

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Friday 4 December 2015 18.30 – 19.15 at Green Pastures Nursery & Farm Shop, Mill Road, Bergh Apton, Norwich, NR15 1BQ

Approximately 50 members were welcomed by Chairman Martyn Davey, who said it was good to have our AGM at Green Pastures with outgoing President James Debbage.

- 1. Apologies:** Anne & John Bridge, Cyril Harrison, Simon Gaches, Peter Firman, Julian Woodrow, Lady Bacon
- 2. Minutes of the last meeting:** the chairman apologised to the meeting for the fact that previous AGM minutes were not available. The General Secretary, Sharon Copple, had departed abruptly earlier in the year and minutes of the AGM from December 2014 were not available for this meeting. Committee are still trying to make contact with Sharon to obtain the minutes. If obtained they will be put on the website and mentioned in a future newsletter. This was accepted by the membership without comment.
- 3. Matters arising:** None, based on above.
- 4. Chairman's report for 2015:** Martyn Davey said the last few years have been transitional, particularly the last one. Changes have been made, some good, some not so good. The turnout for the AGM at Easton in December 2014 was reasonable, however numbers remaining for the post AGM quiz and buffet were rather disappointing. Committee will shortly send out a survey to members, to obtain their ideas about what they want and feedback on recent events and activities. He said the location for the AGM had been changed to Green Pastures after the successful President's Evening held there earlier in the year. Some shows had been difficult this year, with the showground availability limited, plus issues with having to compete for the venue against other bigger events and our shows being dropped in favour of others. As a result of these issues, Kristopher Harper has been searching for new venues and both the Costessey Centre and Breckland Halls are now being considered for future shows. Shows in the glasshouse at Easton College were good as an interim venue but the daffodil exhibits suffered in the heat and therefore the Spring Show didn't work as well as expected. Thanks to Sarah Barley for her work on the Spring and Early Autumn shows. Reducing the smaller shows to just one day of public access worked well and help to reduce venue costs, which are substantial, but we still have some work to do to get the staging times right. Our Summer Show as part of the Royal Norfolk Show generated a nomination for a new Vice-president in Charlotte Carter, who was very enthusiastic and complimentary about the show. Thanks to Ian Roofe for co-ordinating and putting lots of time into this event for us. Sharon Copple resigned from the General Secretary role unexpectedly due to personal circumstances just before the Summer Show. This had a big impact and the society has run without a General Secretary since then, with Ian Roofe taking on the role of minute writer alongside his existing Show & Social Secretary roles. The society couldn't have managed without the input from Ian Roofe and Kristopher Harper since June 2015. We now have a new General Secretary, Lesley Webdale, who has lots of experience of secretarial roles with other clubs and committees, and we hope she will be with us for many years to come. We also have a change to the Editorial team for the Norfolk Gardener, with David King and Brian Ellis standing down after nearly 13 years and 50 issues. We are very grateful for all they did, with their experience of marketing, media and website designing bringing us into the 21st century. The role has now been taken on by Tim Allison and Kristopher Harper, who will no doubt put their own touch on the society's magazine and have already got a new website up and running. Committee have been working on a new version of the Constitution for some time, with Kristopher Harper taking the lead in discussions with the Charities Commission for us. This essential document has to be correct and there have been many amendments made to ensure that all of the Charities Commission requirements have been met. Finances are steadily dwindling and membership is decreasing. Martyn had therefore recommended to committee that they review the situation with honorariums for key roles and, after discussion at the last committee meeting, a decision has been made that honorariums will cease to be paid for the foreseeable future. Unfortunately this has resulted in the resignation of our Treasurer, Norma Howes. Thanks to Norma for all

her efforts to keep the society on track during her time in this post. In conclusion, it has been a difficult year but we now have a keen and committed committee who will take the society forward in a positive way.

