

ELLENS GREEN AND RUDGWICK GARDENING ASSOCIATION

(Affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society, Membership No. 10546948)

Chairman: Mr R. J. Haigh
6 Woodfield Road, Rudgwick, West Sussex RH12 3EP

Tel No. 01403 823236 Mobile 07392 006287
email: rjh@rjhaigh.plus.com

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Dear Member(s)

Last year was an exceedingly difficult year, truly an annus horribilis for all of us, I hope we can all look forward to a much better and brighter 2021. However, before we can start enjoying life and hopefully getting back to normal, we do have some continuing disruption to our schedule owing to the continuation of COVID-19 related measures.

The first of these is the postponement of the AGM which was scheduled for the 25th January 2021. At the time of writing the plan is to reschedule the AGM to 21st June 2021 and to make the most of mid-summer's day we are planning to follow the AGM with a quiz night run along the lines of the successful quiz night held last February. With continued interest, I would like to make the quiz night part of our annual calendar. Also, as for last year, it may prove impossible to stage some of our events such as the Spring Show and Plant Sale/Coffee morning, I am hopeful that the Summer and Autumn shows go ahead as planned. I will provide more information on our rescheduling and/or cancellations in due course.

Membership renewal. For those of you who provided an email address you will have noticed we are using membermojo to invite you to renew your membership. But please note that the way you have paid your membership in the past will continue; by BACS, STO, cheque or cash. Payment online has NOT been set up. If next year you would prefer to pay online via membermojo, please email the membership secretary: zoechilds75@yahoo.co.uk.

You need to register with membermojo so that we know which payment system you will be using. As we receive confirmation of payment, I will ensure that you receive your Members' Handbook for this year either by hand, or if necessary, by post. If you have already collected a copy from the Co-op please use it to recruit a new member.

For those of you without email I have enclosed the usual membership renewal form. If you do have an email address, please may I ask that you consider providing this to me (my email above) to help make our administration easier.

I also draw your attention to the relevant section of the membership renewal form where we ask you to indicate your willingness to help at the shows, in particular the Summer Show. Please try and help if you can, every sort of help is required this year to ensure our 76th year is a great success. If you are reading this online, please look for the "Please can you help" volunteering page to help us run our shows and our association. The welcome email sent when you have renewed contains a PLEASE CAN YOU HELP? Section. Please complete with any offers of help and email back to egrgams@gmail.com.

As mentioned last year, I remain immensely proud of the quality of exhibits in the various show classes throughout the year and the help and support provided to ensure our shows are a success. In 2020 this could only apply to our virtual shows; however, I am sure you will agree that the standard was exceptional. The pictures are still available on our website to view. I know it is early in the year; however, please start thinking now about the show classes that you might enter and start planning your planting year.

I am most grateful to the Committee for all their help and support throughout 2020, I am fortunate that I have an experienced and knowledgeable committee that I can rely on to ensure our association continues to thrive. Coming into 2021, there are changes to the committee; Zoe Childs has taken on the role of Honorary Treasurer and deputising for the vacant Membership Secretary. Peter and Brenda Gooch have stepped down from their committee roles towards the end of last year and Fransesca Raccini having handed over the role of Honorary Treasurer to Zoe remains as a knowledgeable and active member of the committee. I thank them for their diligence and thoughtful contribution to committee. I am pleased that Beryl Windwood has joined the committee and I look forward to our meeting and planning this year's

activities. As the AGM is now scheduled for June, voting on the committee changes shall be deferred until then. The roles of Honorary Secretary and Membership Secretary are still vacant; if anyone is interested in taking one of these vital responsibilities please do call me to discuss what is involved.

On the subject of committee members, at this point I would like to mention the help and support provided by Simon Quail and John Sherlock. Simon has worked diligently throughout 2020 keeping our association going. The most notable output is the excellent Members' Handbook that you will be receiving shortly. You may have noticed or been involved with the daffodil bulb planting towards the bottom end of Church Street in the autumn. Simon arranged for 6000 bulbs to be planted by a workforce of some 50+ association members and residents which is an excellent achievement. I noticed the other day that the bulbs have started to break the surface, so looking good for the spring. Simon also was instrumental along with John in getting our virtual shows off the ground.

Although John is not a committee member, he has become indispensable to the workings of our association in managing the website, and in sending out letters to members and the media. John together with Simon through their creativity and technical skills have ensured that we still have a functioning association, that we had virtual shows and that memberships can be renewed.

And finally (for the moment) as with last year we can offer bags of compost, however, this year we can offer a choice.

1. 75 litre bags Sinclair all-purpose professional mix **peat-based** compost at £8 per bag, order (as soon as possible) to Chris Westbrook via info@whitestonemusic.co.uk or contact me if without email.
2. 50 litre bags Melcourt SylvaGrow® Multi-Purpose **peat-free** compost (endorsed for use by the RHS) as used by Prenplants at £6 per bag. We have this in our own stock so is available now, please order by contacting me directly.

I hope you had a lovely Christmas, and on behalf of the Committee may I wish you a very happy and healthy New Year.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Haigh

Chairman

Encl. membership renewal form (non-email users only)

President's Message

Dear Members,

I hesitate to wish you a Happy New Year after all that we are going through but at some stage the shackles will be removed, and we will all be able to meet again.

On your behalf I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Richard Haigh and his committee together with John Sherlock for the way they have kept things going throughout the restrictions. I hope that those of you who were able to take part in the virtual Shows enjoyed doing so. Unfortunately, it does look as though our Spring Show will have to be conducted in this way again, but hopefully we may be back to some semblance of normal for the Summer Show – let us hope so.

Fortunately, we do have the reality of our gardens and we should by now be planning our planting and work schedule for the year.

In the meantime, I hope that you are getting your COVID-19 vaccinations and I wish you well for a safe and productive year.

Michael Clarke

President