

Annual General Meeting - November 2022

Chair's Report

In my report I will be reflecting on the last RGS year - that is from our AGM in 2021 - and talk about plans for next year. We have one item of business which I will present for ratification at the AGM. The full paper is entitled **DEFINITION OF PLOT HOLDER PARTNER and PLOT HOLDER ASSISTANT** and is available on this website so you will be able to read it before the AGM.

What has the RGS achieved over the last year- our Centenary Year?

- **Centenary celebrations:**

- i ***History of RGS exhibition at the library.*** This event was the central activity relevant to our centenary. It was mostly driven by Jackie Savage and Jean Crawford with help from Christine Wolski, Sue Macdonald and Jenny Cobb. Jenny also made a beautiful fabric banner celebrating our 100 years. Vivien Fowler and Shan Karwatowska put together lovely arrangements of plants to set the gardening theme and attract attention in the library. The exhibition was visited by a lot of people many of whom left very positive feedback in the visitors book and many gave oral congratulatory comments. It was a very well researched and presented exhibition and Jackie will be giving a cut down version in her presentation at the AGM. Jackie also gave a presentation of our history to the Putney Society on 24th October which went down very well indeed.
- ii ***Jubilee room visit.*** At our last AGM I said in my report that 2022 would be our Centenary year. Having heard this, Fleur Anderson, our President and MP, floated the idea of having a celebration at the House of Commons in the Jubilee Room. We thought it was a wonderful idea so, good as her word, she arranged for us to go to The House on 26th April. Numbers had to be restricted so members of the committee, past committee members and others who had made a particular contribution were invited. The wine and conversation flowed in the lovely environment. Fleur then took us for a tour of the areas of The Houses of Parliament we were permitted to visit. It was altogether a very memorable evening. Many many thanks to Fleur for arranging such a special event.
- iii ***Centenary Summer show.*** This took place on site 2. To mark the special occasion we offered bucks fizz drinks and savoury snacks as well as tea and cake. The bucks fizz went down a treat so might be a stayer for future Summer Shows!

- **The communal areas.** These continue to be enjoyed. We owe a huge thanks to

Vivien Fowler who vigilantly plants up and tends the plants in the communal area on site 3 and to Annie Hardinge for making the site 2 communal area so colourful and inviting.

- **Site improvement:** This year we had pleas from those who have to freeze in the store waiting for deliveries and from members who have meetings in the store, that we had some better heating installed. We now have some overhead heaters that cut out after a short time so there is no fear of them being left on. We haven't needed to use the heating yet but are likely to need it at the beginning of next year. This project was elegantly managed by Patrick Crawford - many thanks to you, Patrick.
- **Paddock School.** This school is for youngsters with severe learning difficulties. They have had plot 85 on Site 3, otherwise known as the 'apple tree plot', for about 7 years which they visit regularly with staff supervising but the large 4 rod plot was too much for them to manage as the students are only able to stay a short time and school holidays were a challenge for them. We negotiated with the Head of the School to move the School area to the end of plot 85 under the apple tree which would release 2 plots to let to new plot holders. Vivien Fowler did a very attractive design for the school's plot and Artan Deliallisi was commissioned to do the work. He also donated some of his time to make a shed and he painted the wooden structures an attractive blue. The school staff are very please with the result - many thanks to Artan and Vivien for doing such a professional satisfactory job.

Plans for next year

- **Toilet hand washing upgrade:** This project has been started. Our current hand washing facilities are very poor and are not compliant with building regulations - we should supply warm water for washing hands. We are planning to have electric units that are infrared activated so the water is warmed as needed but cut out automatically. We are also installing new basins supported on a small cupboard.
- **Lease:** Patrick Crawford is assiduously pursuing a new lease with Wandsworth Council. The aim is to have a full repairing lease at a peppercorn rent. These negotiations have been going on for many years now but I am glad to say that Claire Gilbert, who is the Councillor for this area, is on the case so we remain ever hopeful that we will get there. With our current lease the Council are responsible for the infrastructure for which they take 80% of the rent we collect leaving us with 20% for site maintenance.
- **Possible change of name:** There is a feeling that Roehampton Garden Society

does not capture the fact that our primary location and most of our members are in Putney. To start another century of our Garden Society we could mark this transition by updating our name to **Putney and Roehampton Garden Society (PRGS)**. I would be interested to hear your thoughts about this proposal. I have to declare my view which is in favour of this name change. We are not in Roehampton any more and not having Putney in our title is misleading. Having a name change is indicative of an active, forward looking organisation which I believe we are. The proposed name keeps the 'Roehampton Garden Society' element linking it to its past. This is not a binding piece of business right now but I will invite a show of hands at the AGM to get some idea of how the membership feel about it and would welcome comments by email to rgs.sw15@gmail.com.