5. **Treasurer’s Financial Report and adoption of accounts for 2015:** all members had access to a paper copy of the accounts. Norma Howes advised that this was the first full 12 month set of accounts since the accounting year end was changed to 30 September and that it was a draft set because some amendments had still to be made because of changes to the committee during the year. The financial details in the report are correct and show a balance of £14,094 in the deposit account and £10,893 in the general account. Social events have been well attended and our flagship show within the Royal Norfolk Show was a resounding success from a financial perspective. Once the necessary amendments have been made, checked and agreed the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts will be made available to members and reported to the Charities Commission. The society has also maintained its requirement in an educational role by holding talks and events during the year. Norma said that she had enjoyed the role and thanked everyone for their help and support.
6. **Social Report for 2015:** Ian Roofe issued a written report outlining what had been a very full year and successful year of events. Planning for 2016 is already underway, with a trip to Lord Heseltine’s garden on 18 February and a Gardeners Question Time for 23 March already available for booking. Ian is also looking into a possible holiday in 2017.
7. **Adoption of the New Constitution:** Kristopher Harper advised members that the process to update the whole constitution has started after the last AGM. Out of date items have been removed and the document circulated to members in September and on the website is the result of considerable activity between committee and the Charities Commission. One key change is reversion to our original name of “Norfolk and Norwich Horticultural Society” rather than “Norfolk and Norwich Horticultural Society 2012” which is in the current document. There is no change to governance, Charities Commission rules have been applied and overall the constitution is now simpler but with basically the same content as before. All committee members become trustees of the society under the new constitution. There were no comments from members. Acceptance of the new constitution was proposed by Cathryn Waldron, seconded by Phill Webdale and agreed by those present with none against.
8. **Retiring President’s address and election of President and Vice President for 2016:** James Debbage had no comments to make. Existing Vice President, Lady Bacon, had sent her apologies for the evening and confirmed a date of 15 July 2016 for a President’s evening at Raveningham Hall. Mrs Charlotte Carter had confirmed her willingness to be nominated as Vice President. Election of new President and Vice President was proposed by Joy King and seconded by David Riches with all present in favour.
9. **Appointment of Auditors:** Kristopher Harper proposed and Norma Howes seconded that existing auditors of MA Partners be retained. This was agreed by those present with none against.
10. **Vacancies for committee officers and members:** the society needs a new treasurer and one more committee member. No nominations from those present.
11. **Election of Trustees:** two new trustees to elect were Lesley Webdale and Cathryn Waldron. Their election was proposed by Ian Roofe, seconded by Terry Young and agreed by those present. Taking into account the resignations of Sharon Copple, Norma Howes and Sarah Barley, current trustees for re-election were confirmed as:

Chairperson	Martyn Davey
Vice Chairperson	Kristopher Harper
Membership Secretary	Laura Hemming
Social Secretary	Ian Roofe
Committee	Simon Gaches Cynthia Young

Re-election was proposed by Jenny Lysons, seconded by Brenda Foster, with all present in favour. We agreed to provide a list of names with the AGM agenda in future years.

- 12. Annual Subscription:** it was confirmed there would be no increase in the subscription for this year. Membership Secretary, Laura Hemming, is still contacting members who have not yet changed their standing orders to the correct rate and those present were urged to check that they had made any necessary amendment.
- 13. Open Forum for members:** Martyn Davey advised that this had been put on the agenda to give members an opportunity to raise any questions they had. There were no questions from the general membership. Kristopher Harper requested that members with email addresses ensure that these were held by the membership secretary to enable the issue of the Norfolk Gardener electronically as well as other ad-hoc communications. Robin McDonald asked for confirmation that such email addresses would not be passed on elsewhere. Kristopher Harper confirmed that the society does not forward details on. Martyn Davey confirmed that committee was looking at inviting corporate members and other carefully chosen organisations/people to have an advert in the Norfolk Gardener to help subsidise costs.
- 14. AGM formally closed at 19:15**
- 15. President's Medal:** this is an award considered by committee and awarded by the society as a token of appreciation to people who have given loyal support. This year the award goes to Alan Bidwell who has exhibited at our Summer Show for 25 years. Alan was unable to attend the AGM and the award will be present at the 2016 Spring Show.
- 16. Presentation of trophies to overall show winners for 2015:** retiring President, James Debbage, presented annually awarded trophies as follows:

JA Christie Cup, greatest number of points in open classes at all shows	Pauline Harper
John Wyatt Membership	Dr & Mrs Castro
JE Moxey Cup, Best Pot Plant	Robin McDonald
Lord Lieutenant's Challenge Cup, most meritorious amateur exhibit	Dr & Mrs Castro
HWT Empson, greatest number of points in flower arranging classes	Maggie Morton
May & Baker Cup, most first prizes in vegetable classes	Dr & Mrs Castro
E Harradine Shield, most points in cacti & succulent classes	Cyril Harrison
Lombe-Taylor Trophy, best vegetable exhibit	Dr & Mrs Castro
HP Neave – most promising newcomer	Jacinta Webb
NNHS Silver Gilt Medal	Maggie Morton
Drayton Shield, affiliated society with most points	Hethersett & District Horticultural Society
RHS Grenfell Medal, highest number of points for flower arranging	Costessey Flower Club

Ian Roofe advised members that Cyril Harrison was now known to be in hospital following an accident and that the society would be sending him a card with our best wishes.

Dr Castro presented a new trophy to the society to be awarded for most points in the vegetable classes in the Summer Show.

Martyn Davey advised that David King and Brian Ellis were being sent £200 in garden and whiskey vouchers as a thank you for all their hard work in producing the Norfolk Gardener for nearly 13 years.