

# BIDEFORD GARDENER'S CLUB



## SPRING NEWSLETTER 2023

***ALL MEETINGS AT BIDEFORD METHODIST  
CHURCH HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDEFORD  
ENTRANCE FROM HONESTONE STREET CAR PARK***

### ***DETAILS OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS***

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## SECRETARY'S PAGE

Well Friends,

We tried during 2022 to have the usual meetings but the numbers were disappointing to say the least, despite having some great speakers and subjects. Because of this we held an Extraordinary General Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> September to decide the way forward with the club. We are still carrying but decided to limit the number of meetings and they were postponed until 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023, later than the normal night by 2 weeks but done in the hope of being better weather and lighter evenings to attract more attendance. I'm pleased to say we are now commencing the meetings at the Methodist Church Hall on that date with a belated AGM but that will be a short part of the evening and we will have the Quiz Night and we hope you'll bring along some refreshments for a light buffet in the interval. Please all attend and let's make sure we can look forward beyond the past gloom and get much more attendance and support this Summer and of course much more help at the Show, which will take place on 20<sup>th</sup> August at the Pannier Market. Apologies that last years show got cancelled at short notice due to me sustaining a dislocated shoulder and being unable to carry out the normal functions. We will soon be needing to find another venue for meetings. After this year the Methodist Church will close down and be put on the market. I'd like to think it would be purchased for a community hall but no doubt that's a long shot for that to happen. I've been told we are fine for this year's dates and the church really does need the income.

Meetings are initially intended to be every other month during the Spring and Summer with Claire Forster with a talk on Pots & Baskets for 9<sup>th</sup> May then on 11<sup>th</sup> July we have again booked Jeremy Wilson from Torquay with his Talk on Camellias last time it was so disappointing to have a great talk and excellent plants to buy but just a handful of members so we try again in the hope the light nights encourage more to come along. It will also be the Show Preparation Meeting and we really do need a lot more helpers from the club.

We ran an absolutely fabulous Summer Show in 2021 with the opener, television presenter, David Domoney, from ITVs Love Your Garden and I'm delighted to say we are really pushing the boat out by having him come and do "An evening With David Domoney" on the 12<sup>th</sup> September. We will produce tickets for this to be sold at the Summer Show and again hope we can count on the supply of some refreshments from members.

There are things to look forward to for us all and this years 55<sup>th</sup> Summer Open Show will be on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2023 and I would hope we are feeling confident enough to run our own refreshments in the afternoon once again as it is a much needed and excellent income for the show failing that Carol and her staff at Pannier Pantry will again be called on to provide this facility.

Yes that's right we are going to have a Show again this Summer after all and in fact it

should be the best the town has seen. We host the National Begonia Society South West Group show each year and attract exhibitors from throughout the West Country and South Wales. Shrewsbury Show is on again this year on 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> August and I'll be there for most of that week but back to run ours the following Sunday. We need many more helpers than last time to get the staging up and laid out for the show. This was the most noticeable problem in 2021 when only a few helped and we even engaged some paid helpers to move tables into the market and return afterwards to the store.

Last time we made the admission cost at £1.00 per adult with accompanied children free and didn't notice any reluctance to pay that, Exhibitors now pay 20p/entry too and again wasn't considered a problem. For the 2016 show we brought back a Floral Art Section with great success and we hope this will still attract entries. Schedules will be available for the May Meeting and will then be online or sent to existing Exhibitors however I would ask you use the one issued in 2022 for the show we had to cancel, please let me know if your ok to use that and if not I'll supply a new version. Only the dates will be changed. Feel free to ask for more copies or download it from our website page. Please, please get some Children's entries from your children or grandchildren, nephews and nieces.

Subscriptions were not requested during the period of postponement of meetings since we last met, Your membership therefore now restarts following the deferred AGM in March at the same cost of £5.00. Make all payments to Bideford Gardener's Club or in person to myself.

We look forward giving a big welcome back to all members and we hope all will continue their membership and help rebuild the membership levels now we are resuming events. Thankfully we intend to continue and this was the reason for bringing a big name to open the show last year and we will be publicising the fact that we are up, fully running for the rest of the foreseeable future. We will get a mention and an advert in The Link magazine for March and hope some of its 12000 recipients respond and come along. The details are all on the club website but of course not all members have internet access. I would hope that members that do use the internet can pass on the details to their friends who normally attend and encourage them to come along for what we hope is a really attractive set of events.

Sharon Elliott looks after the provision of the teas at the meetings but we need some help to cover evenings and liaise with Sharon when she is not available to bring the milk and biscuits. Dave Hopkins will run the Raffle for the meetings as well. Pauline Spencer acts as our Social Secretary, taking a burden off myself and has the role of organising speakers and trips and is doing a superb job with booking the speakers for our events. With the very poor numbers at meetings there will be no trips this year. Let hope in 2023 we can at least think about a few car trips.

Best regards, Mike Avis, Secretary & Editor.