The Committee and others

RGS could not function without a strong team on the committee supplemented with extra help from other members. The list of 'thank yous' is always very long on these occasions but there are some members who have been especially helpful. The Committee team run RGS and I would like to draw your attention to some particulars. Our Vice Chair, Jackie Savage deserves a special thank you from me as she has been a constant source of guidance and support especially for me as Chair. If I am struggling with a decision a chat with Jackie invariably makes the right path clear. She is a doer as well as a consultant so very valuable to the Society. The others on the committee that are big contributors are the Site Secretaries - that is Vivien Fowler, Alison Linton and Catherine Maunsell-Bower (with Charles Gillbe as Site Manager) The vast majority of our members are a pleasure to work with and as Site Secretary you do get to know all those on your patch but sometimes conflict occurs which is never easy. Catherine Maunsell-Bower will be relinquishing her role as Site 2 Secretary so a special thank you to her for all her work. Carol Martinez is another big contributor - she organises the shows and does the post event Bulletins as well as helping with general tasks on site 2. The store would not run without Gill Tamsett and Greg Willcox who do the ordering and deal with the deliveries of stock with Jackie ordering and generally organising the Kings seeds. They all do a sterling job. Our splendid website is managed by Jean Crawford who also does the monthly Update both of which we can be justly proud. The waiting list is ably managed by Alison Linton. This role used to be fairly quiet but since lockdown it has become a lot more work. Robert Linton vigilantly keeps the membership database up to date and sends out the annual invoices to all members. He also keeps our maps (the envy of Enable) up to date. We are fortunate that he is very exacting in these tasks otherwise we would be in chaos and confusion. I have already mentioned that Patrick Crawford is consistently chasing the elusive lease with a fantastic air of inevitability and he has ably project managed the store heating installation. Other members of the committee who

don't have a specific role have been fantastic at being there, doing things when needed. So the RGS owes a huge thank you to you all.

I have not mentioned a key role - that of the Treasurer. We have been fortunate having Dorcas Johnson as RGS Treasurer for the last 2 years as she has a strong background in computing and all our accounts are now kept on a computer package. She has done this role conscientiously and precisely so all has been well - bills paid and movement of monies vigilantly recorded. However, travelling calls and lockdowns are in the past so she feels she needs to relinquish this role and stand down from the committee. Many thanks to you Dorcas for all you have done for RGS over the last 2 years.

This is not quite the end of all the 'thanks'. The allotments and other RGS activities would not happen without the help and resourcefulness of other members who are not on the committee. Mariangela Renshaw has continued to work on the shows and was able to step into the breach when Carol was indisposed. Thank you to all those who man the store on Sunday mornings and the Trading Sheds on site 3. Artan Deliallisi always gives some of his own time to the Society added to any job he is commissioned to do. Alan Strowger has on several occasions done some 'handy man' jobs on site 2. Sylvia Willcox not only made the lovely cushion covers on site 3 but also made replacements for those that the fox decided to sabotage. Annie Hardinge's daughter helped to pretty up the shed and communal area on site 2. Also thanks to the plot holders who clean the toilets and communal areas. All this good will is what makes our Society work so well and a pleasure to be part of - thank you all.

Item of business. Plot Holder Partner/Plot Holder Assistant. The full paper entitled **DEFINITION OF PLOT HOLDER PARTNER and PLOT HOLDER ASSISTANT** is on the website for you to read. At the AGM I will summarise this paper and take any questions or comments from the floor followed by a show of hands to indicate adoption or otherwise of this change.

Helen Finch
Chair of RGS