

Crowhurst & District Horticultural Society

Annual General Meeting – Chairman's Report

Wednesday 5th October 2022 at 7pm - Crowhurst Village Hall

Hello Everyone. Wonderful to see you all. Thank you for coming tonight to support us We are very grateful to you all

We have been busy over the last year since our last AGM in September 2021 - during this our 50th Anniversary year we started in the usual way by holding our fundraising Jumble Sale last October (which always helps with the coffers to keep the shows and events funded)

However; despite an excellent sale we were very badly let down after the sale that caused a lot of upset! The charity who had fully agreed to collect all saleable pieces left at the end of the sale failed to turn up at all and did not even let us know they were not coming !!! So there we all were after the sale with a pile of full boxes and bags with all our “worldy goods” about us waiting on the driveway of the hall wondering what the heck to do with it all ! Luckily (and very kindly) our friends Denisa and Duncan took the items in their work van later to their office, plus many cars also full up - and they kindly held the items in their storage facilities in Battle until I managed to track down another charity later that week (with great difficulty), who kindly came without delay and took it all away for their fundraising activities ! **I was cross however and it put me off having an Autumn jumble sale in case the same repeated itself!**

We chose not to hold a Quiz night last year in December to give us all a Christmas break with no stress leaving several of you disappointed I understand but we all just needed a break.

Our next event this year was our Spring show held in March which is always a “fresh” bright show each year and very pretty although this one was a small show with low entry numbers but was still pretty with bright spring flowers which sets off the start of the gardener's growing year and serves to inspire us all

As is the usual line with these shows we had a lovely lot of footfall - as it was a warm sunny day and people seemed keen to get out and about after winter The tasty cakes and refreshments were so enjoyed and we sincerely thank everyone who donated the delicious cakes and our two faithful “tea ladies” Shirley and Penny who did all the serving, slicing and pouring, all afternoon – thank you both so much as always ladies Also thanks to Sue for selling the Raffle tickets for us – very helpful

On a positive note we held a very lovely 50th Vintage tea party in July almost 50 years to the date it all began back in 1972 with a few keen gardeners from the village setting the society up initially. A lot of hard work went on in prep. for this but in my opinion it was a great success and we hope you all agree Sadly we had several people who did not turn up so the numbers even for this were lower than we catered for (as several failed to let us know they were not coming!) This date began the start of the beautiful sunny weather we all experienced throughout the summer in this country (and others of course) but also which caused the nasty drought and meant the gardens and farmers everywhere had problems to grow their produce This meant later that our Autumn flower show suffered quite a lot also re lowered entries/poor produce.

There was no village Fayre held again this year by the way no Summer flower show took place either

The recent show in September was overall another small one - with low entries and entrants but again was pretty and colourful once more (It was expected to be low on entries due to a very poor growing conditions - the heatwave and drought and our dear Queen's demise and funeral just that week Until the date was confirmed of her funeral day we had wondered whether the show may have to be cancelled!!! Luckily that was not the case and it went ahead as planned, (but entries were very low sadly as said)

However as you can begin to note this lowered entry trait appears to be the ongoing current trend over latter years of all the shows and to a degree events we plan/ arrange also We are at this time, deeply concerned about the viability of the society - as it stands going forward and the pressures it puts predominantly on the small committee we have who are tiring and end up doing most of the prep. and works on the event/show days and all through the year as well

You can see on the AGM info. alone (that you have site of here) - that the overall entries have dropped since 2012 - alongside the outgoing payments for prize money (as against entry monies in) and also the increased costs to hire the hall for each event now which is @ approx £10 ph. at present (Ex. a show costs over £100 in hire charges before purchasing Judging cards, printing schedules, posters , buying coffees, teas biscuits, show cards, prize money etc! We also have to purchase Raffle prizes, and plants unless people assist with donations We obtain a lovely lot of cakes etc as donations usually for which we are truly grateful They are always so delicious (but again these have to be requested each time and reminders sent out always to request such which I dislike doing)

Therefore sorry to be so blunt tonight here but if the society is to continue to hold viable shows, interesting events, talks ,quizzes etc past this 50th year we do need to deeply look at how we can improve things asap or we may seriously have to choose to close it down.

At present it is only the hard work and the fundraising of a very few people that keeps us afloat Especially now the cost of hiring the hall has increased also Hence the reason not to have a lecture tonight (which we usually arrange) to allow us extra time to discuss/chat out ideas and see what we can all come up with. together

To finalize this 50th year which ends at this AGM today we want to confirm to you all that we plan to donate a new wooden bench outside this hall (when the old one is moved by the Parish Council) and also we are planning to plant a lovely flowering Cherry Tree down on the Rec. alongside the fruit trees that were planted earlier this year. Both will have plaques attached celebrating our 50years and the Bench will be in memory of previous leaders of the society and members (who have sadly died over recent years and moved away) and the Tree will be in commemoration of our 50th year. I will organise a special get together to install both of these later on (hopefully by the end of this year)and hope many of you will please be able to attend and share in these

We will now have a chance to discuss all the points that are listed on the Agenda and maybe a few more that may be highlighted during our chats over cups of tea and coffee that Sue and Phil have kindly agreed to help with tonight -Then after that break we will resume the rest of the Agenda as is per usual

Thanks for holding in for my long speech but it all needed to be spelt out we felt

Mary B