## **MEETING / EVENTS DETAILS all commence at 7.30pm**

### **TUESDAY 21<sup>st</sup> March – QUIZ NIGHT with light BUFFET and AGM**

A belated AGM and this is now likely to be the regular format so that its not in the dark Winter months. I've brought along the slide presentation Quiz on a couple of occasions and with low numbers have not run it so this will be used at the start of the evening. Can you do Bring & Share Buffet for this evening and after that we will have the short AGM. With no events or little activity the balance sheet needs little explanation and we are still very healthy financially. If we have enough interest there could be a car trip somewhere in April in place of a meeting in the hall. A request to committee members who will be willing to carry on please let me know either by phone or email.

### **TUESDAY 9<sup>th</sup> MAY – CLAIRE FORSTER – POTS & BASKETS**

Claire is a new speaker to us and belongs to the Devon Gardeners Trust and comes from Exeter with a range of subjects and I've chosen one which is always in people's minds in May, planting up those summer pots and hanging baskets. We really hope the lighter nights and warmer weather will get members to support our efforts to get more involvement in the events we organise.

### **TUESDAY 11<sup>th</sup> JULY – JEREMY WILSON – CAMELLIAS**

Jeremy has been a regular attendee at RHS Rosemoor Plant Fairs and is a specialist in Camellias. He grows many other hardy plants on his Strete Gate Nursery at Torquay as well and no doubt will bring along some items for sale. He did a talk on them in April last year but with so few there we feel it only right to give him another visit and hope the numbers are much better. He brought many great plants last time and sold several so we hope that will be the case this time too.

As part of this meeting we will have our Show Preparation Meeting after his talk. We want you all to attend and offer help in manning the stalls and entrances on the day but there is much to do before that with bringing in the staging equipment from the store at my nursery and setting up the market and getting classes marked out. This year the NBS South West members have offered to help in the setting up and removal of the staging after the show. The show day requires stewards to accompany the judges and mark up the cards and result sheets for Paul Mitchell to collate the prizes and awards. Unfortunately Paul has some health problems and we really need an understudy to help in this area of the show. The programme is on my laptop and runs really well so should be easy for anyone used to a computer. Steward sheets and facilities to offer help will be at the meeting. If you cannot attend but will help with the show please let me know by phone on 07710 454230 or email [mikeeavis44@gmail.com](mailto:mikeeavis44@gmail.com).

### **SUNDAY 20<sup>th</sup> AUGUST – 55<sup>th</sup> OPEN FLOWER SHOW.**

We had to cancel the Show in 2022, which would have been the 55<sup>th</sup> Show so it is deferred to this Summer. This was down to myself slipping and dislocating my shoulder making it impossible to drive and carry anything or even type on my computer to create the exhibitor cards. It's only when this happens you know how much is done by yourself. The Schedules are the ones we printed for 2022 so those issued last year are still valid,

just change the dates by 1 day for both entry closure and staging etc. If you have lost or recycled the copy you had I can provide another but we can reduce costs by using the same ones. Spares are ready now and we count on a fantastic event with all the things mentioned above. Staging of exhibits is from 7.30pm to 9.30pm on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> August and on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> August from 7.00am to 10.00am. Show lunches will be provided for judges as always by Pannier Pantry and we hope to offer the facility for exhibitors travelling so far in the normal way. Last time was the biggest spectacle of Begonias the Town has ever seen and we hope many will return again, however we are not able to stage the 12 bloom class this year..

If you have trophies from the show can they be returned very soon so I know who to chase up before the show.

### **12<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER - DAVID DOMONEY from ITV's LOVE YOUR GARDEN**

David was so pleased when he came down and met members of the Club and the public and has been trying to visit us again and we had a good chat at last year's Shrewsbury Flower Show when he came to find me in the National Begonia Society section. Obviously for a nationally known presenter this costs a fair bit but with repeated grants that haven't been used due to the pandemic this should be a chance to restore interest in the club and its events. David opened the show in 2020 and will be answering gardening queries and have his books and seeds for sale.

We will make this an open meeting and invite as many people as possible to come along to hear David who was so popular when he opened the 2021 Flower Show. There will be tickets issued for the event and the price will be decided at the AGM but probably £5.00 for visitors, and will be notified by the club website, Facebook and The Link magazine.

### **RAFFLES**

At all of these events, we shall be having a raffle at £1.00 per strip. We welcome prizes to be added to these raffles and of course, Raffle prizes for the Summer Show, which Pauline Spencer will co-ordinate and we hope for a superb set of items to attract the public to participate. The ones pre-purchased for 2021 will be used and form the basis for the raffle but we need good prizes to attract sales of tickets.

### **COMPETITIONS – Flower of the Month**

All meetings will have the usual Flower of the Month competition and we welcome entries for this.

### **55<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL OPEN SUMMER SHOW - SUNDAY 20<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2023 - Bideford Pannier Market. Admission is now £1.00 with accompanied children free.**

Much has already been noted in this newsletter but to emphasise the need for help It is repeated here. Having passed the milestone for the Club, celebrating 50 years of staging a flower show in the town during 2016 we continue to run our annual event. 2021 was a wonderful event with good attendance and great exhibits and should have been equally good in 2022 until I had my injury. As it happened with such a hot summer no doubt

entries would have been limited. This will be another chance to show the area and its visitors just how good the local growers are and provide a great spectacle as usual. We have former gardening editor for the North Devon Journal, Graham Andrews to open the show. He has a vast knowledge on plants too and lives at Northam from where he runs an internet blog page Grahams Garden Buddies. We also hope to have Trevor Cummings with his woodturning of flowers which always attracts a lot of interest.

