

**EPSOM GARDEN SOCIETY  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
20 November 2024**

**Present**

<b>Committee</b>	Mary Wood	Alma Simmonds	June Grant	Jane Hoddy
Alan Moody	Eileen Dann	Pat Roebuck	Peter Townsend	Susan Walker
Cathy Flitter	Sarah Jane Mitchell	Barb Warwick	Carolyn Page	Tom Pope
Steve Roebuck	Debbie Turner	Felicity Peatfield	Margaret Angus	
Pam Davis	Audrey Simpson	Britt-Marie de Chassiron	Brian Angus	
Margaret Haslam	Leslie Simpson	Pat Dunn		
Sue Glover				

**Apologies**

Heather Martindale	Elizabeth & Richard Martin	Jane Mawer
Joan & Patrick Gabbett	Rosie & Doug Nurse	
Jo Henrick	Liz Evenden	

**Welcome by Alan Moody.** President

**1. Approval of 2023 minutes**

You will all have received your own copy of the 2023 minutes. There were no questions, so acceptance approval of minutes was proposed by Tom Pope and seconded by Brian Angus. This was accepted by all members at meeting.

**2. Chairs' Report – Cathy Flitter and Kim Shrosbree**

This is a joint report with Cathy. When in early 2024, I suggested that we volunteer to be joint Chair, in a slightly mad moment, Cathy agreed!

One of our biggest jobs to is address the lack of publicity locally for our fabulous Society. Bonuses are though that our meetings have grown hugely this year and are very popular; the annual Show is developing and growing; we have had lovely outings to some beautiful gardens. But, how many people know about us, what we do and how welcoming and inclusive we are – we are not a bunch of expert gardeners but we love gardening and gardens and can appreciate everything from Monty Don to dog-friendly spaces and welcome gardeners with no time and no space to spare!

Cathy's garden has, in its time had had to deal with kids and footballs and archery targets (otherwise known as "bosses"), whilst mine is shared with terriers with a passion for apples and chasing wildlife. Despite these distractions, we still love our spaces and want to help other people appreciate gardens as much as we do. We want to share our passion. We have already recruited more people, particularly from the Langley Vale community where I live, but what more can we do? This year, we are planning a local and online publicity drive, aimed at not just experienced and expert gardeners, but anyone who likes a good 'potter'! If you feel you can help drive the enthusiasm, please do let us know – we would love to hear your thoughts.

You will now hear reports from other members of the Committee today which I am sure you will find interesting.

**3. Secretary –Kim Shrosbree**

We have had another successful year and the move to our lovely new venue has certainly helped with this. Thanks to everyone here and to Pam for making this happen. We would also like to thank all those involved with refreshments for our meetings. I would also like to thank everyone who helped with, and attended, our lovely Annual Show in August – what a fabulous day with everyone enjoying the beautiful displays and yummy refreshments. As we say so often, please do not think you are "not good enough" to enter our show, even the most experienced entrant thought that once! Anyone can take part, no matter what your level of experience and every entry helps to make such a lovely display for our visitors.

Don't forget to consult your Members' Handbook and membership card for the amazing discounts which have been negotiated by Pam – what great work, thanks so much to her, I have certainly taken advantage of the discounts which can easily cover your society membership and which are all listed in the Members' Handbook. If the one sent to you by email is not to hand, let me know and I will send you a replacement copy, and Steve will be sending an updated version once you renew your membership for 2025.

I have been adding all our events to our Facebook page and local events sites. Organisations that sponsor us also post in our Facebook group so do keep an eye out. We will also be looking at a revamp of our website over the winter months and integrating with Instagram (not that I have much idea about what goes on there!). As this work continues, it is hoped that more of the benefits of being a member of our Society can be more easily accessed. Do let me know if you have any ideas of where

else we can promote our Society.

We have several affiliations which are detailed in the Members Handbook. I would like to highlight, however, our affiliation to Tender Shoots, an online gardening club who host online talks and events during the autumn and winter months. Whilst many of the talks are open to everyone, some are limited to individual members or affiliated societies only and access to all their benefits is included in your Epsom Garden Society membership. To take advantage of our affiliate membership, I have to add your email address to the Tender Shoots website and send you the access passwords so if any of you would like to take advantage of our affiliated membership, do let me know on [kimshros@gmail.com](mailto:kimshros@gmail.com).

