



Roehampton Garden Society

AGM 2024

Chair's Report

In my report I will review what has been done within RGS from November 2023 to now, sketch out plans for next year and touch on who makes all these things happen.

November 2023 onwards

Pests and Diseases: how to manage them; 18th February 2024: This was a talk given by Sarah Foss (M.Hort) from Ecolocal. Many members squashed into the store for this event. Sarah helped us to understand the importance of healthy soil, learning to conservatively manage pests and diseases with limited use of fertilisers and pesticides and preferring to plant disease resistant plants.

Lindley Library Visit; 4th June 2024: This RHS library has a world-class collection of current and historical books, journals and botanical drawings. We had a visit and guided tour in June which was very informative and enjoyable. We were privileged to see 17th century Herbal books as well as photos of British prisoners of war during the first world war who formed a horticultural club and ran shows just like we do today.

National Garden Scheme 21st July 2024: We opened site 3 to visitors as part of the National Garden Scheme. The visitors enjoyed looking at the allotments and chatting to some plot holders. The teas were a great success served from our 'Potting Shed' and consumed in the area. Also the plant stall was a huge success. Many thanks to Vivien Fowler whose idea it was and who drove the project through. Thanks to all those who organised the teas, those who supplied cakes, those that ran and supplied the plant stall - it all added up with a modest gate fee of £4 to about £1,000 to donate to good UK charities. The afternoon was a great success.

New Lease: In February this year the Council approved the principle of our taking on a full repairing lease which would be funded by our keeping almost all the rent we collect. Currently we hand over 80% of the rent to Enable but the Council are responsible for carrying out all major repairs needed. We have had some major projects funded by the Council - the new water system on site 3, a new roof on the store - but our running the allotments saves the Council a lot of money. RGS was presented with a Heads of Terms for a lease but there are some aspects of this that need to be negotiated which Patrick Crawford is pursuing. A similar stage was reached about 10 years ago and the project was abandoned as no agreement was reached. If the same situation arises we might have to consider options open to RGS.

Privacy Policy Update: We had no scheme for expunging discipline communications sent to plot holders so we have now introduce a rule that staged letters are deleted after 3 years - this period of time was chosen as it is similar to points on driving licences. Also after a plot holder has relinquished their plot all communications are deleted after 1 year.

Plans for next year

National Garden Scheme Site 2: As a follow on to the site 3 open afternoon we are planning to open site 2 on Saturday 21st June 2025 combining it with our Summer Show. We will be looking for helpers to make this a successful event and for you ALL to put something in the show!

Review of Store: Gill Tamsett and Greg Willcox will be looking at improving the way we display and serve the loose items in the store. At the moment several items are hidden from view and are in plastic boxes that are not fit for purpose.

Succession Planning: Last year I mentioned that several of us had been serving on the committee for many years and would like to stand down or stand aside. We now have a total of 19 members prepared to serve on the committee, three of whom are new and hopefully we will be able to hand over to newer, fresher committee members.

Thank You

One of our most important resources is our very able members who are willing to contribute to the running of the Society. In particular we have an excellent committee who give so much time and commitment to RGS.

Jackie Savage as Vice-Chair continues to be very supportive and provides an excellent sounding board for me. She also manages the waiting list and the RGS email - both tasks done very efficiently.

Vivien Fowler has stepped down as site secretary for the outer plots on site 3 but continues to keep the Potting Shed and all the area around it looking wonderful - it is much admired and appreciated. Vivien also runs plant sales and most importantly the bar at social events.

Nina Buchan, who joined the committee last November has taken over the role of site secretary for the outer plots on site 3 and doing a very good job. She also has been very helpful advising about policies and the lease.

Richard Standen took on the middle area of site 3 as site secretary last year and is doing a sterling job.

Susan Bennett is now site secretary for site 2 and is managing the role very well indeed. Being site secretary can be a tricky role as it requires balancing the interests of individual plot holders against the wider allotment community as well as the long term management of the allotment sites.

Carol Martinez has continued to keep the shows on the road as Show Chair as well as being Treasurer. How she finds the time and energy - she is still working too - I do not know.

Gill Tamsett and Greg Willcox keep the stores stocked and running smoothly with Annie Hardinge ensuring the seeds stands are well stocked.

IT is another area that is very competently covered by Jean Crawford who keeps the RGS website running and up to date as well as publishing the very interesting monthly Updates.

Robert Linton meticulously keeps the RGS database and then sends out the annual invoices to all our members.

Patrick Crawford is pursuing the lease assiduously and has the right contacts and expertise to ensure Council repair jobs are done.

Shan Karwatowska ensures there is woodchip supplied to both sites and has been fantastic organising events and teas for the shows and NGS event.

There always are other bits and pieces that need doing so the above and other members of the committee who don't have a specific role have been fantastic at doing things as and when needed. So the RGS owes a huge thank you to all members of the committee who have served over this last year.

However, it is not just the Committee; we have a lot of members who volunteer to make cakes, to help get the shows going, that tea is served, bars are manned, there is tea and coffee in the store, ensure equipment is maintained, the toilets are cleaned and stocked, the social areas are looked after, shredders are used properly, wheelbarrows work and so on. It all takes the goodwill of members.

These are the names of non-Committee members who make these contributions: Raj Patel, Danuta Grabda-Ferreira, Mariangela Renshaw, George Casley, Dorcas Johnson, Sue Hodgson, Marianna Pencharz, Sue MacDonald, Jo Eskdale, Maria Sforza, Bill Pencharz, Sylvia Willcox, Mary Jane and John Ireland, Jane Quayle, Georgina O'Reilly, Sue Illingworth, Harriet Hobson, Carolyn Singer, Sue Hodgson, Jane Varnus, Adele and Bella Stebbings, Matt Price, Charles Gillbe, Artan Deliallisi, Mark Sutcliffe, Bob Aveling.

Many, many thanks to you all too.

Helen Finch

Chair