



**FINCHLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
79TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
FINCHLEY LAWN TENNIS CLUB
7.30PM TUESDAY 17TH MARCH 2020**

Chair's Report for 2019

Introduction

We are holding our AGM in the Finchley Lawn Tennis Clubhouse, by kind permission of the Tennis Club Committee; many thanks to Elain Wright for organising this for us.

Sadly, Claudine Fear, chairperson for 6 years, had to step down from her position in September. We are very grateful for all the work she has done for the FHS as chair and we miss her greatly. She has been a stalwart of the Society and has supported it through some major changes. In 2013 our Allotments became self managed. We lease them from Barnet Council and Claudine played a vital role in enabling that transition, taking on the challenge of self management and ensuring that our Society is well managed, properly conducted and is fulfilling the legal requirements. She has helped to make the Plant Sale the huge social and financial success that it is now. Claudine has always been keen to promote the social and community aspect of our Society and has always promoted the outings, special events and fundraising for charity that we carry out. We thank her for her dedication and kindly guiding hand.

We had a very successful 2019, completing two significant projects, visiting Pashley Manor and Great Dixter House and Gardens and holding a successful Plant sale. We won prizes for all our allotment sites. Three schools, Moss Hall Nursery, Southover School and Kisharon School all use our Gordon Road site to promote learning and for students to gain qualifications in horticulture. We continue to be members of The National Society for Allotments and Leisure Gardens (NSALG) and Barnet Allotment Federation (BAF). We are affiliated members of the RHS and obtain insurance by the NFU through the RHS.

We have not raised rentals or service charges for 2020 and the Committee consider the charges for rent and services each year.

This year our FHS Garden Lecture will be given by Pat Morgan, Master Beekeeper, entitled *From Flower to Jar*

1. Committees

The General Committee met regularly throughout the year. Membership of the committee consisted of The Chair (Claudine Fear), Treasurer (Chris Ouseley), Membership Secretary (Christine Williams), Allotment Secretaries (June Brookes, Elain Wright and Penny Igoe), Security Officer (Tony Ingram), Website Manager (Judy Woollett), Newsletter Editor (Jo Cuttell).

The Allotments Committee met several times during 2019. Chaired by June Brookes, Committee members were Rosa Baden-Powell, Philip Cuttell, John Hale, Mark Hanslip, Eric Hess, Felicity Nock and Louis Zweg.

Mark Hanslip is Mower Manager and holds the key for the mower.

Philip Cuttell, Rosa Baden-Powell and Louis Zweg run induction sessions for new members to the Gordon Road site as do the Allotment Secretaries at Brent Way and Nethercourt Avenue.

2. Completed Projects

Fencing: the second phase of the project to replace the fence with a new, higher more robust fence along Dollis Road has been completed. Many thanks to Tony Ingram and Felicity Nock for all their hard work in making this a reality.

Poly tunnel: a new cover was put on the poly tunnel this year. This involved several days of hard labour - thanks to all the many who helped.

Heated Greenhouse: the renovation of this greenhouse was completed this year. Thanks to Terry Burling for doing this and to Philip Cuttell for the new windows.

3. Future Projects

- Continuation of the fence along Gordon Road: planning permission has been gained and a grant application sent in to erect an approved type of fence. Replacement of the gate for something more secure may be included in this. Thanks to Philip Cuttell for applying for the grant.
- Improvements to the plant sale beds at the top of the Gordon Road site
- Canopy over the barbecue
- Fencing and a gate for safety around the pond in the wild life garden
- Use of the log cabin for children's activities subject to H&S requirements
- Demarcation fence for the allotment plots at Nethercourt Avenue. This will require planning permission.

4. Accounts

Thanks to Chris Ouseley for producing the accounts for independent examination. We thank Jane Healy for examining the accounts and she has agreed to examine them again next year.

5. Membership and Benefits for Members

We had 132 members in 2019 and 98 are plot holders.

We continue to have a concessionary 10% discount off plants at Finchley Nurseries for all FHS members. Suttons seeds give 50% discount on seeds and 15% discount on other items when ordered with the unique FHS code. Through The National Society for Allotments and Leisure Gardens (NSALG) members can buy discounted seeds from Kings.

There are three tickets for two people to visit any RHS garden with 30% off the entrance fee. Any member can borrow these tickets from Chris Ouseley. They can be used for an unlimited number of visits. Please take advantage of them.

6. Allotment Sites

Vacancies and waiting lists

There were very few plots that became vacant this year at any of the three sites. There is a waiting list for all three sites.

