

## **Minutes of the AGM of the Warkworth Show Tuesday 10 November 2020 held on Zoom**

**Present:** Simon Buist, John Park, Catherine Dowlen, James Cox, Sally Black, Brennig Davis, Graeme Popay, Ann Burke, John Howie, Ann Popay Mick Egdell, Gill Egdell, Mercy Collin, Pat Dodd, Roger Black, Kate Burnham, Nickie McDonald, Carole Moyes, Ian Moyes, Philip Pearson, Sheila Pearson, Sally Sample, Peter Dowlen, Fred Calvert, Judith Hebron, Jan Archibald, Tim Gray, Alistair Currie  
28 members present

**John Park the President chaired the meeting and welcomed members to the Zoom meeting.**

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Margaret Douglas, Maureen Shepherd, Catherine Park, Margaret Gray, Margaret Gibson, Sandi and Mark Saunders

### **2. Reports from Sub-Committees**

***Horticultural Committee Report*** given by James Cox

#### **Looking back...in 2020**

- **Gardeners' Question Time 6.3.20**

This went well and was instructive and very enjoyable

- **Market Stall 6.6.20**

Unfortunately cancelled because of Covid-19

- **Wednesday Challenges June and July 2020**

Held on the Show Facebook page and were a lovely idea and brought a whole new village dimension to the pre-Show atmosphere

- **Virtual Show 22.8.20**

An amazing and very professional achievement when so much else had been cancelled

- **John Howie retires 31.8.20**

Thank you to our longstanding Horti Secretary and Show stalwart

Thank you also to all those who contributed to this year's events making the very best of the situation and especially not forgetting the website team Ian and Carole

#### **Looking forward...to 2021**

- **Horti committee**

As John Howie has retired and no replacement, the committee will need to share out his former roles

- **Gardeners' Question Time**

Probably not safe in 2021, as it is normally held inside in winter months

- **Market stall**

However, we might well be able to schedule this with careful planning

- **Show 2021**

Also difficult to predict but I am sure we will contribute to this in whatever form it takes

### ***Industrial Committee Report*** given by Sally Black

The last time the Industrial Committee met was to decide on schedule classes for the 2020 Show, but, of course, those decisions were never used owing to the unforeseen circumstances arising from the progression of Covid 19. We can only hope that the situation will be better for 2021.

Because there seemed to be uncertainty about various aspects of future Shows, and an awareness that changes were coming, the committee chair decided to ask members of the committee, together with other Show supporters, just what they thought the future might look like. Views were sought on how important the Show is to the people of the village, the castle as our venue, what parts of the Show are most essential, who the Show is for, how it might be simplified, and how more volunteers could be encouraged.

Responses were interesting and, briefly, included the following:

- There is strong support for the Show to continue.
- It is seen as an integral part of village life, our heritage and culture, and one of the few truly intergenerational events.
- Although the castle is favoured as an ideal location, there was strong support for a change of venue either in the short or long term.
- The 2021 Show being the 150<sup>th</sup>, together with uncertainty regarding the use of the castle when building work begins, was seen as an opportunity to make a 'fresh start', to organise things differently.
- There was unease at the mismatch between the traditional aspects of the Show and the 'entertainment fair' activities.
- The need to cover costs seemed to be governing the Show's direction.
- Virtually everyone wanted the exhibition to be the centre of the Show.
- Remaining a tented Show was seen by everyone as essential.
- The importance of involving families and children was emphasised.
- It was recognised that lots of people enjoyed helping on the day but were unwilling to sit on committees or take on responsibility. Giving defined small jobs to such volunteers was seen as a way of encouraging greater involvement, building confidence, and increasing ownership. Simplification of the Show structure could also help.
- The way forward was described as 'true to our tradition and manageable'.

My thanks to all who gave their views and who so passionately care about the Show.

Sally Black

## **5. Treasurers Report read by Catherine Dowlen on behalf of Margaret Douglas**

I must start by giving my thanks to the Executive Committee, Mark and Sandi Saunders and Carole and Ian Moyes for the very successful virtual show they pulled out of the hat in such difficult circumstances.

1. Not surprisingly this year has been fairly uneventful, from the Treasurer's perspective, with very few transactions. All income this year came in the form of donations, two of which were late payments due in the 2018/2019 financial year. Other donations were received from ex-Friends of the show.
2. Six trade stall fees were received but these were returned.
3. Expenditure has also been very limited, the main expenditure items being printing of the schedule and stationery, mostly in the form of computer consumables required to enhance the website.
4. Overall our cash loss for the 2020 show is £435.14.
5. Interest as we all know is very low with less than £260 being earned in the financial year. However, all bank accounts continue to be healthy with the Show combined deposit and general account balance at the end of the year being over £21K. The Mark Patterson balances stand at slightly over £13K
6. As in previous years David Manion has health checked the accounts and signed them off as being accurate.

