

1. CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen. Welcome to the 2024 AGM of the Ewell Horticultural Association. My thanks to Lynne Mason for taking the minutes to-night.

It is with sadness I have to announce that during August 2023 we said goodbye to our President, Tony Field, after a long illness. The EHA was well represented at his funeral.

Our current membership is approximately 850. I would therefore like to thank Roger Bellingham, our registrar, who does an incredible job behind the scenes, keeping track of all our members. However we are changing the way we collect subscriptions for the next two years to ease the pressure on our rapidly diminishing volunteer road stewards, details were published in the current newsletter. We are also attempting to promote more use of email addresses to communicate with our members.

I would like to thank Lynne Mason for all her hard work as our Secretary, however Lynne wishes to stand down. She will continue as Minutes Secretary.

Many thanks to Les Smith, our Treasurer who has the unenviable task of keeping track of our finances.

We had 3 shows in 2023. The shows were well attended with a good number of entries. However, we had a few major problems with the venue – not least that the school introduced a key entry system that was totally inflexible for our needs, resulting in many people complaining and not attending our shows. Another problem impacted our catering where promised facilities were not forthcoming, resulting in frustration for our Catering Officer who was close to resigning. This has led us to change the location of our next show in an attempt to improve our catering facilities and access to our shows. The new venue will be St Paul's Church, Northey Avenue, Ewell.

Many thanks must go to Tracey Ross for all her excellent work as our Show Secretary. As reported last year Tracey was moving from the area and would not be able to continue in her role, however she came up with a compromise. Consequently we have decided to hold only two shows this year. Tracey must be congratulated in single handedly compiling the new reduced 2024/25 Handbook.

The quality of our catering at the shows continues to be excellent, congratulations to Dawn Simms and her team. I personally would like to thank all those who help with the catering at the shows.

I would also like to thank all the members of the committee for their hard work during the year. In addition, I would like to thank all our volunteers and helpers at the shows. In particular, Tim

and Thelma Goldsmith, although not on the committee, both have been a tremendous help to the Association, especially at the Flower Shows and other events.

Also thanks to Katherine Alexander for her continuing hard work in the single-handed preparation and setting out of the newsletters.

Many thanks to Beryl Smith, our Domestic Secretary, for all her preparation and help at the shows.

Thanks also to Anne-Marie and Fred Evans for their help, particularly for their involvement in the Association's Christmas cards sent to all our Road Stewards and distributors.

Many thanks to Jane Hoddy. Jane has been an invaluable member of the Committee, previously organising our talks which we suspended last year though we are still reviewing the situation. Please keep an eye on the newsletters and our website.

Finally, many thanks to Brian Angus for all his help at the shows and behind the scenes activities.

So in closing, we are, as always, in great need of people to join the committee or just volunteer to help in whatever capacity they feel best suited, especially at our shows. Thank you.

Dave Tarrant.

Total 26 people present at AGM. There were no questions.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM – 14th March 2023

Acceptance of the minutes from the 2023 AGM was proposed by Beryl Smith and seconded by Roger Bellingham. All were in favour.

3. MATTERS ARISING

None.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT AND ACCEPTANCE OF ACCOUNTS

Copies of the 2022/23 Income & Expenditure Accounts and the Balance Sheet, all of which had been approved by the Committee, were available at the meeting. The Treasurer talked members through the finances with particular reference to the following.

We are still selling off the remaining Potting Shed stock at the shows and below cost price, thus converting stock into cash.

We received significantly more interest than usual because of the general raise in interest rates over the last year.

Overall we are running at a loss and we are slowly running down the money held in the Building Society account. We are normally able to borrow the Scouts' van for shows at a very modest cost, but this was not available for the 2023 Summer Show and so we had to hire one at commercial rates. Printing costs have increased and we needed to buy a new sign. An invoice from the Council for 2022 has only just been received!

