

BIDEFORD GARDENER'S CLUB



SPRING & SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2024

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

DETAILS OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- Chairman - Mr. Dave Hopkins
Tel: (01271) 345246
- Secretary - Mr. Mike Avis, 19 Moreton Avenue,
Treasurer Bideford. EX39 3AY
Tel: (01237) 475914. Mobile 07710 454230
Email mikeavis44@gmail.com
- Social Sec.- Pauline Spencer (01237) 423587 for trips
- Website - www.bidefordgardenersclub.co.uk
Email info@bidefordgardenersclub.co.uk

SECRETARY'S PAGE

Well Friends, During 2023 we held just a few meetings in May, July and September and a great one it was in September with David Domoney, but of course that was quite an expense. The numbers were still disappointing despite having some great speakers and subjects. Talks in October with Roy Kenwood on Geraniums and in November with Jean Smale and some lovely Christmas Floral Art were good and proved popular with being held in the afternoon instead of the dark evenings and numbers were better. We used the Choir Room for Roy's talk but due to that being occupied with Foodbank Stock leading up to Christmas we had the main hall for Jean's demonstration and really needed that space to show things off well. We held the AGM meeting on 5th March 2024 in the afternoon but now return to evenings during the Summer months. I'm pleased to say we are still able to hold the meetings at the Methodist Church Hall. We said last year that the Methodist Church Hall was closing down but we continue there for this year. Please all attend and let's make sure we can look forward and get much more attendance and support this Spring and Summer, and of course much more help at the Show, which will take place on 18th August at the Pannier Market and marks 40 years at the Pannier Market but is our 56th Show and in fact 24 years since we started hosting the National Begonia Society South West Show. Fittingly we have Simon Inch as a well-known councillor and garden enthusiast as our opener this year and he is key in our obtaining grants which this April we have been awarded another £500 which along with the £1000 from Bideford Bridge Trust, ensures we can run the Show.

Meetings will now be every month with speakers booked for the most of the year and newsletter and website updates made as this occurs. July will also be the Show Preparation Meeting and we really do need a lot more helpers from the club. See out list of meetings and events that follow in this issue.

There are things to look forward to for us all and this years 56th Summer Open Show will be on 18th August 2024 and if we could run our own refreshments in the afternoon it would be great as it is a much needed and excellent income for the show. However it is a lot of work and failing that Carol and her staff at Pannier Pantry will provide this facility.

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 and not to myself as bank charges are incurred by both club and me for such transactions. Use of the Post Office is also more costly and cheque paying in is also more time consuming having to fill out the envelope before taking a cheque to pay in. I think we should be looking for alternative methods of banking in the very near future. Mentioning the post office I for one and many others are finding the delivery of post very erratic. The National Begonia Society Spring Bulletin, for

which I'm now the editor was posted from the printers in Lancashire on the Tuesday and my friends copy in Torrington arrived on Thursday that week. Mine took a full week before it turned up.

If you wish to try paying your subscription by bank transfer the details are as follows: Account name – Bideford Gardeners Club, sort code 40-10-17 and account 71302450. I have paid mine this way and it works correctly. What's more it will save the club money and I don't have to go to the bank or post office.

We look forward to giving a big welcome back to all members and we hope all will continue their or renew their membership and help rebuild the levels. Thankfully we intend to continue and this was the reason for bringing a big name for the talk last September. We placed adverts in The Link magazine for May, July, the Show in August and David Domoney's talk in September at a cost each time of £108 in the hope some of its quoted 12,000 recipients would respond and come along, however I have to say it was not worthwhile. We will advertise the show but rely on Facebook and the Website to attract new members, which I have to say along with word of mouth is paying off. I'll be putting postings in Westward Ho! and Bideford Community pages on Facebook so check there for details. 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 afternoons and liaise with Sharon when she is working and not available to bring the milk and biscuits. Dave Hopkins will run the Raffle at the meetings as well and we count on you to bring along some prizes for that. 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 meetings and getting Raffle prizes for the Show. We have some very good news for existing members or those rejoining after a gap for Covid in that the AGM agreed to organise a coach trip on Friday 2nd August to Taunton Flower Show, repeating a trip we have done previously with great success. This time it is even better in that members who have remained with us during the Covid disruptions, even if you've been missing from events, will have a free trip and free admission to the Flower Show. We will open this to other folks once we gauge the member numbers but for them the cost will be a very reasonable £30 for trip and entrance to the show. Please book by the June meeting to enable us to get the group rate tickets. I realise there has been reluctance to come out, especially of an evening but we addressed that with afternoon meetings in the Autumn and Winter months. As long as you have been a member and are rejoining you will get the benefits of the trip as it is you that supported the club and enhanced our funds over the years and this is our way of thanking you for that. Best regards, Mike Avis, Secretary & Editor.

MEETING / EVENTS DETAILS

No meeting was held in April as following the AGM on 5th March there was insufficient time to arrange a guest speaker.

