

**STAA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
THE HALF MOON, SHEET, WEDNESDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 2022 - 7.30PM**

1. ATTENDING:

Committee

Margaret Davis - Chair
Alison Carling - Treasurer
Georgie Thurlby - Secretary
Steve Elliott - Sheet Rep
Abi Grute - Trading Secretary
David Mogg - Membership Secretary and Webmaster
Kate Wighton - Tilmore Rep

Members

Nigel Baldwin	Steve Jones
Paul Barton	Fiona Oakley
Dorothea Barton	Keith Oakley
David Berry	Jamie Parkins
Gordon Churchill	Mags Collis
John Deavin	Stuart Collis
Tim Dilks	Michael Cowen
Peter Dobson	Peter Davis
John Elliott	David Petcher
Viv Elliott	John Russell
Rachel Gorvin	Steve White
Annabel Hartley	Julie Yardley

Council Representatives

Cllr Lesley Farrow (Petersfield Town Council)
Cllr Robin Forrest (Sheet Parish Council)

2. APOLOGIES:

Jenny Hollington (Sheet Parish Clerk)
Mike Owen
Mike Kinsey

3. WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Margaret welcomed the attendees to the meeting, including the councillors from Sheet Parish Council and Petersfield Town Council.

4. MINUTES FROM LAST AGM

The minutes of the last AGM in 2021 were approved as an accurate record of the proceedings (proposed by Steve Elliott and seconded by David Mogg).

5. CHAIR'S REPORT

Margaret shared the news that John Hakeman, a Sheet plotholder and former member of the STAA committee for many years, had sadly passed away over the summer.

Margaret gave some reflections on the past year on the allotments. There had been some challenging weather, including a record breaking heatwave, but most people had been able to grow several crops and had continued to enjoy the benefits of having an allotment.

Margaret explained that sadly we had had to cancel the planned summer BBQ due to the unprecedented heat and drought conditions over the summer months and the risk of wildfire. On that note, she reflected that water usage had been a particularly important topic this year and would likely be in future, and reminded members that having water butts to harvest and store rainwater is always a good idea. The summer BBQ would be rescheduled in 2023.

Margaret also reminded plotters of the importance of communicating with the respective councils, if for example, they are going to be away from their plots for some time.

Margaret individually thanked all the committee members for their efforts over the last year and made a request for association members to consider whether they would like to join the committee as there were always tasks to be done and it was useful to have enough committee members.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

Alison introduced the annual accounts which were now available to view on the STAA website. She explained that we have around £200 less in the accounts than at this time last year, because Abi had invested in non-perishable stock for the Shed which would be sold next season.

The Shed had not sold as much stock this year as it had last year, but it had made more profit.

Alison explained that we used to arrange the public liability insurance through the RHS but they have recently outsourced this to a different supplier so the accounts now show that the RHS affiliation and the insurance are two separate payments.

The accounts also show that seed sales from Kings using the paper forms were down this year - around £75 rather than around £1000 in previous years - because of the new website ordering process, which had generally been well received as it was very convenient and could be repeated many times over the year. It had also reduced the admin burden on the committee as orders were placed directly with Kings.

Alison also explained that she had set up an option for other committee members to log in and view (but not edit) the bank accounts which would help with monitoring transactions (for example to check whether a membership fee had been paid).

7. TRADING SHED REPORT

Abi did a quick straw poll to see whether attendees were aware of the Shed and had visited. Most had, but there were some new members who had not. She explained that sales had been down compared to previous years, likely because garden centres etc had been open again following a couple of years of Covid lockdowns, but profits had increased.

The main reason for this was a change in the way of ordering seed potatoes. To avoid wastage, last year the Shed had started only ordering what people wanted, in 2kg bags. This had been successful so the same process was being used again this year. The details for doing so were on the STAA website and Abi reminded members that the deadline for sending in seed potato orders is this Saturday. She explained that the price of seed potatoes generally is likely to be much higher this year because of crop failures etc, so our prices at the Shed have gone up by around 80p compared to last year, but that this was still going to be much cheaper than garden centres. As last year, seed potatoes would be able to be collected from the Shed from March onwards. Abi explained for the benefit of new members what the Shed stocks: fertilisers, bamboo canes, compost and growbags, insect mesh, horticultural fleece and various other products. The majority of the compost for 2023 would be peat free. All the stock details and prices were on the STAA website for members to view.

She explained that the first Sunday opening in 2023 will be the 5th March, so that will be the first opportunity to pick up seed potatoes from the Shed.

Abi explained that the Shed team had changed the opening hours to 10-11am on Sundays and were now opening every week instead of every other week. However, if those times are not convenient for members, they should feel free to contact Abi because she is generally happy to drop off stock at members' houses or open up the Shed at a different time in the week if requested.

