

**EPSOM GARDEN SOCIETY  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
20 November 2023**

**Present**

Heather Martindale Sue Glover	Pam Davis Kim Shrosbree	Cathy Flitter Margaret Haslam
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**Apologies**

Alan Moody Audrey Simpson	Steve Roebuck	Marian Oliver
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**Welcome by Heather Martindale**

**1. Approval of 2022 minutes**

Accepted by attendees. Proposed by Sue Glover and Eileen Dann

**2. Chairman's Report**

No report as position vacant. However, Heather thanked those who give up their time to do whatever it is we need. Takes about 60 hours of volunteer effort to put on one show so if anyone would like to come and join us we would be delighted

**3. Secretary – Kim Shrosbree**

I hope everyone found the new Members' Handbook useful. This will be updated and reissued in 2024

You will have seen the great work Pam did on the amazing discounts she negotiated in 2023. I have also been working on some affiliations with organisations and Facebook groups and will let you know more next year.

I have been adding all our events to our Facebook page and local organisations that sponsor us also post there so, for those of you who use Facebook, do keep an eye out.

The Committee will also look at other promotion options early next year, including local publications, Facebook and, perhaps even Instagram – we do need to attract new members after all! Do let me know if you have any ideas of where we can promote our Society.

**4. Treasurer Report – Pam Davis**

The Annual Accounts and Show Costs are at the end of these minutes.

2022/2023 has been a funny year, with cold extremes and not too much of a warm summer. I personally lost many scrubs over the cold belt we had in last December.

We are fortunate that most of our members have remained with us, albeit our subscriptions were increased, but the Committee believes there is value for money with our Society. We are fortunate that we have our sponsors who also support the Society and give us concessions at four local garden centres (Chessington; Old Moat, Ashted; Rainbow Nurseries in Farm Lane and Dobies discounts for seeds. We do list them in our monthly newsletter regularly. Please do take advantage of these. I will be working on more support with local Gardeners and Centres over the winter period.

This year we have changed the venue for our monthly meetings, to The Epsom Sports Club in Woodcote Road, Epsom, at the back of Epsom Hospital. The cost for the hire of the facilities has not increased and is on Wednesdays. We have also changed the timings to mornings and have gained a lot more members to the meetings and more income. The location allows us to look out onto the cricket green of the club, but the Committee would like to hear any feedback on the venue and timing changes of these meetings.

We held our show this year in September and it was very well-attended, the weather was very good and it gave a lot of our members the chance to catch up with friends as well as appreciate the beautiful show of flowers. The show cost us £355.33 this year and although we had our support from our sponsors the school hall cost has gone up £170 and the hiring of the Gazebos has also increased but has now become part of the show for members to sit in the school grounds and have a hot drink and cake.

Next year we are going to increase the prize money for the Flower Arranging section to show the appreciation for their work

in their displays we feel it fair for the time and cost the exhibitors put in.

General expenses for printing stationery and postage remain static and are essential for the running of the Society. Other expenses included replacing our banners to advertise the show and also a new prize cup was required together with the polo shirts that were purchased for the committee members to wear at the meetings and show. We also donated to M Challis and A Pawson given charities during the year.

The Society remains in a good position financially and this will allow us to continue to have our meetings and show and provide another fun year with the Society.

The accounts have been independently reviewed by Julian Flitter, a partner of Goodman Jones firm of accountants and we once again thank Julian for doing this.

Everyone agreed with report. Margaret proposed and Keith seconded

Agreed to continue to appoint Julian Flitter to audit the accounts. Proposed by Pam Davis and seconded by Marion Mason. This was accepted by all members at meeting.

## **5. Membership Report – written by Steve Roebuck and read to meeting by Kim Shrosbree**

We have a total of 297 members, a net loss of 15 over the year. We gained 24 new members, 8 at the Show, which was brilliant, but lost 39 members for assorted reasons. We have lost about 30% of our members over the last 10 years, which actually isn't bad compared to other clubs but it would be great to see the trend going the other way.

The increase in the sub last year (the first for over 20 years) did not seem to put people off as we still offer fantastic value for money.

Most of our new members come via existing members. We also have quite a few who find us via our website and of course visitors to our show. We hope to do more publicity next year. We offer great value for money with our newsletters, annual show, meetings and outings & open gardens group, and especially with the discounts kindly offered by local companies.

