



**Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of
the Blofield & District Gardening Club
held in the Margaret Harker Hall, Yarmouth Road, Blofield,
on Wednesday, 12th March, 2025, from 7.30 p.m.**

1) Welcome: President, Mrs Sylvia Nelthorpe, welcomed 32 attendees to the meeting, confirming apologies for absence from Committee member Sue Brown. The sad demise of our past Chairman and President Mrs Pat Thomas was marked with gratitude for all the work she had done for the Club over many years, and a minute's silence to remember her. Another former member, Billy Howes, has also recently died.

Mrs Nelthorpe then reviewed the highlights of the last twelve months and was pleased to confirm that members have much to look forward to in 2025. She invited all to stay on after the meeting, to enjoy an informal talk about growing vegetables for showing, a quiz and a light buffet, kindly provided by committee members.

2) Draft Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 13th March, 2024: these were reviewed by all present and proposed as accurate by Lynda Hunt, seconded by Sarah Reynolds 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 31st December, 2024. 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 £452. Income from the Annual Show, raffles, donations, the £1 bring and buy stall, the spring Plant Sale and his own sharpening service had all contributed to this healthy profit.

Mr Drake invited anyone interested in becoming more involved with the position of Treasurer to have a word with him, as he would like to pass on the role next year. He then thanked Peter Mackness for acting as Examiner of the Club's accounts.

Mr Drake proposed the membership fee should remain at £10 p.a. He felt this was still a reasonable 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.

The meeting was invited to agree the Treasurer's report, which was proposed by Christine Goodwin, seconded by Sue Burton, and unanimously approved by the meeting.

Concerns about the likelihood of the Club being charged for banking membership subscription cheques was raised by one member, who proposed that members could be encouraged to pay their subscriptions via bank transfer perhaps, thus avoiding extra bank charges. The treasurer confirmed that at present the Club was not charged for banking cheques, though of course this may alter in time. He had been in contact with the Club's bank many times over the past year, trying to change cheque signatories, which had proved a very onerous and frustrating task. The bank acknowledged his difficulties and had offered a one off payment in apology.

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.

Mrs Drake wished to thank Lynda Hunt for organising a very interesting selection of speakers last year, Christine Goodwin and Bridget for organising the raffle at monthly meetings and the summer show, Jo Wicks for supervising the £1 stall, and Alan for his sharpening service donations. She congratulated Sarah Reynolds for taking over the organisation of speakers and planning some outings for the current year as well as helping with refreshments. Sue Brown was also thanked for arranging an apple tree pruning session in her garden, which was very instructive.

She also thanked the committee for offering this evening's buffet, and Sarah's husband David, for compiling a quiz. She is very grateful to John Burton for agreeing to offer hints and tips for successful vegetable growing and showing. Lastly Mrs Drake was very grateful to Sylvia Nelthorpe for running the seed order scheme so well for many years, and to Christine Goodwin for taking over the scheme, which has run very successfully this year.

A plant sale at Blofield Church was a new initiative last year and raised over £300 for Club funds. Refreshments were offered by the Blofield Church team with donations going to their own fund. Another plant sale has been arranged for Saturday morning, 24th May and members were asked to grow on seedlings and plants for sale at that event, please.

Assistance will also be much appreciated at meetings, especially when committee members are away. If anyone would be happy to help with serving refreshments or getting out/putting away the chairs, or indeed would consider joining the committee, please see the chair or one of the committee, thank you.

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 both the chair and the treasurer are looking to retire during or at the end of the current year. Mrs Drake has agreed to continue until a new chair is elected, but new committee members will be much appreciated. The meeting was asked to approve the following officers and committee members:

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

The meeting was invited to approve the proposed committee names, which was proposed by Barbara Basey-Fisher, seconded by Peter Mackness, and unanimously approved by the meeting.

7) Summer Show Schedule for Saturday, 12th July, 2025: Mrs Nelthorpe thanked all Club members for supporting the summer show last year, by entering exhibits, offering and serving refreshments, organising the raffle and the plant stall.

Some changes to the schedule for the 2025 show have been agreed. In order to encourage young people to become more interested in gardening, Mrs Nelthorpe 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, the Gould Plate, is to be given to the winner of the best exhibit in the Pot Plant classes. The revised show schedule and entry form, with a tea cake recipe on the reverse, will be given out to all who become Club members this year.

8) Club Programme for 2025 including competition titles: Mrs Sarah Reynolds outlined the programme for the year confirming competition titles. There will also be a Club outing to the Bird in Hand garden in Blofield Heath and to the Walled Garden at Little Plumstead. The full year's programme will be printed on membership cards which will be issued from April onwards.

9) Seed Order Scheme: Mrs Christine Goodwin confirmed that the Club was now ordering seeds and plants from King's Seeds of Colchester. The company had offered an efficient ordering and delivery system last year and a 50% discount on seeds had been achieved. Mrs Goodwin would like to hear how members had fared with the seeds/plants, both positive and negative experiences, please.

10) Any other business

a) **Concerns re: the future of the Margaret Harker Hall:** Mrs Drake confirmed that the management committee of the Hall urgently requires trustee officers and committee members, to ensure the future of the hall. It is to be hoped that people will assist in this. However should the hall not be able to continue, the Gardening Club will need to seek an alternative venue. All will be informed should that be the case. There was a query about where Blofield Parish Council met, confirmed as Blofield Court House.

b) **Water butts and raspberry canes:** Karen Stevens offered 5 water butts and some raspberry plants to anyone who might want them.

c) **Gardening at Blofield Church:** on behalf of the church team, Mrs Reynolds thanked all those who had taken part in pruning bushes and tidying up the borders leading to the main doors of the church recently. Their efforts were much appreciated.

d) **NNHS Spring Show: Sunday 13 April 2025:** venue: The Costessey Centre, Longwater Lane, Costessey. Mrs Drake encouraged anyone who would like to enter any of the Affiliated Classes at the spring show to contact her or Sue Brown.

e) **RHS discount card when visiting RHS gardens:** Mrs 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 Mrs Drake to borrow the card.

f) **The April meeting:** the next Club meeting will be on Wednesday evening, 9th April. If people could arrive a little early, to help set out the chairs, that would be much appreciated. The speaker will be Simon White of Peter Beales Roses discussing "Highlights of Chelsea and Hampton Court Shows". The competition will be "3 spring flowers in a vase". A membership card, show schedule and a plug plant will be given to all becoming members of the Club. People were therefore 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 will be distributed, to ensure that the Club complies with GDP Regulations.

11) Date of next Annual General Meeting – Wednesday, 11th March, 2026

Club member John Burton then kindly gave a talk about how he sows, feeds and prepares vegetables and flowers ready for showing. His informative talk was much appreciated by those present.

Attendees were thanked for attending the meeting, and invited to try their hand at the quiz and enjoy a light buffet. The AGM finished at 8.40 p.m.