#### 4. Treasurer Report – Pam Davis

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

Funds from membership has slightly reduced but 90% have remained with us. Given difficult times for some, we are fortunate that we have our sponsors who support the Society and give us concessions at 4 local garden centres (Chessington, Old Moat, Ashted Park, and Farm Lane). We do list them in our monthly newsletter regularly and these are in the Members Handbook. Please do take advantage of these. I hope to obtain more support from local gardeners and centres over the winter period.

Last year we changed our 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 but it has changed the day to a Wednesday. We have also changed the timings to mornings, (10.30am to 12pm) and have gained a lot more members to the meetings thus more income. The Committee would still like to hear any feedback on these changes.

We held our show this year in September, and it was well attended, weather was good, and it gave a lot of our members the chance to catch up with friends as well as appreciate the beautiful show of exhibits. The show cost us £636.83 this year, we do have support for this from our sponsors and the Committee believe it is an important part of the Society. The school hall costs and the hiring of the Gazebos, together with judges and prize money, make up the costs. This year, our plant sales took a huge drop in income, but the Committee think September may not be the right time for people to be buying plants and seedlings. We also need to work on the raffle prizes to give visitors to the show more incentive to buy the tickets. Entrance fees were slightly down. On a positive note, the show was a great success and enjoyed by all.

General expenses for printing stationery and postage remain static and are essential for the running of the Society. The monthly meetings this year came in at a cost of £219 whereas last year they cost £563 which shows how attendance has improved. Insurance and memberships for the Society remain the same. Pat Roebuck said that by encouraging sending of newsletter by email and hand delivery has reduced postage costs by around £60.

Overall, for the year income versus expenditure leaves us with a surplus of £144.77 as an income.

The Society remains in a good position financially and this will allow us to continue to have our meetings and our annual 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.

Agreement with report was proposed by Debbie Turner and seconded by Steve Roebuck. This was accepted by all members at meeting. Agreed to continue to appoint Julian Flitter to audit the accounts. Proposed by Felicity Peatfield and seconded by Mary Wood This was accepted by all members at meeting.

#### 5. Membership Report – Steve Roebuck

We now have 271 members of whom 5 are Honorary. During the year, we gained 16 members but lost 45, a net loss of 29 in the year, rather more than most years. Having only one show means we have fewer opportunities to recruit, though we still offer fantastic value for money with our meetings, with amazing speakers, monthly newsletter, gardens to visit and, of course, valuable discounts from our kind sponsors.

Most of the leavers gave no reason. 13 were impossible to contact. Of the members who don't have a rep we lost 20%, whereas where a rep chased members, we only lost 10%, so the value of having reps is clear, even though most have few, if any, paper newsletters to deliver.

One of our reps has resigned so we are looking for someone to take over her round in West Hill Avenue. It has 16 members, but only one paper newsletter, so most of the work is in April and May. Please contact me if you feel you can take it on or just want to know more about it.

Giving members the option of paying online works well with over 55% of members paying their sub this way, although two-thirds of members with a road rep pay their rep, so again, the reps do a brilliant job for us and we would lose a lot of members if we didn't have them. A reminder in the newsletter to have £5 by the door really helps given how many people don't carry any cash nowadays.

In the year, we have received £1,354 in subs plus £25 in donations. All has been paid in and Pam has a copy of both the

membership and subs received spreadsheets so she can check everything is in order.

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 & Facebook page have lots of information on. Previous newsletters and contact details are on the website.

## 6. Meetings report – Cathy Flitter

When I started writing this report, I had a strong feeling that this had been the best year for meetings since I took over in 2018. It turns out that feeling was correct and not just because of the welcome move to profit in 2024! We have come a long way since 2018, and many changes have been necessary. The pandemic of course forced many of those changes, speakers no longer wanted to come out in the evening (and neither did our members), costs of hall hire, and speakers almost doubled and generally people were less inclined to have a routine of attending a monthly meeting. The most noticeable difference was that our membership demographic changed considerably. I have therefore spent some time recently analysing our meetings for the past three years or so and there have been some surprising and some pleasant statistics to report and to carry forward into planning for the future.