Our wonderful road reps again did a sterling job knocking on doors collecting subs and delivering membership cards. Having a hybrid system where members have the option of paying on-line works well with over 45% of members paying their sub this way. I then notify the rep who drops their card off. It does create more work for me than when the reps did most of the work and paid a lump sum, but it is well worth the effort. Many people just don't keep any change with them when asked for their sub and prefer to pay by bank transfer. I now have access to the EGS bank account so subs can be paid direct rather than via my bank account. Members and reps will still, of course, have the option to pay by cheque or cash to me as previously. Once this is set up we will have to remind people to change their payee from my account to the EGS one. Details will be sent out in due course.

All £1469 in subs and £80 donations has been paid into the EGS account and at the end of our year our treasurer is sent a copy of our membership list and our subs received spreadsheets to ensure all subs are accounted for.

Regarding our newsletter distribution, we only deliver 60 paper copies now, of which 2 are postal, the rest are via road reps. Indeed about a third of our 26 reps have no paper copies to deliver so are only called upon at subs time. We are often looking for additional volunteers to act as reps, particularly as stand-in or reserve ones. As I said, there are usually only a small handful, if any, of paper deliveries each month. The main part of the job is collecting subs in the Spring. We still find that knocking on doors is much more effective than just emailing a request.

Finally, a reminder to let me know if you change your email address. It's very easy for emails to disappear into the ether and they don't always bounce back to let me know they haven't been delivered. Also, don't forget that our website and Facebook have lots of information on. Previous newsletters and contact details are on the website.

All agreed Proposed Sue Glover seconded June Grant

## **6. Meetings report – Cathy Flitter**

There has been a huge change in the way we run our monthly meeting schedule through 2022/23. After returning from our successful lockdown schedule of zoom meetings, attendance dropped so much, that a mix of morning and evening meetings was organised. This very quickly became unworkable as attendance at the evening meetings was simply not sustainable. You have no idea how embarrassing it is to book a really good speaker and have 12 people attend, to say nothing of the financial loss! Speakers these days cost an average of £110 plus travel (and that can be another £30 - £40).

We were extremely lucky to be able to book space at Epsom Sports Club, who have been enormously helpful all year. Meetings varying from 'display' coffee mornings to garden history talks to flower arranging workshops proved to be extremely popular and, although very sad to lose some of our members who couldn't make morning meetings, generally were really successful in a pleasant environment with good facilities. St Barnabas (where we always used to meet) have revamped their space into a 'community facility', but lovely though this is, is more expensive and they do not offer daytime facilities.

Moving forward, I have booked a range of meetings and events, aiming to have at least something every month for our members plus, with Sues' help, some evening and weekend outings to offer something to all our members. Please do look on the website and in our newsletter for all the different events we offer. I think I can promise an exciting and diverting 2024. Thank you

All would like to thank Cathy for her hard work

## 7. Show Report – Cathy Flitter

On Saturday 2nd September, we held our Annual Show. Together with the new date, we introduced a 'new look'. Renamed the Epsom Garden Society Garden and Craft Show to more accurately reflect our members' interests and abilities, some categories were expanded and some removed. Flowers, Fruit and Vegetables was given a refresh partly because of the change of season but also because of what people like to grow these days. Novices were taken out as entries have always been very low in this category and really we are not all Monty Dons, so putting us all together was the right way to go. One of our members who has previously only entered as a novice did so well, he even won Best in Show, so obviously this was a good idea! Cookery and Craft were split for the first time and had more categories to enter. It appears that there are lots of people who like to cook but may not necessarily be 'crafters'. The number of entries was very healthy indeed, so another successful plan. Photography categories were expanded and while it was lovely to have so many amazing entries, we are definitely going to have to invest in more display boards for next year!

This gave the committee a considerable amount of additional work, so my apologies to those confused by receiving several different versions of the schedule! Anything new is going to have teething problems, but lots of lessons have been learnt and hopefully future years will be trouble free.

