**Minutes of AGM held Wednesday 9th March 2022**

**7.30pm at Ashurst Village Hall, BN44 3AP**

**Apologies:** Barry Newman, Ann Luxford, Richard and Lorelei Hilson, Catherine George, Phil Midwinter.

**Present**: Paul and Brenda Dalby, Martin and Marion Neden, Gordon and Dilly Cooper, Norman Dickinson, Brian and Pat Jeffries, Chris & Christine Gibson, Nick Forsyth, Dennis Collins, Kevin Duncton, David Colgate. Jason Ralph-Smith (speaker)

**Welcome**: Chairman, Paul Dalby welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for supporting the society at the AGM.

**Minutes from Previous AGM on 8th January 2020 at 7.30pm (There was not an AGM in 2021 due to the Pandemic)** Secretary, Marion Neden had supplied everyone with a copy of the 2020 AGM minutes by email. These were approved by all in the room. Acceptance was by all present. Paul Dalby then Signed and dated them.

**Chairman’s Report.**

Paul reported that the last AGM was in 2020. Then it was decided not to hold a meeting in March as we were hosting the Southern Branch AGM where we had Fliss Lewis from Woolshred followed by Sherie Plumb. Who could have predicted that after this the whole Country shut down due to the COVID Pandemic. However the committee did meet a few times by Zoom and we are very grateful for the support of the hall in allowing us to reschedule our bookings.

After 18 months we were finally able to get together for the Mini Show in September 2021 and under the circumstances it was very well supported with a number of good quality exhibits Although I thought the judge was unnecessary harsh on my peppers! Christine Gibson won the trophy for most points and Tim Richardson won Best in Show for his Blackberries.

With the amount of uncertainty still in the air we approached the South of England Agricultural Society (SEAS) and asked if they were running the Horticultural show at the Autumn show and game fair in October. After some discussion it was decided that we would run it for them. Although the entries were down on previous years the entries were a good standard with Roy Spooner being the star of the show. We were able to run a bureau for the duration of the show at no cost to us, resulting in 5 new members for the NVS and selling a number of books. We hope to repeat the experience again this year.

With restrictions being slowly released we were able to get a speaker for our November meeting, we were joined by Chris Stewart who gave us a talk on the eco-warrior the earthworm. It was a shame but perhaps understandable that not many people were able to attend.

With Covid variants appearing around the world there was a great deal of uncertainty about whether there would be another lockdown or further restrictions on meetings etc. in this atmosphere we decided that the best thing to do would be to postpone the AGM in January so here we are after nearly 2 years with restrictions lifted and if we will catch Covid, isolation is now optional rather than a legal requirement.

Looking forward we are intending to have a presence at the Spring show at the south of England Showground at the end of April this will be a bureau with a sales table. Following the pandemic, SEAS have made changes to all of the shows which affects us with the south of England show in June. SEAS will no longer have a horticultural marquee and are concentrating their efforts on garden design instead. If we were to go to the show with a bureau and plant sale we would be obliged to pay commercial rates for a pitch which wouldn’t be economically viable. We have made contact with the Floral Fringe who are holding an event at Leonardslee Gardens, Lower Beeding near Horsham over the bank holiday weekend at the beginning of June and are intending to have a stand there. We are confident that this event will enable us to engage with a large number of people and give us the opportunity to have a sales table and promote the growing vegetables and companion planting. We will also be heavily involved once again at the autumn show at Ardingly.

I am standing down as chairman today I have enjoyed my time as chairman but feel it is time for a change I am confident that the DA Is in good hands. I will still be around growing plants and helping where I can. I wish you all good luck for the coming growing season and I am encouraged that my judging diary is full as opposed to the last two years when it was virtually empty.

**Treasurer Report**: A copy of the accounts were handed out by Brian Jeffries.

**Accounts**: Brian reported that we did well thanks to Paul and Marion growing and selling plants during lockdown. We have a deficit of £4.46 against income for 2021. Balance as at 31/12/21 £4023.79. Accounts are attached to these minutes. We have purchased a Sumup payment machine to make taking payments a lot more easy when at shows and meetings.

Accounts were proposed by Norman Dickinson and seconded by Christine Gibson. All were in favour.

**Election of Officers**:

**Chairman**: Paul Dalby had confirmed that he wished to stand down as Chair of Sussex DA due to other commitments. Norman Dickinson was proposed by Paul Dalby and seconded by Brian Jeffries. All agreed. Norman then continued with the meeting and thanked Paul for all his hard work over the years and especially during hard times.

**Vice Chairman**: no nominations so remains vacant.

**Secretary**: Marion Neden had confirmed that she was standing down as Secretary. Norman thanked her for her services to date. There were no nominations and therefore remains vacant.

**Treasurer**: Brian Jeffries, Proposed by Gordon Cooper, seconded by Chris Gibson.

All agreed by the members present.

**Committee members**: Gordon Cooper and Marion Neden Proposed by Brian Jeffries and seconded by Chris Gibson.

**AOB**: Norman advised about Southern Branch AGM would be at Thatchers Hotel East Horsley On 13th March followed by a talk by Chris Stewart. No programme for the remainder of this year as yet apart from Spring Live and the Floral Fringe and Autumn Show as mentioned before. Kent will not be at the Edenbridge and Oxted show this year so it is possible that Surrey and Sussex could have a joint bureau there.

Nick Forsyth asked if we wanted him to try a reschedule the trip to Barfords for early August. Norman thought a good idea.

Judges exam will take place early October.

The meeting closed at 8pm whereupon A presentation by Jason Ralph-Smith on Auto pots followed by light refreshments were served.

Thanks to Martin Neden, Dilly Cooper and Pat Jeffries for doing the refreshments.