Firstly, towards the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023, most of our meetings were on a particular plant or plant treatment, for example, fruit pruning, magnolias, rhododendrons and so on. As 2023 went on, I started to move my meeting planning to include more general subjects such as gardens to visit, garden design, plant sales, photography and this was received extremely favourably by our membership, with a noticeable increase in attendance. January 2024 saw Emma Ward discussing how to photograph nature. 27 members attended and further workshops are now in the planning. By the time we moved to 'Vegetable Growing for all' in April and 'National Trust Houses and Gardens' in August, we had nearly 40 members attending. Simon Horrill's talk in October had 35 people (despite it being prime holiday season for 'nonparents'!) and he has since had requests for talks from three other Societies or groups that our members also belong to.

We also had wonderful support for our 'Seasonal Display and Plant Sale coffee mornings'. Special thanks go here to the two Margarets - Haslam and Angus and Carolyn Page for providing lots of lovely plants to sell and Margaret Haslam for delicious cakes which made the coffee morning aspect so enjoyable. Both these events raised considerable sums for the Society, in part thanks to Margaret's 'pay what you want' plan, which meant people were more than generous, but also because there is nothing a gardener likes more than the opportunity to drink coffee, eat cake, buy plants and enjoy a bit of a chat, horticultural or otherwise!

I think the move to Epsom Sports Club has been an enormous success and, although it hasn't been easy to obtain speakers who are not working during the day, I have been able to tap into other sources (WI for one) to get some really inspiring speakers for 2025 and, yes, 2026. I for one look forward to some really entertaining mornings in the coming months.

## 7. Show Report – Cathy Flitter

When I took over running the Shows in 2019, my handover from the previous Show Secretary, Jill Farnham, was detailed and everything was organised to within, as they say, an inch of its life. I was really quite confident picking up the reins and it was very easy even with three Shows a year to start with. Unfortunately, the pandemic hit, and the goalposts moved in rather a significant way.

As with many things, our Show has evolved significantly since pre-Covid days. Hall hire has gone up exponentially, judges are very hard to come by (we are very lucky to have some friends to the Society, who help out enormously for no fee (Keith Lewis you are a total godsend!). Rules and very precise categories were really the thing when I first started showing (over 20 years ago now), but people do not have time to be as precise or spend as much time gardening as once was the case, with life busier than ever. We therefore reflect this in our Shows and make room for a more varied type of gardener – maybe they only get out there once a week, they don't have an allotment, so veg are in raised beds at the bottom of the garden or in pots, they enjoy photographing nature as much as cultivating it and the resurrected fashion for cooking and craft (pandemic again!), means that people are more involved in this aspect than in many years past, albeit rather differently to the tastes of previous years – did we know what focaccia was 20 years ago, much less make it ourselves? Was 'muffin making' so 'trendy'? Bake Off has a lot to answer for!

Anyway, as Show Secretary, I have tried to make this a 'Show for all'. Resource availability means we can only hold one show a year (with our committee being worn into the ground on the day!), but it is a hugely enjoyable and welcoming event for everyone. Steve recruits so many new members, Margaret sells shed loads of plants, our refreshments table makes enough money to almost fund the Show and, now I have the kind offer of help from Barb Warwick with this, our raffle will probably make up the difference in 2025! I would also like to give particular thanks to Brian Angus, who this year has negotiated storage for all our show paraphernalia and arranged for the loan of tables when the school not only threw us out of our storage shed, but replaced their tables with some rather strange, wheeled, benches! He also went above and beyond in terms of assisting with setting up and taking down of the Show.

Although it was a lovely day at the end of August this year, the entries for our one show were not particularly high and generally attendance was down. Our aim with the Show is not to make money although it would be good to break even, so, for 2025, I

have taken the decision to move to a Summer Show, so please put Saturday 14th June in your diaries. I hope this will be an opportunity to encourage even more people to enter and of course to make the plant sale table even more appealing! I am currently preparing the new schedule, so please keep an eye on the website for things to do over the winter whether it be crafting, preserving or ordering seeds for planting early next year.