Not everyone agreed with the move to an 'annual Show' but after three years, I think I am safe to say that this is really the only option available to us. Another local society has also had to cut the number of Shows and they don't have meetings either (to date they do not have a venue either, this is an ongoing problem for all societies – ticking the boxes for school hire has become really difficult for amateurs and there are less and less small venues with appropriate local facilities at a reasonable price). Finding judges is also really difficult, not to mention costly. We rely on volunteers to help set up and run and so but everyone has so much going on in their life that asking them to assist three times a year is simple not an option unless our numbers double at the very least.

Generally more positives than negatives (including the rather snazzy 'uniform' for the committee which helped to encourage newcomers to chat about having a go next year. The Committee will also work on more publicity and social media information to boost our show going forward. Support with the Show is very gratefully received and we really couldn't do it without the help we get. Thank you to everyone and please, if you have a suggestion for improvement, let us know.

All agreed suggestion made that we tried Epsom College which Cathy will do. Also that a poster for the show is sent with the newsletter that goes out before the Show.

## 8. Open Gardens and Outings– Sue Glover

Marian Oliver kindly organised three trips this year. The Ramster trip was very successful and 18 people attended. Unfortunately, the trip to Hampton Court nursery needed to be cancelled at the last minute because too many people were unable to attend. The third visit to the garden of Keith Lewis was also successful despite the weather. It was a lovely garden and the homemade cakes were a great treat.

I would like to thank Steve and Pat Roebuck, John and Mary Lucking, Marion Mason, Linda Rooney, Helen Seymour, Jill Farnham, Elizabeth Toogood and Peta and Clive Hargreaves for offering to open their own gardens this year. Most of us suffered a great deal of damage over the previous winter but it was good to see that most plants had recovered; as well as some doing spectacularly well. Hopefully many of you will offer your gardens again in 2024. It would be nice if a few more people hosted these events as even quite small gardens can be instructive. We all have different problems and seeing how others cope can be very helpful. Remember, the object is to enjoy, socialise, share and not judge; especially as most of us cannot achieve the professional finish of the bigger public gardens.

Earlier this year I took over running of this group from John Lucking and would like to thank him for all the work he has done for us over the last few years, especially during Covid when we had to enjoy pictures only. I also took over the oversight of Outings from Marian and I would like to thank her for the hard work she put into trying to get various visits off the ground.

Coach trips are not viable and the Committee has now decided to merge the two groups and restrict most outside visits to NGS gardens in Surrey. Thank you to all the people who have signed up for the new Outings group. I have made bookings to visit Timberhill, Vann Garden, Coverwood Lakes and Westways Farm. These will take place mostly during Spring 2024. Will see how these go before adding summer visits to other gardens. I am also in the process of arranging an evening trip to Heathside (Margaret Arnott's garden) for wine and canapes in July. Everyone who signed up will shortly be receiving a schedule of all the visits that have been arranged so far.

## 9. Committee Election

All the existing Committee will stand, and we have one new member. We still have a vacancy for Chairman so if anyone is interested in joining the Committee, do let us know.

This is the current Committee:

President	Alan Moody	Secretary	Kim Shrosbree
Chairman	Post vacant	Newsletter Editor	Margaret Haslam
Membership & Webmaster	Steve Roebuck	Assistant Show Secretary	Heather Martindale
Shows & Meetings Secretary	Cathy Flitter	Outings & Open Gardens	Sue Glover
Treasurer	Pam Davis		

Proposal to re-elect the existing Committee by Tom Pope and seconded by Linda Bristow. This was accepted by all members at meeting.

*There have been no new volunteers for the Committee.*

## 10. AOB

- Query raised re sundry expenses – clarified by Pam Davis
- Thank you to Margaret for doing wine and cheese and Linda for bringing glasses
- Thank you to Heather for running the meeting