The schedules are available and the same as last year only the dates have been changed. As this year is the Coronation of King Charles 111 it's only right that the Floral Art classes reflect this and one of the classes will be "Royal Splendour" and exhibit that resembles a crown, 36cm x 36cm x 36cm max, that's approx. 14.5 inches in old money. Other classes will be "My Favourite Book" 60cm x 60cm x 60cm, to be viewed from the front, "Tomorrow's Compost" natural materials, staged on a wooden base not to exceed 60cm wide x 60cm deep and 67cm max height, to be viewed from the front. The final class is "Your Invited" – A Corsage for a Wedding, space 26cm x 26cm x 26 cm, please provide your own mount for this, or place on the drape provided.

At this time we like to remind members of the need to get things growing on for the Show. It is no good waiting until a few weeks before to grow a plant. Last time we were really good on entries and attendance was much improved.

Some new schedule classes were drawn up for the 2021 show and this year will not have any changes other than those for floral art, which in fact are those in the 2022 schedule. It is available to download from the club website [www.bidefordgardenersclub.co.uk](http://www.bidefordgardenersclub.co.uk) or can be sent by email if you wish. Last year's schedule is there for you to get a guide on what to prepare and for handicrafts or needlework look at the Advance Schedule page to know what will feature this August. There is still plenty of room to expand the show and just a bit of effort from members can do this. Please make the effort to exhibit and attend, with it on a Sunday you should be able to do this. Exhibitor fees will now be 20p/entry.

Please offer to help on one of the stalls or even sit at the entrances and take the admission money from the visitors. Door stewarding is a simple job for any member and just involves taking the admission fee and handing out a ticket, an excellent job for those who cannot stand around for too long, as is the Raffle sales table. Judge's Steward sheets will be brought along to the July meeting so please offer to help us out for the many stalls and refreshment counter. We really found the benefit of our own Teas in 2019 with great income, and at that show Sharon Standen and Jan Thrower did an amazing job but with their roles at the NHS had to drop out due to Covid risks in 2021, when we restarted the shows, so we had to engage Carol and her staff at Pannier Pantry to provide the facility. I'm hoping that members may feel able to revert to providing our own Teas this year. If so, we need extra offers of help. The Cream Teas were a superb income source.

The RHS Banksian Medal for most points in horticultural sections, is here once more for this year's show and this only applies to the horticultural classes of the Open Show not the NBS section. The National Begonia Society has again allocated medals and rosettes this year and pays for a judge for their section and usually give an annual donation of

£200 from the South West. Their normal donation will be back for 2023. The judge is Andrew McDougall for the regional show and you won't find a better one anywhere.

## **CLUB WEBSITE**

With the trend towards internet presence for organisations we have joined the wider world by opening a club website account through 1&1 Internet as our host. It's funded through my own business account and was free to join. The website itself has been developed and maintained by myself using Serif Web Plus8 which I have for business purposes. This makes it compatible with Smart Phones and Tablets. We welcome input to the website from members. We also have a Facebook page running too. Have a look for that and "Like" us it helps a lot. One thing it does provide is a live source of information that I can update with any changes of details on speakers, events, trips etc. We will also be listed in Country Shows and Events. Far more suitable than the newsletters we issue but of course they will still be available for everyone. If you lose your newsletter or need one for a friend, they are available on the website at a touch of a button to download read and print.

New members can now also join through the website, and book trips by downloading the form and there is a facility to make enquiries on any activity of the club. The pages include a Home Page, About the Club, News & Events, with drop down menu for Events, Trips and Meetings, Shows and the Contact page. If you are an internet user, as many people are today, then have a look and give your feedback. The website is accessed from [www.bidefordgardenersclub.co.uk](http://www.bidefordgardenersclub.co.uk). Make sure you type that in correctly.

## **FINAL NOTES**

As most of you know we normally have donations from Bideford Bridge Trust and from Bideford Town Council but during the problems these were not applied for as we were not meeting or holding events. We did apply to the Bideford Bridge Trust in 2022 and received a donation of £1000. We haven't however applied for a Bideford Town Council grant this April. With an excellent year in 2019 and a surplus on the year of over £1600 we used some of this for obtaining the guest opener for the 2020 Show, David Domoney and improved marketing of the show and events.

You are more than welcome to bring guests to any of the normal club meetings, we do now ask for a £2.00 admission charge at normal meetings in the hall for casual guests and of course would waive this should they become members, which we hope will be the case. A final note to new members, we wish you a very warm welcome and indeed. Make the Club your own and take part in as many activities as possible. We hope you will find the Club very friendly and informative. We try to promote this and actively seek your help and suggestions. It is your Club, we just carry out the work to our members wishes.

See you at the very exciting forthcoming events.

Mike Avis, Editor & Secretary.