

WYKE REGIS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Minutes of a General Committee Meeting

held on Monday 10th December 2018 at 7.30pm

Present: Rachel Waldock (Chair), John Southway, Michelle Lindley, Carrie Dalby, Andrea Inns, Dave Best, Jackie Hambling, Chris Mowlam, Rocky Allen, Lorraine Bash, Christina Moody, Jill Head.

1. Apologies: Alexis van El, Malcolm Ketchley

2. Minutes of a Committee Meeting held on 12th November 2018 had been circulated, taken as read and signed.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes are included in the Agenda.

4. Treasurer's Report

Michelle reported that the problems sorting the Tax queries with HSBC are ongoing. Their forms do not apply to British Not-for-profit Organisations and the local branch seems unable to help. Paul has been in to try to sort it. They seem unable to accept that we do not trade outside the UK and therefore have no overseas tax liabilities. Once we have the matter resolved, Michelle would like to move the Society's accounts to another Bank - Santander or Lloyds. She will advise after further research into charges for paying-in.

Trading figures for November show income of £1,090.49, a profit margin of 34.16%. (£326.50 profit) - down on last year by £500, thought to be due to the weather. Michelle will bring comparators with previous years in future, to try to show trends. The greatest revenue earner is Yard products, with WRHS plants in second place, proving the value of producing our own plants for sale. Analysing the most successful supplier in November reveals that Kim Curtis's sales of plants is the highest. The Pandle software package is working satisfactorily and the categories are gradually being loaded.

The Electricity problems have been resolved.

Any purchases made on behalf of the Society must be presented to Michelle, not put in the Bank bag. Dave can scan and forward the invoices, if required. Small purchases can be refunded via Petty Cash as before. It would be helpful if correspondence for the Treasurer could be scanned and emailed, before putting it in the tray in the office.

Michelle presented the Spreadsheet for Total Sales by Time Period, produced from EPOS, which is very useful. It can be provided monthly and will inform future planning.

The BT over-payment problem has been sorted and a letter received confirming refund of the cost of the Router, plus postage.

Andrea asked whether the Global Payments account could be transferred to Michelle's name, from Paul's - to be looked into. There is a complex form expected from them, which requires to be completed at this time of year.

Dave asked if Michelle could email the LBS invoices to him as they arrive, as he needs to check the prices when the stock is being entered into EPOS. All other suppliers send their invoices to the Trading Post.

Paul Clarke will be away for the whole of January. Paying-in or coinage required during that time can be done by another member of the Committee: the Trading Post will only be open for the last two weeks. We are insured to hold up to £1,000 in cash.

Warm appreciation was shown to Michelle for her very thorough Report and gratitude for all her work in setting up the software was expressed. The Committee felt much better informed. Carrie said that to have such a clear picture of the income at the time of the refit was very helpful. We have never drawn from capital for refurbishments. Michelle said that there is about £6,000 in the current account.

5. IT Manager

IT Report by Dave Best

As previously reported, my plan is to reduce our dependency on the "EPOS Now" software (which runs the till), and do as much of the work as possible on our own database on a local computer. At present, our Membership and Trading databases use the popular, free software called "MySQL". MySQL is simple to use, but requires me to write and maintain a lot of additional software to interface our MySQL databases to the EPOS Now software.

I have recently been getting to grips with a much some more powerful database software called PostgreSQL (or Postgres, for short). This is also free, and looks very promising. Since Postgres can do much more data processing internally than MySQL, it should need much less custom software to interface it to EPOS.

I don't think there is anything else to report on IT.

Newsletter

Progressing steadily and produced on time. Dave expressed thanks to Carrie for collating the articles. We do need more contributors to add variety to the articles. Request to go in next edition.

Recipes relevant to garden produce or seasonality to be added.

Action: Chrissie , Lorraine

Website

Rocky is still working on the new set up.

Facebook

Chrissie offered to add material regularly and keep it up to date, promoting the Society. Martyn Simmons is the Administrator, as it is registered using his email. **Action: Carrie, Martyn, Chrissie**

6. Trading Post

Andrea is still checking the stock prices and updating the till. Members' plants are being taken away - they cannot be stored over Winter by the Society. A stock-take of the WRHS plants will be taken before the Trading Post re-opens. Substandard plants are to be disposed of - can be donated to the Chiswell Walled Garden.

Dave is working on a design for self-watering in the main poly tunnel. The shelving must be levelled to enable grow bag trays to be linked using conduit and connected by small pumps. Jackie asked if this would limit the space used, as trays only cover part of the shelves. There will be enough watered trays, with room for pots that do not need to be watered as much alongside.

The electrical weighing scales are erratic, reading variably during use. They should be checked against the balance at intervals. There are 100g and 200g weights in stock.

The seed potatoes are due in January (date depends upon the weather in Scotland), and will be set out on the new work surface.

Andrea suggested that we could close the shop for two weeks in August (similar to Winter closing) to give opportunity to do any work required to catch up on stock, maintenance, etc.