## 8. Open Gardens and Outings– Sue Glover

This year we experimented with visits to NGS gardens within the Surrey area on a shared car basis. In March a large group visited the Vann Garden which was well-timed to follow our talk on Gertrude Jekyll. The garden was looking very good as some plants were flowering very early, so it was spectacular. In April we went to Coverwood Lakes. The owners are really trying very hard to keep the gardens looking as planned and the result was a series of scenic walks and some really interesting plants. The following month we went to Westways Farm. This was a smaller garden with less to see but the owners made up for it with cake. Bad weather had kept people away for their official open day and that resulted in a surfeit of homemade produce. Our final visit was an evening visit to Heathside where we enjoyed wine and canapes and a leisurely stroll around Margaret's beautiful garden.

In addition to visiting gardens in the NGS scheme, members were also able to enjoy our own members' gardens. I would like to thank Yvonne Parish, Marian and Brian Oliver, John and Mary Lucking, Jill Farnham, Louise Laudy, Steve and Pat Roebuck, Rosie and Doug Nurse and Elizabeth Toogood for opening their gardens to us. They had all done a wonderful job getting their gardens tidy and providing refreshments.

I have investigated the possibility of organising a minibus outing to Hampton Court flower show next year but it is very expensive even on a self-drive basis. So, this will not be taking place. Next year hopefully we will be visiting Gatton Park in early February for the Snowdrops, Shieling garden in April, Chauffeur's flat in May and a talk at Plant Passion with a flower arranging display in June. Other gardens will also hopefully be arranged for June and July.

I do hope that our own members will continue to open their gardens next year. As I am not arranging an outside visit in March perhaps someone could consider opening their garden if they have spring interest and a sheltered spot for visitors.

As soon as the arrangements are finalised for the outside visits, I will send out a schedule to everyone who has registered with me.

## 9. Committee Election

All the existing Committee will stand:

<b>President</b>	Alan Moody	
<b>Joint Chair</b>	Cathy Flitter & Kim Shrosbree	
<b>Membership &amp; Webmaster</b>	Steve Roebuck	<a href="mailto:epsomgarden1932@gmail.com">epsomgarden1932@gmail.com</a>
<b>Shows &amp; Meetings Secretary</b>	Cathy Flitter	<a href="mailto:catherine.flitter2@ntlworld.com">catherine.flitter2@ntlworld.com</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Pam Davis	<a href="mailto:parodavis@aol.co.uk">parodavis@aol.co.uk</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Kim Shrosbree	<a href="mailto:kimshros@gmail.com">kimshros@gmail.com</a>
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Margaret Haslam	<a href="mailto:margarethaslam6@gmail.com">margarethaslam6@gmail.com</a>
<b>Assistant Show Secretary</b>	Heather Martindale	<a href="mailto:heathermartindale4@gmail.com">heathermartindale4@gmail.com</a>
<b>Outings &amp; Open Gardens</b>	Sue Glover	<a href="mailto:suegreenfingers51@gmail.com">suegreenfingers51@gmail.com</a>

Proposal to re-elect the existing Committee by Eileen Dann and seconded by Carolyn Page. This was accepted by all members

## 10. AOB

A concern was raised by Jane Hoddy that if someone is exhibiting at the Show, they were being charged entry to come so they could enter to collect their exhibits. This had not been considered by the Committee, but we will look at creating a voucher for entry for free entry for exhibitors for future shows, at least so exhibits can be collected at no charge.

Many excellent suggestions for publicity were made by members:

- Adverts in stores such as Sainsburys
- Creation of flyer (the one we already have was shown at the meeting)
- Get in touch with local allotments
- Publicity on Borough Boards –although we do this for the Show, it is difficult to do this more regularly, as materials have to go through an approval, delivery and distribution process, however, the Committee will look at perhaps increasing the number of times we post publicity material
- Ask members if they know anyone if who would give talks at our meetings
- The Mayor should be invited to the Show

**TREASURER REPORT – ACCOUNTS FOR END OF YEAR 30TH SEPTEMBER 2024****Income & expenditure for the year**

<b>Income breakdown</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>Cash Book Summary:</b>	<b>£</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>		
Membership subscriptions	1,454.00	1,354.00	Opening balance	9,282.04
Donation	105.00	40.00	Income	2,865.91
Monthly Meetings Income	367.69	702.62	Expenditure	<b>-3,727.02</b>
Advertising	350.00	350.00	<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>8,420.93</b>
Dobies Credit	24.73	2.85		
	<u>2,301.42</u>	<u>2,449.47</u>		

