



**Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of  
the Blofield & District Gardening Club  
held in the Margaret Harker Hall, Yarmouth Road, Blofield,  
on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2024, from 7.30 p.m.**

**1) Welcome:** President, Mrs Sylvia Nelthorpe, welcomed 29 attendees to the meeting, confirming apologies for absence from Committee member Jo Wicks and five members. She reviewed the highlights of the last twelve months and was pleased to confirm that members have much to look forward to in 2024. She invited all to stay on after the meeting, to enjoy two light-hearted quizzes and buffet food, kindly provided by committee members.

**2) Draft Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2023:** these were reviewed by all present and proposed as accurate by Sarah Reynolds, seconded by Chloe Veale and unanimously approved by the meeting.

**3) Matters arising therefrom:** no issues were raised from the previous minutes.

**4) Treasurer's Report:** Alan Drake had circulated the Club's accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2023. The full accounts were available for review at the meeting. He thanked all members for their support during the year which had enabled the Club to make a profit of £537. Income from the Annual Show, raffles, donations, the £1 bring and buy stall, and Alan's sharpening service had all contributed to this healthy profit.

He was aware however that expenses were likely to increase this year by some 15-20%, with higher costs for the hire of the Margaret Harker Hall and speakers' fees. He therefore proposed that the annual subscription for members should increase from £8 to £10 p.a. He felt this was still a reasonable membership fee for the 8 meetings per year and would help to keep the Club in a stable financial situation. Other fundraising events were also being planned.

Alan invited anyone interested in becoming more involved with the role of Treasurer to have a word with him; he also thanked Peter Mackness for acting as Examiner of the Club's accounts. The meeting was invited to agree the Treasurer's report, which was proposed by Sheila Ashford, seconded by John Burton, and unanimously approved by the meeting.

**5) Chair's Report:** Mrs June Drake thanked members for attending this evening's AGM and for their support during the year. There had been a varied programme which had been well attended, ensuring a good income and keeping the Club solvent. However fundraising would continue to be important for the club's future, details of which would be outlined shortly. June wished to particularly thank Christine and Bridget for organising the raffle at monthly meetings and the summer show, Sarah for taking over the organisation of refreshments – and all were pleased to see Maureen attending meetings again now - Jo for supervising the £1 stall, and Alan for his sharpening service donations.

June wished to particularly thank programme secretary Lynda Hunt for organising a very interesting selection of speakers in 2023 and 2024, and although she had decided to resign as programme secretary, she has kindly agreed to remain on the committee. Fortunately Sarah Reynolds had offered to take on the duties of programme secretary, for which all are most grateful.

**6) Election of officers and committee:** Mrs Nelthorpe confirmed that the current committee had agreed to continue for a further year, though it is understood that changes are anticipated in 2025. The meeting was asked to approve the following officers and committee members:

| <b>Office</b>  | <b>Name proposed</b>  |
|--|---|
| <b>Chair</b>   | Mrs June Drake  |
| <b>Treasurer</b>   | Mr Alan Drake   |
| <b>Assistant Treasurer</b>                               | -   |
| <b>Secretary</b>   | Mrs Susan Rowe  |
| <b>Programme Secretary</b>                               | Mrs Sarah Reynolds  |
| <b>Show Secretary and Seed Order Scheme organiser</b>    | Mrs Sylvia Nelthorpe  |
| <b>RHS/NNHS Link member and Assistant Show Secretary</b> | Mrs Sue Brown   |
| <b>Committee members</b>                                 | Mrs Christine Goodwin, Mrs Lynda Hunt, Mrs Joanna Wicks, Mrs Maureen Willsher |

Agreement was proposed by Chloe Veale, seconded by Peter Mackness and unanimously approved by the meeting.

**7) Summer Show Schedule for Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2024:** Mrs Nelthorpe thanked all Club members for supporting the summer show last year, by entering exhibits, offering and serving refreshments, organising the raffle and plant stall – a supreme team effort. She felt the new class of “a rose in a frame” had been very successful and thanked Alan Drake for preparing the frames.

Some changes to the schedule for the 2024 show have been agreed, including removing the class for the large floral arrangement. In order to encourage young people to become more interested in gardening, Sylvia has been in contact with the Blofield Forestry School and there is to be a stand-alone class for the children to enter. A new award is to be given to the winner of the Blofield & District Gardening cup, the RHS Banksian Medal, with the NNHS Bronze medal going to the winner of the vegetable classes. The revised show schedule and entry form, with the cherry cake recipe on the reverse, will be given out to all who become Club members this year.

**8) Club Programme for 2024 including competition titles:** Mrs Lynda Hunt outlined the programme for the year confirming competition titles. The full year’s programme will be printed on to membership cards which will be issued from April onwards.

**9) Seed Order Scheme:** Mrs Nelthorpe was sad to confirm that there had been a change in Mr Fothergill Seeds’ usual policy of sending out printed catalogues, and now they expected people to order seeds etc online. She felt this was entirely inappropriate and not how most people would choose to select what they wished to grow. Therefore the scheme did not run in 2023/24 though she is looking at other seed suppliers and hopes that the scheme will recommence in the future.

## **10) Any other business**

a) **Gardening Club Plant Sale – Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2024 (10 am – 1 pm):** the committee has arranged for a plant sale and coffee morning to be held at Blofield Church. Members will be asked to offer plants for sale and to come along to support the venture. The Club will put plant sale profits towards its funds while the church team will supply and keep any profits from refreshment sales/donations.

b) **Blofield School Fete – 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2024:** the school has asked if Club members would be kind enough to offer plants that can be sold at the School Fete. All will be reminded nearer the time.

- c) **NNHS Spring Show: Sunday 14 April 2024:** venue: The Costessey Centre, Longwater Lane, Costessey. The horticultural schedule is under review and will be added to the website. Committee member Sue Brown will keep members informed. There is also to be a workshop, to encourage people to become more confident about exhibiting vegetables in local and NNHS shows. Anyone interested, please see Sue Brown.
- d) **Visit to the John Innes Centre:** following a very interesting talk last year about the work of the John Innes Centre, an evening visit has been offered. Anyone interested in attending this, please speak to Committee member Lynda Hunt, so that a date can be agreed and transport needs identified.
- e) **RHS discount card when visiting RHS gardens:** June Drake reminded members that, as an affiliated society, members can ask to borrow a card offering a 50% discount to visit RHS gardens. If any members are planning such a visit, please see June Drake to borrow the card.
- f) **The April meeting:** all were informed that the next Club meeting will be on Wednesday evening, 10<sup>th</sup> April, when Andrew Brogan will talk about Henstead Exotic Garden. The competition will be "A cactus or succulent". A membership card, show schedule and a plug plant will be given to all subscribing for membership of the Club.
- g) **Club publicity posters:** Chloe Veale was thanked for producing another very artistic poster detailing the Club's meeting and Annual Show dates. Copies were available for members to take to display in the local area.
- h) **The £1 bring and buy table:** a query was raised about what sort of items were appreciated on this table. June Drake confirmed that anything at all that members were happy to donate would be much appreciated. Anything not sold should be taken away by the donor.
- i) **Membership subscriptions:** all were reminded to bring along an envelope containing their £10 subscription, noting name, address and telephone number please. A short application form for members to sign to confirm agreement - or otherwise - to receive emails from the Club was also distributed, to comply with GDP Regulations.

#### **11) Date of next Annual General Meeting – Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2025**

*Attendees were thanked for attending the meeting, and invited to try their hand at the quizzes and enjoy a light buffet, for which the committee was thanked. The AGM finished at 8.15 p.m.*