

Petersfield Gardener's Club AGM 9th November 2023

Chairmans Report for the year 2022/23

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Clubs AGM and a very special welcome to the new members who joined during the year. This is an important AGM as it marks change in a number of areas. Both our secretary (Anne) and myself are retiring from the Committee, of which more later, but just to refresh memories for those who are new I would like to reintroduce the current Committee Members in alphabetical order -

Gordon Churchill – Day Walks

Malcolm Hunt – Speaker Secretary and Publicity

Sonia Ratsey – Membership

Anne Smith – Secretary

Colin Smith – Chairman

Angela Snow – Holiday Organiser

Carol Surman – Day Visits Organiser

Alan Walder – Treasurer

Each of the officers will make their own report so I will not steal their thunder by giving the detail of our activities during the year, instead I will summarise my term as Chairman since 2017

When I volunteered to cover for David Mogg, who sadly resigned as Chairman through ill health. In the absence of anyone else volunteering I said I would bridge the period to the AGM – that was my first mistake, as I didn't specify which AGM! so you have been lumbered with me ever since. Anne and I both gave a years notice of our retirements at todays meeting. Anne has been Secretary for 12 years since taking over from Pat Ilbert, by comparison I am a “Johnny come lately” taking over during 2017. We have both resigned for good reasons, It is essential to get new blood and new ideas into the club as your doddery old chairman is no longer fit for post as he nears his mid 80's and as five of the eight committee members are well into their 80's succession planning is essential . Our resignations were forcing factors to get others to volunteer otherwise the club could no longer exist. Our intention was to give as much time as possible for any potential successor to understand the culture and organisation of the club.

I have very much enjoyed the honour of being your Chairman, I have had a great deal of fun but none of it would have been possible without the fantastic rapport and hard work contributed by all the committee members, everyone took their allotted role on board and worked, largely independently, to achieve ongoing success, reporting and contributing actively at committee meetings where future policy and activities were thrashed out in constructive, but never acrimonious, discussion. Teamwork has been the hallmark of our endeavours. The period of the pandemic shutdown and later the start up were particularly difficult.

The theme of the Club has been to have a varied and knowledgeable succession of specialist speakers, two organised formal away day visits a year, occasional local walks or visits, with the annual five day, four night holiday by coach as the major event of the year. I believe we have continued to uphold these objectives thanks to everyone's enthusiasm and sheer hard work. I can only say again a huge thank you to the ever active committee and the continued support of the members. The future looks bright as I hope the election of a new chair and secretary will demonstrate.

When the formal AGM has been completed you are invited to take a social drink and some nibbles and I might be able to tell you a couple of stories if you are so minded. But now the Treasurer will give his report on the year – Alan.