

Marlborough Gardening Association

Minutes of AGM 2023 held on Wednesday 7th February 2023 at 7.30pm

Apologies for absence were received from John & Angela Price, Marion Gordon-Finlayson, Jane Tilbrook and Richard and Carol Smith.

Minutes of the 2022 AGM were circulated. Miranda Gilmour proposed they be accepted, seconded by Debs Schofield and this was agreed.

Chairman's Report The programme offered during 2022 had been excellent, although there had been a lower attendance at meetings and take up on trips than pre-Covid which was a shame. It was hoped that this would improve in 2023. The Association's offer for 2023 included 9 lectures, 3 garden visits, a weekend away, a plant sale and a Xmas quiz – very good value. The committee were thanked – Jan Lillywhite for the excellent speaker programme, Jane Tilbrook and Miranda Gilmour for organising day trips and Carolyn Davis for organising the weekend. 2024 would be Carolyn's last year of organising the weekend away and the committee would be hoping someone else would take this on. Thanks were expressed to Debs Schofield as treasurer and Deirdre Watson who produced the newsletter and well as posting on Marlborough on-line. Dorothy Aitcheson was responsible for printing and delivering the paper copies and Ruth Pitt welcomed members and kept attendance lists, while Jacqui Taylor ran the raffle.

While Jacqui, Dorothy, Ruth and Carolyn were stepping down from the committee, they would continue to help in a variety of ways. Thanks were given to Sue Jackson and her many volunteers who helped with refreshments which this coming year would be free (covered in cost of membership). MGA continued to be grateful to Bruce Hayllar for managing the website and Heather Bridgeman for running the plant Committee, responsible for the annual plant sale. Membership was over 140 with some 30 volunteers, illustrating a strong and vibrant Association. Members were encouraged to participate in meetings and visits and enjoy gardening. There are many new initiatives being introduced and if members had some ideas, they were encouraged to suggest them.

Those leaving the committee were formally thanked by Lesley and in turn Miranda thanked Lesley for taking on the role of Chairman during 2023.

Committee Three new members were welcomed, Grace Hoskin, the new membership secretary, Myra Hay and Bev Luxford, who together with Deirdre, Debs, Jane, Miranda and Jan would form the 2023/4 committee. Unable to find someone to take on the role of Chairman, it had been agreed that it would be shared by four members, starting with Miranda.

Treasurer's Report was presented by Debs Scofield. The club received income from membership subs, refreshments, the raffle, a pop-up stall and a few donations. In addition, the Plant Sale raised £725 which was used to underwrite the speaker's programme. A big thanks to everyone involved in these activities. We ran a successful programme of events which we aim to break even on. The plant sale and weekend away costs are spread over several years and so the income and expenditure shown is not directly comparable, and we lost a small amount on our day trips. The club had a healthy surplus at the end of the year which is useful as use of the Town Hall has increased costs slightly and it will enable us to purchase some audio equipment and then return to the Court Room, which is cheaper and a better size for us. Emma Goodwin, a professional accountant, has volunteered to check the accounts and expects to sign the off in the next 2 weeks. Members were invited to ask questions and approve the draft accounts. This was proposed by Miranda Gilmour and seconded by Bruce Hayllar.

Any Other Business Miranda encouraged members to participate in the new 'themed display table' which would feature at each meeting to encourage members to bring a few flowers from their garden – the March theme being 'Early Spring Flowers'. The annual MGA lunch would be taking place at the Golf Club on 1st April, the booking form would be in the March Newsletter. The first garden visit would be taking place on 18 April. The booking form was included in the January Newsletter. There were still places available on the Norfolk weekend away on 16 -18 June, however all the single rooms had been taken. The Plant Sale was on 13 May and members were encouraged to divide perennials and sow extra seeds for the sale. Anyone who could display a flier promoting MGA on a village noticeboard or garden fence should see Debs. There were some free seed packets available at the end of the meeting as were clips for greenhouse insulation which were available free to a good home.

The AGM was followed by a presentation from Anna Forbes from ARK.