

Minutes of the Blofield and District Gardening Club 2015 Annual General Meeting

held in the Margaret Harker Hall on Wednesday, 11th March, 2015, from 7.30 p.m.

1) **President's welcome:** Pat Thomas welcomed members of the Club to the AGM, pleased to see so many people attending.

2) **Apologies for absence:** it had previously been agreed that apologies for absence would no longer be recorded at the AGM.

3) **Minutes of the last meeting – 12th March, 2014** – had been made available to all. These were reviewed and with no-one suggesting any changes, proposed by Gillian Stansfield and seconded by Sylvia Nelthorpe, then signed by the Chairman, as an accurate account of the 2014 meeting.

4) **Matters arising: Section 7:** the President felt that Susan Rowe should be formally thanked for producing the Minutes of the AGM and other secretarial duties.

5) Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer, June Drake, had circulated a copy of the Accounts for the year ending 31st December, 2014, which confirmed a healthy bank balance. Mrs Drake explained that this had been helped by not having to pay for seed and other purchases from the main supplier in advance. She also outlined the income received from membership subscriptions – slightly down in 2014 – and from the raffles held at monthly meetings and at the Annual Show. The proceeds from the raffles covered speakers' fees last year and helped to keep the membership fee at such a low level, and all joined with Mrs Drake in thanking Irene and Roy for all their hard and productive work over the year.

The Committee had some concerns that membership had dropped by 12 last year and was looking at publicity and other initiatives to encourage new people to join; a target figure of 100 was suggested.

The Treasurer proposed that in view of the healthy state of the finances, membership subscription should remain at £5.00 for the 2015 year, with visitors paying £2.00 per meeting. No queries about the accounts were raised by Club members, and Mrs Drake confirmed that the original of the Club's accounts, that had been signed by Douglas Clark, the Examiner, was available for inspection.

The adoption of the Accounts and report was proposed by Sylvia Nelthorpe and seconded by Celia Green and unanimously agreed by the meeting.

Members' subscriptions for the 2015 year fall due in April and all wishing to join were asked to put £5 in an envelope marked with their name, address and telephone number and bring to the April meeting. It was confirmed that members' personal information is kept within the Club for administrative purposes only and is not made available to any other parties.

6) Chairman's report

The Chairman, Peter Mackness, was pleased to report another successful year with good membership numbers, interesting speakers at the meetings, and a healthy set of accounts. He felt that despite the difficult spring weather, the summer show it had proved an excellent occasion and thanked all involved. The Seed Order Scheme had altered during the year, but the new supplier continued to offer members good value for money. He was however keen to encourage members to enter the monthly competition, which is a fun part of the evening and could be better supported.

Mr Mackness thanked the committee and all others who worked so hard to run the Club so successfully, especially those who set out and put away the chairs. He confirmed that the current committee members were happy to continue for a further year, and was very pleased to announce they had been joined by Sue Brown. He confirmed that further new committee members are needed – it is not a heavy commitment but new ideas and faces are always welcome. He also announced that 2015 will be his final year on the committee as, having served as Chairman for over eleven years, he has decided it is time to stand back, a decision which caused sadness and concern amongst the membership. He concluded by thanking the President for her continuing support and she was presented with a token of the Club's gratitude and esteem.

7) Election of officers and committee

The President confirmed the 2015 committee:

Chairman	Peter Mackness	Treasurer	June Drake
Show Secretary	Sylvia Nelthorpe	Deputy treasurer / deputy show secretary	Gillian Stansfield
Registration secretary	Valerie Mackness	Secretary and programme secretary	Susan Rowe
	Sue Brown		

She thanked the members for their hard work during 2014, especially Peter Mackness for his excellent and invaluable work as chairman, Treasurer June Drake for the very efficient way she managed the Club's finances and provided excellent financial reports, Sylvia Nelthorpe for the impeccable organisation of the Summer Show, Gillian Stansfield acting as assistant Treasurer and Summer Show support and Susan Rowe for prompt and accurate AGM and committee minutes etc.

Club members were encouraged to consider joining the committee, as the duties are not onerous, and support would be given to anyone interested. The President also thanked members who worked with such dedication organising the monthly raffle, plant stalls, refreshments and other benefits for club members.

8) Summer Show Schedule – Saturday, 11th July, 2015

Show secretary Sylvia Nelthorpe thanked all who had entered the Show last year and for the support offered by many behind the scenes, especially Gillian Stansfield. The majority of the Schedule for the 2015 show will remain the same as last year, though some changes had been proposed by the committee, which were outlined. The meeting was asked to agree the amended Schedule for the 2015 Summer Show and it was proposed by Gillian Stansfield and seconded by June Drake.

Mrs Nelthorpe asked whether the Chairman was willing to continue to act as auctioneer at the Show, which he confirmed. Members were also encouraged to enter the "informal arrangement in a vase" class which does not need flower arranging skills nor even garden flowers!

9) Club Programme 2015

The Programme Secretary, Susan Rowe, outlined the 2015 programme, also confirming the titles of the competitions to be held at each meeting. She encouraged members to let her know any topics they felt would be of interest to the Club, as she is currently compiling the programme for 2016. Mrs Rowe was thanked for her efforts in arranging a varied programme of speakers and subjects for the coming year.

10) Outings 2014

The chairman confirmed that the committee had discussed the viability of arranging summer outings and had ultimately concluded that as people's lifestyles had changed over the years, and even the Christmas lunch is not such a special event any more, then no further outings will be formally arranged by the Committee. Should any members wish to challenge this proposal, they should speak to the committee.

11) Seed Order Scheme

Sylvia Nelthorpe confirmed that the scheme supplier had changed from Thompson & Morgan to Mr Fothergill's Seeds. The new supplier had processed members' orders very efficiently and the maximum discount had been achieved. Mrs Nelthorpe had raised a query about why individual members had to pay postage costs when everything was being delivered to one address, and if no satisfactory resolution can be achieved, then a different approach may be instigated. Members who had ordered from the company were encouraged to feed back on the quality of the goods, to ensure that all were satisfied. The chairman thanked Sylvia for the time and effort she committed to this scheme which was reinforced by the members.

12) Any other business

- i) **Publicity for the club:** Peter Mackness displayed a new poster which had been composed to try to encourage new people to join the club.
- ii) **Website:** the committee is to establish a website so that members and others can see what is being planned. As the use of photographs can enhance a website, permission to take photographs at the AGM was requested and agreed. The website is: <http://blofieldgardeningclub.org.uk/>
- iii) **Composting:** Susan Rowe gave a short presentation about the benefits of home composting and made available leaflets from Norfolk County Council, encouraging interested people to consider training to become Master Composters.

13) Date of next meeting: The next Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday, 9th March, 2016, from 7.30 p.m. at The Margaret Harker Hall

The President thanked the committee for arranging light refreshments for all and closed the meeting at 8.15 p.m.