

**Minutes of the
Annual General Meeting of the Essex Dahlia Society
Held on Saturday 7th May 2016 at 3.30 pm at
St. John Payne Lower School Hall**

The Chairman, Alan Taylor, opened the meeting by thanking everyone for coming to the 47th Annual General Meeting and for all the help with the plant sale and also for bringing plants.

Apologies for absence:

Robert Chambers, Robin Crouchman, Jill and Roger Claydon, Betty Whiting and Leslie Taylor.

Minutes of the 2015 AGM and any matters arising.

The minutes were circulated to the members attending the meeting. They were approved and signed by the Chairman. A member asked how many medals were donated by George Powley and was informed that we were not sure of the exact number, but they were mainly Bronze medals.

Chairman's Report & Membership

The Chairman's report which follows is the same as that which has already been printed in the 2016 Schedule and mentions the loss of Peter Ottaway, who was a very private person and a very good showman of Daffodils Fuchsias and Dahlias, as well as potatoes. He always supported Essex Dahlias and will be greatly missed. His funeral was well attended and was a celebration of his life.

David Gillam is now Chairman of the NDS and we wish him well in his first year and congratulations to Dave Spencer for winning the "Terry Clarke" in 2015 at the NDS National Show at Wisley after an absence of 30 years.

John Cullen is also to be congratulated for winning the Championship class at the Kent Show in September 2015.

The Annual Essex Show was a great success. As mentioned in the 2015 AGM minutes it was agreed to no longer use the white cloth to cover the staging, but to improve the boards which would look better and make the vases more stable. Robert undertook the job of rubbing down and staining the boards, which took a lot of time, but was worth it, as the whole appearance of the Show was a big improvement. Robert was thanked for doing this.

It was a good year for entries with very few gaps and was well supported in all classes. Congratulations to everyone who entered.

Thanks to all our Judges. In 2015 it was decided to only have 4 judges, instead of 6 judging in pairs and this worked efficiently and the same 4 judges have been retained for 2016. Thanks especially to Barry Moore who comes a long way from Havant and drives back the same day.

The Committee was thanked for their work on Show day, everyone has a job and thanks go especially to Margaret for preparing the meal and refreshments.

The Mini Shows were well supported, some years ago they were nearly cancelled, now there are over 100 vases in the Mini Shows and thanks go especially to Robert and Rosemary for their support.

The main Show venue has been a problem. The cost of hiring the venue in Braintree has tripled and the Society cannot continue to pay £900.00 hire charges for the Show weekend. Any profit from the plant sale goes to support the Society, but an account loss on the year of £256.00 reflects the increase in costs. This is one of the reasons why it was decided to hold the 2016 plant sale and AGM on the same day to save on the cost of hiring the Hall for the two events.

We have got to look into how to keep the costs down. The loss on this year is greater than last year which means using our reserves to cover the losses. Any ideas?

Membership Report

At present there are 34 members on the list, this goes up and down and although the subscription is only £3.00 the members do not get anything for their money.

One option is to increase Subscriptions, however, this would be for the new Committee to discuss.

Re: Venues

Schools at Broomfield and the big Hall at John Payne have been investigated as possible venues. Some schools do not want to hire out during holiday time. Also they charge extra for any addition rooms, equipment etc., so most overall costs are similar to Braintree.

Do not need to make a profit? How to raise funds? Raise subscriptions? use reserves? Apply for grants. Date of show always the same?

The Society is losing members each year through death or illness, people are joining. Should carry on for as long as we can;

Do we put up price of Plants or a combination of membership and plants?

A suggestion was made about having children's classes in the Show, but it was mentioned that from experience of other shows, in general there was no real interest by children to become involved.

We do need to try and encourage retired people who have Allotments.

Robert at present is our President and Rosemary the Secretary and they have decided they want to take a step back after many years of growing and showing. On behalf of the Society the Chairman thanked Rosemary and Robert for all their hard work over the years and they will be greatly missed, but they have agreed to help out with plants and the storage of staging but will no longer take an active part on the committee.

Here ends the Chairman's Report.

Treasurer's Report (copies of the Accounts were circulated)

Linda Owen's reported that the balance sheet shows a Loss for the year of £262.34.

The Plant Sale in May 2015 made a profit of £630.62

She thanked everyone who supported us, either by supplying plants or coming along to purchase plants, without this support we would not be in the position we are today.

The cost of the halls for all our Events has gone up by approx. £200.00, not only for Tabor, but also John Payne.

Thanks to the Officers, Committee and Members who give so generously to the Society during the Year.

As there were no questions from the meeting, she finished by thanking Robert and Rosemary for all their hard work and support over the years.

John Cullen gave a vote of thanks to Linda for all her hard work.

Election of President –

It was proposed by the Chairman that Robert Porter should become The Honorary President and seconded by Kate. It is very important to prize winners each year that the President is at the Annual Show and presents the prizes, Robert is a great help with his knowledge of Dahlias. This meet with unanimously agreement.

Election of Vice-Presidents

Considered for re-election by the Committee:

Jill & Roger Claydon, Doreen Cox, Linda Owens, Dave and Carman Spencer, John and Margaret Wills, Heinz Wilfgang, Alan Ripley and John Cullen.

Proposed for re-election en-bloc by Chris Whiting, seconded by John Sharp.

Re-elected unanimously.

Election of Chairman

Alan Taylor was proposed by Alan Ripley – Seconded by John Cullen

All agreed, elected unopposed.

Election of Secretary

As Rosemary was retiring from the position, Kate Chambers has agreed to take over as Secretary. Kate was proposed by Alan Taylor and seconded by Alan Ripley. All agreed elected unopposed.

Rosemary was thanked for all her work as Secretary over many years.

Election of Treasurer

Linda Owens has agreed to continue as Treasurer and John Cullen thanked Linda for all her hard work and proposed her as Treasurer, this was seconded by Kate. All agreed, elected unopposed.

Election of Committee Members

The committee members have all agreed to continue on the committee and the Chairman thanked them all for their work over the past year.

The committee members consisted of John and Margaret Will, John Cullen and Malcolm Deacon and were re-elected en-bloc.

Variation of Constitution

The Chairman explained that the regulation 10.1 required that the AGM in March be formally amended to read “the AGM to be held after the Plant Sale” This was agreed by the meeting.

Alan thanked all the non-committee members for staying to attend the AGM. Having both the plant sale and AGM on the same day was cost saving as previously mentioned..

In previous years, we have tried to encourage members to come to the AGM, by arranging for Dave Spencer and other speakers to give a talk on new varieties etc., but this made little difference to the numbers attending.

Any Other Business

The Chairman said that with the retirement of Robert and Rosemary from the Committee he felt that this should be marked in a special way as they had served the Essex Dahlia Society for many years. Therefore, in recognition of their service Alan presented Rosemary and Robert with the National Dahlia Society Affiliated Societies Silver Medal. The award has been approved unanimously by the National Dahlia Executive Committee, for all their work on behalf of the Essex Dahlia Society and for what they have done for the culture of the dahlia over many years.

Robert and Rosemary were delight to accept the award.

The meeting closed at 4.30 pm.