8. MEMBERSHIP REPORT

David gave an update on the Kings seed ordering process. He had had some excellent feedback from members who had used the new online process who had found it very easy and convenient to use. The process was the same as last year and all the details were on our website. Members who had not ordered last year and therefore would not already have the special link would need to email David to request it.

We had around 65 members at the start of the year but sadly 2 had died during the year. Of the 65 members, 33 members had used the online seed ordering process. Someone had ordered £104 worth of seeds, which represents a very large saving!

STAA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THE HALF MOON, SHEET, WEDNESDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 2022 - 7.30PM

David reminded members that they should let him know if there are any issues with the seed order process or the website as he will try to resolve any issues.

David explained that we had researched options for organic seeds following a question at the AGM last year and there is a minimum order amount of £100 to get a discount with the Organic Gardening Catalogue, but that Kings do offer a reasonable selection of organic seeds.

9. COMMITTEE POSITIONS FOR 2022-23

The committee members all resigned from their positions and a motion was proposed by Gordon Churchill (seconded by Tim Dilks) to re-elect them as follows for the 2022-23 year:

- Chair - Margaret Davis
- Secretary - Georgie Thurlby
- Treasurer - Alison Carling
- Membership Secretary - David Mogg
- Trading Secretary - Abi Grute
- Webmaster - David Mogg
- Sheet rep - Steve Elliott
- Tilmore rep - Kate Wighton

10. COMPETITION PRIZES

The prizes from the 2022 best kept plot competition, which had been judged at the end of August, were then awarded.

Cllr Lesley Farrow from Petersfield Town Council presented the prizes for **Tilmore** as follows:

Best Kept Plot

3rd place (£10 Shed voucher) - Plot 2A, Bubbles and Nick Silk

2nd place (£25 Shed voucher) - Plot 9, Gordon Churchill

1st place (£50 cheque donated by Petersfield Town Council) - Plot 14, Fiona and Keith Oakley

Best Newcomer (£20 Shed voucher) - Plot 10A, Steve Jones

Cllr Robin Forrest from Sheet Parish Council presented the prizes for **Sheet** as follows:

Best Kept Plot

3rd place (£10 Shed voucher) - Plot 32/33/35, Patricia Wooldridge

2nd place (£25 Shed voucher) - Plot 93/94, Steve Elliott

1st place (£50 cheque donated by Sheet Parish Council) - Plot 4, Nigel Baldwin

Best Newcomer (£20 Shed voucher) - Plot 15B, Annabel Hartley

Robin gave apologies on behalf of Jenny Hollington, the parish clerk, who had been unable to attend, and thanked Steve for his efforts as the liaison with Sheet Parish Council.

Robin also reminded plotters that the official line on trampolines is that they are not allowed on plots unless the plot holder has obtained permission from the council, which may be granted in exceptional cases.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a. Cllr Lesley Farrow reminded plotters about the importance of mowing grass in particularly dry conditions, as the risk of wildfire is much higher when grass is long. Even though initiatives like No Mow May had been encouraged to help wildlife, the benefits of not mowing would be outweighed by the safety risk of having long dry grass in hot conditions.

STAA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
THE HALF MOON, SHEET, WEDNESDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 2022 - 7.30PM

- b. A member raised the issue of woodchip not having been delivered to Sheet this year. Steve explained that there had been a family member of a former plotholder who was a tree surgeon who would drop off several loads of woodchip every year but that plotholder had now left so the deliveries had stopped. Another member explained that it is useful for the tree surgeons to be able to drop off woodchip at the allotments as then they don't have to pay to dispose of it elsewhere, so it would be a win-win situation if this could continue. Robin Forrest requested that members liaise with Jenny Hollington to see if woodchip deliveries can be arranged.
- c. There was a question from the floor about the small handful of plots at Tilmore which had not been tended to for several months. Lesley Farrow asked members that were concerned about the state of some of the plots to email her directly with any concerns.
- d. There was a question from the floor about security of the allotment sites and whether there had been any reports of anti social behaviour over the last year. Two plotholders at Sheet reported that they had had thefts of an entire tree's worth of pears from their plots. Plotholders were requested to let the relevant clerk know if such incidents happen again.

It was discussed whether putting padlocks on the pedestrian gate at Sheet would be a good idea and it was noted that the thief might be another plotholder not necessarily an outsider so that might not solve the problem - there had also been an issue with a plotholder not being able to operate the padlock from inside the site and getting locked in when it was dark. It was suggested that putting a CCTV warning sign on the gate might deter a casual thief but this would not be a universally popular idea. It was agreed that the scale of the problem was not large, all things considered, and that anyone stealing fruit and vegetables would hopefully at least have had a good meal out of them.

The meeting was closed at 8.40pm.
