

Crowhurst & District Horticultural Society ***Annual General Meeting – Chairman's Report***

Wednesday 4th October 2023 at 7:15pm - Crowhurst Village Hall

Hello Everyone. It is so good to see you here tonight to support us.

There have been a few people who were unable to be with us tonight who have sent their apologies – thank you to them for letting us know

This report sets the scene for our last year 22/23 Our first event was our fundraising Jumble Sale last October which was a very good sale. As always we all had fun and were very busy sorting out the lot of donations we were given and then selling our wares People love Jumble Sales and are a popular attraction and good fundraiser. Sue Laimbeer and Phil were so kind at helping us to take the left overs to St Michael's Hospice warehouse on the following Monday– thank you both so much. We had a further Jumble Sale in January which again was a great fundraiser. Very busy and well supported. The main concern from these sales however are the residue stock and how we can move them after the sales,as charities do not collect them on a Saturday and Phil and Sue said that the Hospice donation site who took the items last were not that welcoming to them despite me planning a date/time for the drop- offs. I have taken this up with the manager who fully apologised and spoke to his staff. We have had a few chats about what else we could do when we next have sales, but this October we will not be having a sale as Alan will be away. This we need to sort out for January next year.

We held the lovely Quiz night as a Christmas event with a lovely cheese and wine buffet Oliver always does so well with his questioning and planning and it was great fun and well supported (We held this one a little earlier in late November, as people have reported before that nearer Christmas is too busy with many other events in the area for them to support them)

In January as said we had our further Jumble Sale

In early March Alan planted a Cherry tree down on the Rec. with Will Kemp from Environmental group, which the society donated, as a memorial to the Queen's Jubilee and to commemorate our 50th anniversary We needed to plant this before summer came so this was a swift role and we still have to organise a slot in which we can add a plaque in front of it that we had made at the same time (as the Bench one) was made and Alan had made a lovely metal holder to display this We need to affirm a date/time to dedicate this plaque this year. It is growing well now amongst the fruit trees on the rec. and should look great when it flowers in future (Double pink Cherry)

March continued and as the signs of Spring it heralded our bright and cheerful Spring Flower show which Oliver's report will cover fully It was a fairly small but colourful and pretty show that went off well with good visitor numbers a busy "tea hut", raffle (kindly organised by Sue Bastin)and we were lucky enough to have our lovely hand masseur Laura, come and join us who offered free massages and also donated a lovely free face massage treat as one lucky raffle ticket prize. A great success
Thank you Laura

We held our annual Plant sale in May as part of the village market – a little later than usual as the market ran late. This went very well indeed – we had lots of donations including those from Edendale Rest Home and we sold a great deal and it was a good fundraiser on a bright sunny day, thank you to all who helped/purchased

The next event was our Autumn flower show held in September at the village hall This was well supported and a very pretty seasonal show, with many visitors. Entries overall were increased across the board although we would still like to get increased children's entries and photographs. It was another really lovely sunny day and visitors really enjoyed the delicious home made cakes once more, that Shirley and Penny served in the "tea hut" We thank them sincerely for their hard work as the stall was busy all afternoon The other stalls did well also, including the Raffle (thank you Phil) The plant stall (thank you Sue L) and the Honey stall (thank you Tim/Tom) We also invited two other

paying stall holders to join us this year to see how this panned out, Amber sold her home made cards and Fern; an active bee- keeper alongside her husband Graham sold Honey and by products made for wax etc

The Honey classes were better supported again this year and this is an area I am very keen to keep going and expand as possible Within this show and the Spring one we did not give out cups to winners, but instead distributed certificates that Oliver has produced. The winners names get added to the cups before the next years shows and are also entered in our Journal (that Frances Royston always kindly completes each year for us using calligraphy and we display at our shows Thank you so much Frances We love this!

Finally we had a lovely afternoon's visit to the Greenhouse Project at Alexandra Park on September 26th - where Linda the Chair. gave us a very interesting talk re the history and progress of the full restoration of this beautiful Edwardian greenhouse which was found in a terrible; fully neglected state found by chance steeped in brambles and undergrowth. It was one of a number that existed in the park for growing all the plants to display in the borders over the years - which then became obsolete as planting became less prevalent. Over approx 5 years, this greenhouse was fully renovated completed by volunteers/professionals and many fundraising events and donations from the Lottery and private people enabled the greenhouse to be restored to it's former glory at great cost and hard continued work. They sell plants and compost on a Saturdays am and Thursdays pm if you wish to support and visit them. I think this is an amazing place that I so enjoy going to and watching all their progress I admire them so much as to the standard they have achieved Our society has always supported them by donating plants left over from our sales etc

Overall this year I have felt more motivated and happier year for myself and Alan as we I have felt so much more supported in my role by kind helpful active members that have inspired me so much to develop the society more and have fully assisted me in many tasks that were struggling as I was unable to achieve such standards alone I so appreciate this help.

It was great and very kind of Sue and Dave Bastin to arrange an impromptu coffee morning in their beautiful garden in August- also on a very hot day - which people very much enjoyed – thanks so much to you both for this huge surprise.

Going forward we hope to achieve more interesting “outside visits” to other local projects and less formal talks and have plans already which we need to confirm in the new year. They are very exciting and we are sure you will all enjoy them.

We hope that interest in our society can go from strength to strength and we welcome fresh blood in to our group as always and new members of course

On a sadder note, we are losing our Honey Bee Rep. Tim Knaggs this year He is retiring He has been running this important role for about 12/13 years since I became Chair. I am sad about this naturally but wish him much good health and happiness in his future, as he can relax more with his family/friends and as a society we wish to thank him sincerely for all he has done for us by building up the Honey interest overall and increased entries into the Autumn show by spreading the word around visitors etc. We are currently trying to seek out another person to take over this role as I so want this established role to continue and if possible expand. Honey Bees are really struggling just now and are generally in decline ,but they are so valuable to all our futures – we could not survive without them. Tim also was our Fayre Cmmtee rep when we used to be a part of that also, although we are not currently running a flower show at these Fayres as they are run in June each year when flowers and produce are not yet grown We are hoping to however organise to have a plant stall at next year's Fayre as we understand from feedback recd. that people did miss our show and Sue L is we hope can be our Fayre rep.She is busy always growing plants that we can sell at our events Thank you Sue very much indeed for all you do. Thank you all - Now we hand over to Alan as our Treasurer and continue the meeting.