TUESDAY 21st MAY - 7pm – Michael Gee – Devon Orchards. Michael lives locally and gives a presentation on the orchards throughout Devon and had great interest in the preservation of the Landkey Mazards. This will be in the main hall not to Choir Room.

TUESDAY 11TH JUNE 7pm – Jeremy Wilson the Scented Garden. Jeremy from Strete Gate Nursery Torquay has visited us several times before and always with a great talk and always good plants to purchase too. He has brought many varieties of scented geraniums in the past.

TUESDAY 9th JULY 7pm – Show tips from Christine Waters and Bill Lee and Show Preparation Meeting

As part of this meeting we will have our Show Preparation Meeting after their tips on the floral art classes and presenting vegetables and flowers. 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 again offered to help in the setting up on Saturday afternoon, which we can do as there is no market that day we have booked the hall for two days. They will also help with the 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 collation of the prizes and awards and we were short of helpers for that last year. If you can help we put on a lunch, not free I'm afraid but always a good one and reasonably priced. Unfortunately Paul Mitchell who normally does this has some health problems and we managed to get help in this area of the show last year from my friend Polo. 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 July meeting. If you cannot attend but will help with the show, please let me know by phone on 07710 454230 or email mikeavis44@gmail.com.

FRIDAY 2nd AUGUST – TAUNTON FLOWER SHOW – free to members £30 to guests. This is the first day of the show and always a great event in Vivary Park, right in the centre of the town and a lovely setting all on the level. The trip will start from Bideford at the pickup point near Victoria Park at 10.00am and with just one other pickup point at 10.30am Tesco Rose Lane, Barnstaple adjacent to Whiddon Valley Tesco, where cars may be left in a selected area but to be on the safe side mention to the store staff. We will travel direct to the showground and remain there until 4.00pm when the coach will return to pick us up and bring us back to Barnstaple and Bideford. We need to know how many members will be wanting to go by 21st May meeting either by calling Pauline Spencer or myself or

by booking at the meeting, before we open it to other people. A 53 seater coach from Taw & Torridge Coaches has been booked and we are counting on filling this. We need numbers confirmed by the 11th June Meeting. It's free to you so please book early.

SUNDAY 18th AUGUST – 56th OPEN FLOWER SHOW.

The Schedules are largely unchanged from 2023 other than new Floral Art subjects and some changes to the Cookery Section recipes and classes. The new schedules will be available for the May Meeting. Staging of exhibits is from 7.30pm to 9.30pm on Saturday 17th August and on Sunday 18th August from 7.00am to 10.00am. Show lunches will be provided for judges as always by Pannier Pantry and we also offer the facility for exhibitors travelling so far to exhibit and it's really appreciated by them. Our opener will be Simon Inch, well known to many of you as both a councillor and a keen gardener himself. If you have trophies from the show can they be returned very soon so I know who to chase up before the show. Schedules will be available for the May Meeting and will also be online or sent to existing Exhibitors. Feel free to ask for more copies or download it from our website page.

10th SEPTEMBER – Hutch House Plants. Rob and Frankie Hutch. New speakers from Exeter with a subject to suit all our members. Their business was set up in 2017 and supplies houseplants and accessories from their shop in Bamfylde Street Exeter. This will be at 7pm in the main hall.

8th OCTOBER – Hugh Mellor – Devon Country Houses & Gardens. Another new speaker to us and we hope we get plenty of members there for the talk which will be either in the Choir Room at 2.30pm or possibly in the Main Hall dependent on numbers.

12th November – Speaker to be confirmed. We have two speakers that have been contacted and can confirm when we know the outcome. It will be at 2.30pm and as above dependent on numbers in either the Choir Room or Main Hall. More news at our forthcoming meetings

10th December – I have been asked about making this a talk and workshop for members on making Holly Wreaths. As you all know I make and sell them in the Barnstaple market and really they are quite involved to make and follow many different styles. Details to be confirmed but an afternoon meeting with a Christmas theme.

RAFFLES / COMPETITIONS – Flower of the Month

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

CLUB WEBSITE

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 also have a Facebook page running too and link to Bideford and Westward Ho! Community pages as well. 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. It is far more suitable than the newsletters we issue but of course they will still be available for everyone and they are available on the website at a touch of a button to download, read and print. The website is accessed from www.bidefordgardenersclub.co.uk. Make sure you type that in correctly.

FINAL NOTES

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. Thankfully with continued support from Bideford Bridge Trust, with £1000 in the Autumn and £500 from Bideford Town Council the club is really buoyant and able to engage good speakers and run the members trip to Taunton Flower Show which makes it a very good club to belong to. As a final note to new members, we wish you a very warm welcome and hope you will find the Club very friendly and informative. It is your club we as club officers only try to arrange events and meetings to suit you all. Suggestions are always very welcome and it is these that have resulted in the trip and the speakers we have this year. Bring your friends along and we are sure they will enjoy it too.

Mike Avis,
Editor & Secretary.