The Treasurer was thanked for all his work in managing the finances. Their acceptance was proposed by David Tarrant and seconded by Margaret Angus. All in favour.

5 FLORAL ART GROUP REPORT

Sheila Stracy, Floral Art Group Chairman, presented her report. The Group meets on the second Tuesday afternoon of the month at Ruxley Church from 2-4 p.m. and the membership is around 35-40. Visitors are welcomed on demonstration days. The programme varies from month to month, consisting of workshops shown by members and outside tutors, teaching different techniques. There are one or two demonstrations each year by area demonstrators, though these are costly – around £200-300 each time. Last year the Group celebrated its Golden Anniversary in May with a demo by Kathryn Austin, followed by a delicious afternoon tea. Unfortunately it was not possible to hold the usual fundraising events in 2023 because of ill health. The Group wish to thank EHA for helping with the NAFAS fees. Sheila greatly appreciated having so much support from her Floral Art friends in what was a difficult year. She hopes the fun and friendship when arranging flowers will long continue!

6. ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

Sadly our President, Tony Field, passed away in 2023. We are delighted that Margaret Angus has kindly agreed to become the new President. The proposal was put forward by David Tarrant, seconded by Dawn Simms and approved by all the members present.

7. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Les Smith took the chair at this point; Beryl Smith proposed that Dave Tarrant be elected as Honorary Chairman, seconded by Roger Bellingham. This was passed by a show of hands.

8 ELECTION OF SECRETARY

Lynne Mason has resigned as Secretary. There were no nominations for the post which will now be Vacant.

9 ELECTION OF TREASURER

Leslie Smith was proposed by Brian Angus and seconded by Sheila Stracy. All in favour.

10. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following were elected en bloc:

Registrar	Roger Bellingham	Publicity Officer	Monica Turnbull
Catering Officer	Dawn Simms	Show Secretary	Tracey Ross
Talks Secretary	Jane Hoddy	Domestic Secretary	Beryl Smith
Vice Chairman	(vacant)		

The Officers named above were proposed by Brian Angus and seconded by Clive Long. All in favour.

11. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following were elected en bloc:

Sheila Stracey (Floral Art Representative)
Lynne Mason (Minutes Secretary)

The Committee Members named above were proposed by Dawn Simms and seconded by David Tarrant. All in favour.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Questions were invited from the floor.

a)Dora May Hobbs asked if she could have a stall at the Autumn Show to display brochures for and generally publicise the work of the local Age Concern branch. Jane Hoddy will liaise with her.

b)Brian Angus asked whether there were any plans currently to resurrect the talks. He said that Epsom Garden Society had moved their talks to the daytime which was proving successful. David Tarrant said that we had paused the talks because of low attendance and there would be increased costs at Bourne Hall during the daytime, both with hall hire and with car parking. EGS had moved their talks to Epsom Sports Club. We had consulted members re the possibility of trying the daytime at a previous AGM, the results by a show of hands then were inconclusive. It should be noted though that our Talks Secretary still works and is not available in the daytime.

Another member wondered if we could arrange a talk without charging entry. We will discuss these issues again at Committee.

Another member asked whether we had thought of advertising at local garden centres. Our Publicity Officer will investigate.

c)Re communications generally, members thought that late reminders by email re shows were helpful. As we are now collecting email addresses, it will be possible in the future to do much more of this and we will do what we can to encourage more show entries.

d)A long standing member asked what is happening at the Potting Shed. He remembers when the Shed actively traded on Sundays and members who came along would often go to the café as well so we had a good relationship with the owners. Sadly the café closed when the owners retired and left the area, but it seems there are now new owners who will have the block at the end of the car park and who plan to reopen in April. David Tarrant explained that it is no longer possible to consider rekindling the relationship with the café as we only use the area now for storage. We could not consider actively trading from the Potting Shed again as there is so much competition from garden centres now and also we do not have the volunteers.

There being no further questions or comments, the meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.