

We have had a wide range of talks this year. The bumblebee talk at the AGM was fascinating and we all learned a lot and I'm sure it all made us think more about planting for pollinators.

The March meeting was not quite what we were expecting from "Gardens of Ireland". It was an appalling evening in terms of the weather, but forty something brave souls turned out to be somewhat disappointed I fear, I know I was.

John Baker, the speaker, has been to us several times and given some excellent talks but I think the wires got crossed somehow on this one and the talk was more a history of the travels of St Patrick with hardly a garden in sight! It was still raining when he left to go home to near Guildford and as he is now well into his eighties I was worried about him getting back safely but he assured me he would be ok. Thankfully, all was well.

We had talks on exotics, hydrangeas, dahlias, carnivorous plants and ended the year with an excellent talk from Jeanette Merillion on "Christmas Crackers" which encompassed not only the usual Christmas things like cyclamen and poinsettias but shrubs and plants in flower throughout the winter months.

Our 20th annual plant fair in May was a huge success, despite having slightly fewer stalls than in the past. Our members came up trumps as ever and the plants donated this year were of excellent quality and well labelled. We raised a record amount on our stall and for the first time ever, had almost nothing left at the end! Massive thanks to Juanita Woods and Sharie Perl who were on the Green from 5.30 am organising things.

With the money already in the charity fund and what we raised at the plant fair, were able to donate just over £2000 to our charities.

Our out evening to Shallowmead nursery in July was very enjoyable and gave members a chance to mix and socialise and we really enjoyed being the only people there.

Two of the highlights of this year were the garden club holiday to the Colchester area and our 25th anniversary party in August, a month when we don't usually meet.

Oakhaven catering provided a lovely traditional tea and Jacqui Evans baked and decorated a fabulous cake for us. We used the "posh" china from the Community Centre and despite the fact that this was in the middle of our summer drought, members found enough flowers in their gardens to fill the front of the stage. I had a great tea of volunteer waitress and kitchen helpers who worked their socks off, so a big thanks to all of them for helping to make this event a success.

There was a real party atmosphere and I had boards of photos out from our archives, having spent the last 6 months going through all the things that Jean Robinson handed over when she stepped down as secretary.

We are also planning to plant an oak tree at the Meadow to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee but also, 25 years of the garden club. I have permission from the Parish Council but we are waiting to see what happens with the latest planning application for the piece of the Meadow which is not ours, to decide where it will go. Hopefully we will be able to go ahead in the Autumn.

The holiday was as ever fabulous despite our coach breaking down between Lymington and Brockenhurst just 20 minutes into our journey! It proved to be undriveable so after a 40 minute wait we transferred to another coach but had to leave our luggage behind as it wasn't safe to transfer it. 4 coaches later, we arrived at our hotel.

Highlights for me were Beth Chatto's garden and Peter Beales roses but we did so much more than just those two. Jenny has an amazing ability to scent out good private gardens as well as the big ones and she always puts together a brilliant itinerary. If you haven't yet been on one of her garden club holidays I urge you to do it. You will not be disappointed.

After all that activity I whipped off to Australia in September to see my sister and left Jen in charge. I suspect she quite likes having the chair role again but not the responsibility! Thanks Jen.

So, to the end of the year. Numbers were down in October, November and December, I'm not sure whether that was due to winter nights or the prevalence of flu and viruses and people being cautious about large gatherings or all of these things.

All in all though, I think it was a good year.

It's a little concerning that membership is only around the 100 mark, given that we have always had 120-130 members but it is still early days this year and hopefully we will be able to enrol some of the newcomers to the village.

TREASURER'S REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2022

As you can see from the annual accounts, which were sent out before the meeting, we are in a healthy financial situation and made a small surplus during 2022.

As at the end of the 2022, we had 131 members. So far this year, we have 105 members, which is 16 fewer than this time last year, so a bit of a slow start. Hopefully we'll pick up more through the year, but we have budgeted based on 120 members so we do need to attract new ones. With that in mind, I have signed up for a seminar next week on Modernising gardening clubs and attracting new members.

Last year, I reported that we had amended the club rules to allow us to take advantage of online banking. This has proved very successful and much more convenient for me as the Treasurer. Most members now pay by bank transfer for membership, outings and the holiday which saves me multiple trips to the bank, (especially as the New Milton branch is closing this summer leaving us with no local branches of HSBC) as well as being cheaper for the club. The club now also has a debit card which made paying entrance fees while on holiday very easy.

The Plant Fair was our most successful ever, enabling us to donate over £1000 each to the Friends of Lymington Hospital appeal and Força's Nourish programme. I apologise for a small error which I failed to spot in the accounts which shows it all going to Lymington – it didn't, it was equally split.

Finally, I would like to thank Paul Garton for his help, advice and guidance in preparing the accounts and for examining them.

It was agreed that the Accounts be adopted.

Proposed: Juanita Woods

Seconded: Jenny Spencer

VOTE OF THANKS FOR OFFICERS, COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND EXAMINER OF ACCOUNTS

The Chairman gave thanks:

To the Committee for loyally staying with her, together with a special mention to Clare Johnson who "is my right hand man and I could not run the club without her valuable help." Not only is she treasurer, but she is a treasure to me! She produces our lovely newsletters and sends them out, leaving me only to send her things for inclusion. All the other reminders and information about things like outings or special events come through Clare and she acts as a sounding board for me and generally keeps me on track.

Carol Gretton has taken on the role of organising tea and biscuits, and contacting volunteers. Great to know I won't turn up and have no one doing teas.

John Hall, helps with the technical stuff and saves us money. We have to pay £34 if we need help and he is not around.

A big thank you to Sharie Perl and Juanita Woods for taking on the Plant Fair and getting up at an ungodly hour on the day.

Also a big thank you to Richard and Anne Bickle for their continuing help as our bar tenders, and to Paul Garton for his invaluable help in the preparation of the Accounts.

Finally but be no means least, my good friend Pat Higgins who has only recently joined the club but has volunteered to do the minutes for tonight's meeting as no one else has come forward to offer help.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS & ORDINARY MEMBERS:

Nominations:

Officers:	Chairman	Sue Crabb
	Treasurer:	Clare Johnston
	Secretary:	vacancy

Ordinary members:	Jenny Spenser
	Judith Holliday
	Iris Slee
	Juanita Woods
	Jacqui Evans
	Marigold de Jongh
	Sharon Perl

It was proposed by the Chairman that a block vote be taken again this year for all posts.

Proposed:	Jenny Hedges	Seconded: Yvette Frost
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All proposals were unanimously passed by the members.

APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINER:

Paul Garton has offered to continue the role as the Examiner of Accounts for the coming year and this is greatly appreciated.

Proposed:	Jenny Spencer	Seconded:	Marigold de Jongh
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Passed by the Members.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at 7.53 pm.