

GRACE & FLAVOUR A.G.M. 2019

Date & Location:	21st November 2019, West Horsley Village Hall
Directors Present:	Ray Beard, Ashley Brown, Amanda de Haast, Nicki Douet, John Fluker, Bob Spackman, Rob Treble, Michael Trower & John Whitlock
Apologies:	Rob Satow, Helena Stuart-Matthews, Stephen Stuart-Matthews, Dana-Leigh Strauss, David Pile and Chrissie Beard
Chairman	Amanda de Haast
Minute Taker:	Nicki Douet

Agenda Items

1. Welcome by Chairman: Amanda de Haast

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting.

The first thing to be done is to ask for your approval for me to chair this meeting.

Proposer: Bob Spackman. Seconder: John Fluker. Group vote by show of hands.

Minutes on website: At this point I should also ask you to approve the minutes of the AGM from last year but since it is highly unlikely you will have read them I won't be going there. However going forward this will be a feature of the AGM and this year's minutes will be available on the website and a reminder sent out with notification of the next AGM inviting you to read the minutes for approval. Monthly meeting minutes are available on the website and the most recent minutes will be in a file on the potting shed.

Resignations: John Whitlock and Robin Satow are standing down by rotation, and I am glad to report they have both offered to put themselves forward for re-election.

Proposer: Bruce Edwards. Seconder: Claire Brown. Group vote by show of hands.

2. Chairman's Report: Amanda de Haast

GRACE & FLAVOUR A.G.M. 2019

It has been a VERY busy year down in the garden. Reading through the minutes from the past 12 months I was exhausted before I reached September.

OGM: I will not repeat highlights mentioned at the OGM in May, other than to say the timing of the OGM, midday on a Saturday, worked very well and we will repeat that for next year.

Birthday celebrations: Of course the big event was our 10th Birthday/Open Day celebrations. If you remember we were blessed with warmth and sun and the day was a great success. Everyone had worked hard to get the garden looking good and it did look magnificent. We had a steady stream of local, and not so local visitors (I recollect that one visitor was from New Zealand), a very popular bar and BBQ and Tom's terrace provided much needed shade and seating. Self-led tours around the garden with before and after photos and information cards worked well and the photographic display in the potting shed was very engaging.

Awards: The night before the birthday party we were delighted to receive the Judges Choice Award at the West Horsley in Bloom competition, and a week after the party we were judged for the Guildford in Bloom Competition where we went on to win a Gold Award in the Neighbourhood Project section. It was a fitting accolade to our celebrations but not something we will be entering on an annual basis: too distracting from the business of growing vegetables, fruit and flowers.

Village fete: Our next major outing was the West Horsley Village Fete at West Horsley Place in early September. Many thanks to Jane, Lyn and Carolyn for organising our stall, ensuring we had a good display of vegetables and flowers to sell and a rota of people to talk to visitors and man our games. Jane, with the fete organisers ran a miniature garden competition – this attracted much attention and at times I wondered who was enjoying it the most – the youngsters or the adults.

Social events: We have enjoyed a variety of social events and thanks must be extended to those that contributed and those that attended. We even had a small group go to see an open air production of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night in Guildford. We purchased our own apple press this year which meant we could extend our apple juicing activities and make full use of the fruit donated.

Donations: And talking of donations, this year we received a rotating composter and large fruit cage, both of which have proved to be very useful. We welcome useful donations like this: what we do not want to become is a home for unwanted items so please do check before leaving 'stuff' at the garden.

Tree disease: We have had quite a bit of communication with our landlord the National Trust this year. Firstly, there was the issue of the Oak Processionary Moth and the Forestry Commission's statutory notice. Evidence of OPM was found on oak trees on our boundary which after much to-ing and fro-ing by Ashley, the NT acknowledge it is their responsibility to ensure the correct treatment is put in place. The affected area has been sprayed twice and will be inspected again next spring. However, we must be vigilant and notify them if we observe any trace of the hairy caterpillar (moth) and its white wispy nests.

Wall repairs: The second issue relates to the precarious state of the West and North walls

GRACE & FLAVOUR A.G.M. 2019

3. Garden Manager's report: John Whitlock

GRACE & FLAVOUR A.G.M. 2019

John started his report by saying that whilst he is not a fan of 'biggest' produce at vegetable competitions we had produced some amazing cauliflowers, cabbages, swedes, carrots and pears.

The squash are nearly all sold and there are still plenty of vegetables available, e.g. cabbages, onions & leeks.

The problems experienced in 2018.....

- Late sown vegetables & salads
- Parsnips
- Runner beans
- Onions smaller than normal
- Asparagus not as good as previous years
- Little Gem for the tithe

.....have all been resolved.

Future plans include:

- Review our potato varieties – we grew 6 different varieties of earlies
- Some chilli peppers – Tim Bennet looked after the chillies & aubergines very well. Will plant the various varieties of chillies in different coloured pots next year to clearly identify the hot ones!
- Broad beans grown in modules
- Peas in the fruit cage
- More Dwarf French beans
- Edamame beans
- Grapes and Kiwi – There may be some fruit from the pergola vines and kiwi will be planted.
- Asparagus and Globe Artichoke new beds
- Aubergines in bigger pots and outside

Some of the best sweetcorn was grown this year but sadly the rats got nearly all of them. Now that Atticus has left options for protecting next years' crop are being investigated.