<b>Expenditure breakdown</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>Bank Reconciliation at</b>	<b>30/09/24</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>		<b>£</b>
Printing/Stationery	360.21	281.25	Balance per bank statement	8,418.53
Postage	93.60	113.50	O/S receipts*	2.40
Hall hire for Lectures	430.00	444.00	<b>Bank Balance at 30/09/24</b>	<b>8420.93</b>
Summer Show (net) Cost	355.33	636.83		
Monthly meetings Costs	501.57	478.60	*Cleared 10/10/24	
RHS, SHF & Tender Shoots membership	55.00	80.00		
Sundry Equipment Polo Shirts/Cup/banner	219.31	104.07		
Insurance	75.00	80.00		
Rebate on school hall	-	<b>-31.65</b>		
Mayor Fund/Gratuity members etc	102.93	118.10		
	<u>2,192.95</u>	<u>2,304.70</u>		
<b>Surplus/(Deficit for the year)</b>	<b>108.47</b>	<b>144.77</b>		

**Balance Sheet at 30 September 2024**

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Bank balance	9,282.04	8,420.93
Prepayments	219.31	144.74
Deferred Income (advertising)	<b>-350.00</b>	-
Accruals (School hire/Gazebos)	<b>-730.45</b>	-
	<u>8420.90</u>	<u>8,565.67</u>
Surplus brought forward	8312.43	8420.90
Surplus for the year	108.47	144.77
	<u>8420.90</u>	<u>8565.67</u>

## ANNUAL SHOW 2024 COSTINGS

### SEPTEMBER 23 SHOW

DEBITS	£	Notes
Total Prize money awarded	212.00	
Judges Fees	72.00	
Sandwiches for Judges/committee/helpers	52.95	
Voucher & planet for raffle	0.00	
Cakes/jam/cream/plates	11.48	
Voucher for caretaker	0.00	
New Cup (over 3 yrs)	16.90	Actual cost £50.68
Hall Hire	535.45	Invoice not received by 30th Sept
Stationery/printing	46.19	
Display Boards for Photography	0.00	
Consumables/new banner (over 3 years)	22.67	Actual cost £ 68.20
Polo Shirts (over 5 years)	35.00	invoice not received by 30th Sept
Hire of Gazebos	195.00	
	<b>1199.64</b>	

### AUGUST 24 SHOW

DEBITS	£	Notes
Total prize money awarded	209.00	
Judges' fees	110.00	
Sandwiches for Judges/committee/helpers	45.60	
Voucher & plant for Raffle	0.00	
Cakes/jam/cream/plates	18.53	
Voucher for caretaker	0.00	
New Cup (over 3 years)	0.00	
Hall Hire	512.40	
Stationery/printing	16.74	
Display Boards for Photography	0.00	
Consumables/new banner (over 3 years)	0.00	Actual cost£ 68.20
Polo Shirts (over 5 years)	0.00	Actual cost £175.00
Hire of Gazebos	195.00	
	<b>1107.27</b>	

### SEPTEMBER 23 SHOW

CREDITS	£	Notes
Tea/Cake Stall	189.80	12 tokens for helpers - £3 approx
Plant Sales	147.80	
Raffle money	97.00	
Entry Fee for Exhibits	38.40	
Advertisement in schedule 50% of receipts	0.00	Shown in accounts as Income
Bread Stall contribution	0.00	
Book Stall	219.31	
Entrance Fees	142.00	
Card Stall	10.00	
	<b>844.31</b>	

### AUGUST 24 SHOW

CREDITS	£	Notes
Tea/Cake Stall	205.44	2 tokens taken for helpers - £3 approx
Plant Sales	64.60	
Raffle money	50.00	
Entry Fee for Exhibits	38.40	
Advertisement in schedule 50% of receipts	0.00	Shown in accounts as Income
Bread Stall contribution	0.00	
Prepayment Credit	0.00	
Entrance Fees	112.00	
Donations etc		
	<b>470.44</b>	

### COST OF SHOW

**-8.23**

### COST OF SHOW

**-636.83**