Prizes 2019

In the Plot Competition Jimmy Chan of Gordon Road was recommended. Brent Way came 1st in the Small Site Category, Gordon Road came 2nd in the Medium Site Category and Nethercourt Avenue Site came 3rd in the Small Site Category.

Deliveries

Thanks to Eric Hess for organising deliveries of wood chip to Gordon Road. Members from Brent Way and Nethercourt can collect wood chip from this site.

Thanks to Chris Ouseley for organising deliveries of cow manure and straw to Gordon Road. Members from Brent Way and Nethercourt can collect from this site.

6. Security

Unfortunately we had a serious break in at Gordon Road in the summer. The garage door was so damaged that a new one was required. The vandals made a large hole in the wall from the Green Room through to the shop. Nothing was stolen luckily as we do not keep anything of great value on the site. Our insurance covered the cost of the new garage door and a repair to the wall.

7. GDPR

FHS is compliant with current GDPR regulations which require us to contact our members annually and ensure that the data we hold on everyone is up to date. We do this by our invoices for rent which ask members to check the details are correct and to inform the Allotment Secretary or the Membership Secretary if they need to be changed.

8. Trading Hut

The Trading Hut was open from March to September 2019 and many volunteers kindly served in the shop each Sunday. Thanks to Helen Skelton, June Brookes and the volunteers for all their support. Helen and June are unable to continue running the Trading Hut and Tuuli Taylor and Munira Grainger have agreed to take this on, for which we are very grateful.

9. Raised Beds

As part of the raised bed project FHS enables three local schools, Moss Hall Nursery School, The Southover Partnership and Kisharon School, to use some of our raised beds to develop their outdoor curriculum. The older pupils are from Special Schools and members must be aware of their *vulnerable status*. A pupil from Southover School was challenged rather aggressively last summer which was an upsetting experience for both the student and the member of staff accompanying him. Please let us be aware of the students working on our site and welcome them into our community. Many thanks to Eric Hess and Jenny Abelman for supporting this initiative.

The delivery of manure this autumn raised concerns from members who work on the raised beds at the bottom of the site. The placing of the manure on the main path means that people with disabilities cannot drive down to the raised beds. I hope that all members concerned - raised beds owners and manure buyers - can compromise in true allotment spirit and if members quickly remove the manure then raised bed holders are prepared to tolerate a week of inconvenience.

8. Wildlife Plot

Fiona Kennedy has kindly taken on the management of the Wildlife Plot but she can't do it by herself. Her priority this year is to sort out the pond and the safety issues for children who may visit the area.

9. FHS Newsletter, Website and Social Media

The Grapevine continues to be published four times a year. Copies are available in the Green Room and are sent to all members via Mailchimp. Thanks to Winkworth Estate Agents who print this for us and continue to support us and all our events. We are seeking a new newsletter editor.

Thanks to Judy Woollett for managing the website. Felicity Nock and Judy manage the Facebook account and Lesley Ludlow manages the Twitter account with occasional input from James Robbins. Thanks to all of them.

Mailchimp was successfully adopted this year as a more efficient means of communicating with members. Many thanks to Judy Woollett, Chris Williams, Jo Cuttell and Anya Zvezdina for developing this.

10. Outings

On 22nd June there was a coach outing to Pashley Manor Gardens and Great Dixter House. It was a most enjoyable and successful occasion. Thanks to Judy Woollett for organising this wonderful trip.

11. Events

FHS held a number of successful events in 2019.

The Plant Sale raised over £4000 for the Society and attracted a large number of local people.

Community Meetings were held in April and July. We had representatives from both Brent Way and Nethercourt Avenue sites as well as members from Gordon Road.

The Summer Barbecue was organised by June Brookes. Thanks to Jimmy Chan, Stuart Wan, Fun Wan and Jade Chan for cooking the delicious food.

The Bonfire Party was marred by poor weather this year, as the rain made it impossible to light the bonfire. Nonetheless the pumpkin soup and mulled wine were plentiful and enjoyed by everyone who came along.

The Christmas Social was organised by June Brookes and was a great success.

Several informal gatherings were held in the Piggery this year and I am delighted that it is being used in this way for the benefit of us all.

12. Our President

Catherine Schmitt has kindly agreed to remain as President of the FHS for the coming year. She has an unprecedented knowledge of plants and horticulture which she is always happy to share.

13. Conclusion

A big thank you to everyone who works so hard to keep all three allotment sites in good order and who do all the behind the scenes jobs that go unnoticed until they are not done!

We are entering our 79th year of gardening in Finchley. We will continue to promote our Society and hope that we can further publicise our events and activities to the people of Finchley and contribute to the community promoting our ethos of friendliness, care of the environment and community spirit.