## ACCOUNTS FOR END OF YEAR 30TH SEPTEMBER 2023

	30/09/22	30/09/23		
Balance at Lloyds Bank	£8,217.43	£9,282.04	<b>Cash Book Summary:</b>	
Outstanding Receipt	£95.00	£0.00	Opening balance	8217.43
<b>Less O/S Cheques</b>	£0.00	£0.00	Income	3897.42
<b>Monies held on Bal Sheet for 2024</b>	£0.00	-£350.00	Expenditure	-2832.81
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£8,312.43</b>	<b>£8,932.04</b>	O/S receipts	0.00
			Closing balance	9282.04
<b>Income Breakdown</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>Cost/Income</b>	<b>£108.47</b>
Membership subscriptions	£956.00	£1,454.00	<b>Bank Reconciliation at</b>	<b>30/09/23</b>
Donation	£55.00	£105.00	Balance per Cash Book	9282.04
Monthly Meetings Income	£199.91	£367.69	O/S receipts	0.00
Advertising	£380.00	£350.00		9282.04
Spring Show (net) Profit/Refund	£0.00	£0.00		
Summer Show (net) Profit	£0.00	£0.00		
Dobies Credit	£18.93	£24.73		
	<b>£1,609.84</b>	<b>£2,301.42</b>		
			<b>Balance Sheet at 30 September 2023</b>	
<b>Expenditure Breakdown</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>		£
Printing/Stationery	£294.33	£360.21	Closing bank balance	9282.04
Postage	£21.67	£93.60	Prepayments	219.31
Hall hire for Lectures	£252.00	£430.00	Deferred Income (advertising)	-350.00
Summer Show (net) Cost	£371.77	£355.33	Accruals (Sch hire/Gazebos)	-730.45
Monthly meetings Costs	£967.76	£501.57		8420.90
Last Year Cost Engraving	£117.00	£0.00		
RHS & SHF membership	£45.00	£55.00	Surplus b/fwd	8312.43
Sundry Equipment Polo Shirts/Cup/banner	£159.95	£219.31	Surplus for the Year	108.47
Insurance	£75.00	£75.00		8420.90
Mayor Fund/Gratuity members etc	£0.00	£102.93		
	<b>£2,304.48</b>	<b>£2,192.95</b>		
<b>Surplus/Cost of income over expenditure:</b>	<b>(-£308.26)</b>	<b>£108.47</b>		

## ANNUAL SHOW 2023 COSTINGS

JULY 22 SHOW			SEPTEMBER 2023 SHOW		
DEBITS	£	Notes	DEBITS	£	
Total Prize money awarded	195.00		Total Prize money awarded	212.00	
Judges Fees	113.80		Judges Fees	72.00	
Sandwiches for Judges/committee etc	48.10		Sandwiches for Judges/committee/helpers	52.95	
Voucher & planet for Raffle	13.68		Voucher & planet for Raffle	0.00	
Cakes/Jam/Cream/ plates	68.84	includes £19.50 from cakes frozen	Cakes/Jam/Cream/ plates	11.48	
Voucher for caretaker	0.00		Voucher for caretaker	0.00	
Cup engraving (Not apple this year)	0.00		New Cup- over 3 years	16.90	Actual cost £50.68
Hall Hire	375.00	included Friday night costs	Hall Hire	535.45	invoice not rec'd by 30th Sept
stationery/printing	38.40		Stationery/printing	46.19	
Display Boards for Photography	0.00		Display Boards for Photography	0.00	
consumables	0.00		consumables-New Banner over 3 years	22.67	Actual cost£ 68.20
Tablecloths	0.00		Polo Shirts (spread over 5 years)	35.00	Actual cost £175.00
Hire of Gazebos	130.00		Hire of Gazebo's	195.00	invoice not rec'd by 30th Sept
	<u>982.82</u>			<u>1199.64</u>	
JULY 2022 SHOW			JULY 2023 SHOW		
CREDITS	£		CREDITS	£	
Tea/Cake Stall	271.65	includes £40 cakes	Tea/Cake Stall	189.80	12 tokens taken for helpers at £3 approx.
Plant Sales	95.10		Plant Sales	147.80	
Raffle money	75.00		Raffle money	97.00	
Entry Fee for Exhibits	34.40		Entry Fee for Exhibits	38.40	
Advert in schedule 50% of receipts	380.00		Advertisement in schedule 50% of receipts	0.00	Shown in Accts as Income
Bread Stall contribution	20.00		Bread Stall contribution	0.00	
Book Stall	0.00		Prepayment Credit	219.31	
Entrance Fees	108.00		Entrance Fees	142.00	
Card Stall	6.90		Donations	10.00	
	<u>991.05</u>			<u>844.31</u>	
<b>COST OF SHOW</b>	<b>-8.23</b>		<b>COST OF SHOW</b>	<b>-355.33</b>	