New in 2019:

- Summer cauliflowers – really successful
- Greater range of tomatoes – members chose varieties other than Sungold!
- No new Tozer seeds – the saving is not that great and the packet sizes are far too big for our use
- Long leeks – as deeper holes were dibbed
- Edamame beans
- Tropea red onions – very successful
- Celery – not particularly good so will have to review

The main aim for 2020 is to maintain the quality and quantity of the produce we have on offer every week.

John thanked

- Everyone who has worked so hard at the garden – a photo was shown from one Saturday when there were 34 different crops for sale!

GRACE & FLAVOUR A.G.M. 2019

4. Allotments: Michael Trower

All plots are occupied and there is one person on the waiting list. A couple of changes happened at the renewals.

Again this seems to have been a successful year crop-wise for all allotment holders. Gerry Robbins has made number signs that will clearly identify each plot.

There does not seem to have been too many problems with wildlife this year – no moles have been noticed and only a token rabbit. A fox has been seen recently so hopefully natural pest control may be taking place.

A rota was set up for mowing the communal grass areas and this has seemed to be successful, so will be carried on next year. Thanks to all those who mowed the grass and strimmed round the boundaries.

2 benches have been installed in the allotment area.

The management agreement between the parish councils and G&F is due for renegotiation next year for a three year period. Stephen Skinner (EH Parish Council) and Catherine Young (WH Parish Council) have both been given tours of the allotments and garden and were impressed by what they saw. Stephen said that E & W Horsley were fortunate to have the allotments as well as the communal garden and considers G + F a great community asset.

There won't be any further drainage works this year but will be considered for the future.

Heather Spackman asked how the plot allocation is divided between the 2 Parish Councils. Michael explained that the original division was inflexible; when the agreement was renegotiated each PC agreed to pay half and the plots are allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Amanda thanked Michael for keeping our Facebook page current. Facebook users can post their own photos and were reminded to send any photos to Ashley.

5. Finance: Ashley Brown

GRACE & FLAVOUR A.G.M. 2019

2018 - 2019

Current bank balance just over £10k including £4k contingency. Our balance prediction was £9k.

Expenses averaging £5k

Capital projects have cost £3.6k. Less was spent than expected hence the higher bank balance than predicted.

We took £1,600 more on produce compared to previous years. The average is £7k so taking nearly £9k is a big help.

Quite a lot spent on maintenance including skips when major tidy ups have taken place, removal of the oak trees, and 2 tool stations. Also leasehold improvements, for example the pergola.

2019 - 2020

£566 from each Parish Council which we allocate across the costs of maintaining the allotment facilities. Some further drainage work is to be carried out.

The north and west walls will be approximately £5k but this will be repaid by our landlords, the National Trust and there are some back expenses for the potting shed and general maintenance.

We continually review any payments, for example this year we shopped around for our insurance renewal. Our previous policy cost £600, but through Social Farms & Gardens have found another insurer who is providing cover appropriate to our needs & usage and is £350.

Looking at having a formal purchasing policy so that we all understand the rules when buying for the garden.

6. Membership & Website: Ashley Brown

Please send any updates or contributions for the website to Ashley. Contributions of articles & photos are welcome.

Newsletter: Ashley said that he tries to send this on a monthly basis. 300 are signed up to receive it but 50% don't open it! GDPR means we have to be mindful of this and update / cull our mailing list periodically.

Amanda thanked Ashley for keeping us in order and solvent, as well as looking after the website and membership.

7. Building Report: Tony Millership

GRACE & FLAVOUR A.G.M. 2019

Successes

- New path from the car park to the nursing home, gatepost replaced and the fence by the entrance walkway has been repaired
- 2 upgraded tool stations using leftover paving slabs.
- Pergola design and erection
- Vegetable washing station developed.
- Oak tree roots dug out
- One water trough installed and preparations complete for second
- Fence installed behind Tom's terrace
- Guttering installed on potting shed

Failures

None we are admitting to.

Plans for 2020

- Install 50 props on west and north walls – some of the concrete pads have been put in.
- Install a second water trough (subject to funding)
- Anything else we think we may enjoy

Thanks to Mark Blowers who looks after the loo. Round of applause.

Amanda thanked the building team for all their hard work. Round of applause.

8. Wildlife

For those of you who have not heard, Eddie has decided to move on from his ten year involvement with the garden. We were extremely sad to hear of his decision but have to respect it.

We are in talks with one of our volunteers about how to proceed and what outside support we may need. Eddie took with him the majority of his bird boxes and feeding station so we will be discussing what degree of replacement we think is realistic. He was also part of the team reviewing the Ecological Management Plan and Sustainable Development Plan, both two projects that we hope to update over the winter months.

9. AOB

GRACE & FLAVOUR A.G.M. 2019

Ray Beard asked if the older polytunnel is to be replaced yet.
Ashley explained that Bob has examined it and we can leave this task for another year.

10. Thanks and Close: Amanda de Haast

A special thanks to all the directors who prepared reports for this evening and those of you who helped with the refreshments and provided delicious cakes for us to enjoy.

Particular thanks to Bob Spackman and John Fluker for stepping in to chair meetings when I have been away this year and also a big thank you to Nicki and Ashley for putting our presentation together.

Thanks must also go to Jeremy Miles and the Lady Noel Byron Trust who cover our rent to NT each year and thanks to Sue and David Reeve for their continuing supervision and work with the bodging group – we look forward to sampling some of their work next year.

Thank you all for coming out this evening and for the support you continue to show for this wonderful community project. Consolidation is a word you will hear over the next few months. We have no new major projects in the pipeline and we look forward to working with what we have and prioritizing our needs.

One last request - please don't forget to let Nicki know if you plan to be there on the 7th December for the Baked Potato lunch.