Michelle will compare trading trends in Summer months to find out if there is a seasonal drop that would make this feasible.

Action: Michelle

Rachel suggested that the Society could buy a microwave oven to make thawing food from the freezer and cooking it easier. Jackie said small microwave ovens are only £39 in Aldi. Chrissie offered hers for free. It was **Agreed** to accept her offer. There was one in the kitchen a few years ago, but it was never used. It might make more social events possible. **Agreed** to try it. (Thanks were expressed to Jill for offering her microwave).

Action: Chrissie

7. Purchasing Team

Jackie has researched washed grit and found a supplier near Bristol. Grit/gravel at 0-6mm is required. **Agreed** to order one dumpy bag in the New Year.

Action: Jackie

The pea gravel (10mm) is almost sold out - order more from Doonan's.

Action: Carrie

Jersey Plug Plants have a good selection of flowers at 70 - 140 plugs and no minimum order. They also have various sizes of plugs. **Agreed** to try them.

Action: Jackie, Andrea

Alexis has personal problems at present and is unable to continue as a Purchasing Officer. She has asked to be relieved of her duties as a Purchasing Officer for the time being. The job requires knowledge of gardening and seasonality, and is time-consuming - a job description will be devised. Good wishes were sent to Alexis and her dog, Tula.

Action: Andrea, Carrie

All ordering is up to date. The surplus stock of fertiliser is still in the shed.

8. Buildings Maintenance

Carrie has emailed Sean Bartlett, but had no reply. Rocky asked if we could consider having uPVC doors instead - have them fitted as whole units. Carrie reminded that the glass has to be impact and fire proof to public building standard. Dave questioned the security strength. Rocky will obtain more information and quotes.

Action: Rocky

A RULE to limit the use of the electrical pallet lifter was **Agreed**:

RULE 11

Use of electrical pallet lifter

The pallet lifter must NOT be used during Trading Hours, unless absolutely necessary. If it is essential that it be used during opening times, the area must be cordoned off and stewarded, excluding all but the operatives from the scene.

It was **Agreed** that AFL Trucks Ltd must carry out the repairs necessary to make the equipment safe to use. Insurance liability cannot be accepted unless the repairs are signed off by a professional engineer. AFL will come asap.

Action: Carrie

Chrissie asked for the drain cover in the yard to be levelled, as it is a trip hazard. Carrie said there were iron bars that should support the cover.

Action: Rocky

Carrie asked for a Budget limit to be set for the Winter refurbishments. It was **Agreed** to allow expenditure of £2,000, which could be reviewed if necessary. The units and fittings from Howden's will cost £743.71, plus a further unit at £84. Michelle will pay the invoice from Howden's directly from WRHS accounts. The Trading Post will be cleared as necessary after closing on Saturday 15th Dec. A work party will work on the electrics on Monday 17th. The units will be delivered on 18th by Howden's. As the work will be technical, specifically skilled volunteers have been appointed to carry out the work initially.

Action: Rocky

Work parties are to be organised after Christmas to clean, paint and set up the shop ready for re-opening. Volunteers will be notified of the times, as required.

Action: Carrie

Phil Durbridge has offered to find some shelves for the plant pots we recycle. Carrie proposed that the roof between the big shed and the fertiliser shed be completed and the fence panel repaired, to make a dry area at that end of the yard. We no longer need storage for more than 10 pallets, so a designated general storage area could be built, using the timber shelves and more from Phil. Phil has offered to come and help with the building of this, as he put the all the sheds up originally. This offer is gratefully accepted and work could begin in March / April, weather permitting.

Action: Carrie

9. Social Secretary

The Christmas Raffle has been well supported with donations for prizes. It will be drawn at noon on Saturday 15th Dec. Brian to be asked to present the prizes.

Action: Jill, Carrie

Several members have gardening books that they no longer want: a table-top book sale will be held on the Opening day next year (12th January) - Dave will create barcoded labels. This will be advertised in the January Newsletter.

Action: Dave, Carrie

We need to hold more social events next year - ideas to be invited from Members.

10. Summer Show

Rachel questioned whether, in the light of the poor support this year, we should have a show at all. It was strongly felt that this is a tradition that should be maintained. Suggestions for the date were in favour of July. More effort to be made to include children.

Opening times to be changed: Judging later in the morning to allow for setting up and the Show open to the public in the afternoon. The Trading Post to be open 9.30am - 4pm, serving lunches. Judges to receive a complimentary lunch.

Action: Rachel

11. Any Other Business

The RHS Affiliation Fee is due - it was **Agreed** to continue with this. We can benefit from free admission to one RHS Garden a year for a group of up to 55. This includes Show days at these Gardens.

Plans for the catering on the last day (15th Dec) are in place with offers of cakes, mince pies and help making filled bread rolls. Enough Volunteers are signed up.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 11th February 2019

Meeting closed at 9pm.