Margaret Douglas  
9<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**A statement of the accounts was emailed to members and posted on the Parish Noticeboards.**

**John Park asked if there were any questions following each report, but no one commented.**

## **6. Show Chairman's Report**

Making my annual report to the AGM via Zoom, a name none of us had heard of earlier in the year let alone at our last AGM, completes a year which has seen us all having to accept much change and manage our lives with less predictability. But as a species we are good at adapting and so it was for us this year in having to decide whether we proceed, and if so how, with the 149<sup>th</sup> Show & Exhibition.

Throughout the UK nearly all other events and traditional village shows cancelled as it became clear that COVID 19 restrictions would make it impossible for even small groups to meet let alone large public gatherings. But the 'Objects of Warkworth Show Society' require us to '*promote, encourage and enhance the skills of horticulture, handicrafts, art and culinary skills for the advancement of education and the public benefit by holding Shows, competitions, lectures and discussions*'. With the availability of the internet, digital photography and our want to provide some fun and optimism in an otherwise gloomy looking spring & summer, we were determined not to just give up. So, we decided to run fortnightly challenges throughout the late spring and early summer and to host the 149<sup>th</sup> Exhibition on our website.

I do not need to wax lyrical at the Exhibition's success or even need to make mention of the number of exhibits, their quality or the winners . . . the 149<sup>th</sup> Exhibition of the Warkworth Show is still open! The flowers and vegetables, cakes and other produce is still as fresh as it was on Show Day. The impressive display of art and photography, and the handwriting is still there for us and all our friends and extended families throughout the country (and world) to view, admire and critique. Never before has a Warkworth Show been able to do this.

I am not suggesting that the 'virtual' Exhibition was an improvement, and like many of you I will admit I did shed a tear and was saddened that the main event in our village's calendar which provides community cohesion and spirit was just not going to happen.

The fortnightly challenges throughout June and July provided many in our community with a focus and a bit of fun . . . and competition. The 149<sup>th</sup> 'virtual' Exhibition unfortunately had to be restricted to residents of our parish and a few local groups owing to the capacity of our Information Technology as well as the task of physically visiting exhibitor's homes to photograph their exhibits. Well, we coped with the large number of exhibitors, many who entered Warkworth Show for the first time. Our thanks to the very many exhibitors who grew, baked, designed, constructed, painted and photographed and allowed them to be shown and competed in the 149<sup>th</sup> 'virtual' Exhibition. None of this would have happened though without the hard work of a small band of volunteers; Carole & Ian Moyes whose herculean efforts in designing the virtual marquee and website and getting the images of every exhibit staged appropriately as well as all the results, their commitment and time given were indispensable. My sincere thanks also to: Rachel Parks and her family who took on the massive undertaking of the Entries Secretary role for all the exhibits, Sandie & Mark Saunders for compiling the Show Schedule in record time and looking after the numerous press and social media releases, Kate Burnham for getting the judges briefed and providing them with all the images in time, to our band of amateur (but very professional) photographers who visited every house and learnt new skills in taking images of still life, to all our judges who enjoyed the task and praised the quality of so many of the exhibits, and to Phil Pearson and his band of schedule distributors. My thanks also to the silent few working hard in the background to ensure it was all pulled together, with special mention and thanks to James Cox whose support and encouragement kept us going when it got harder this year.

Our thoughts now need to focus on the future, 2021 and Warkworth Show's 150<sup>th</sup> Exhibition. No one knows what restrictions will be in place next August, but from the huge support we have received from our community I know that the Executive Committee will strive to put on the best Exhibition that is feasible. It is unlikely that we shall be able stage the scale and size of Show seen in recent years, but hopefully we shall be able to do more than we did this year. The Executive Committee will make it special, marking our 150<sup>th</sup> Show needs to be celebrated.

A scaled-down Show may allow us to look at changing some of our processes that have evolved over the last 150 years, but which are now somewhat bureaucratic and outdated. Whatever changes we make must be attractive to those who have recently joined our community and those of all age groups.

I have now completed my 3 years as Chairman, it was an honour to have been asked and to have led a great team run such an important community event and one that is so much part of our village's heritage. I stand down wishing I could hand over a more secure organization, worried that we do not have sufficient volunteers who are willing to take on the more demanding and responsible roles. Margaret Douglas our treasurer and Catherine Dowlen the Show Secretary have both stepped up superbly and more than fill the shoes of their predecessor's. Rachel Parks has recently agreed to take on the new job of Show Entries Secretary which will streamline the process for children's, horticulture and industrial entries and results.

Finally, I would like to personally thank our President John Park, who has done exactly what a Chairman would want – to be there for advice, reassurance and wisdom. But he is not someone who sees it just as an honorary title – John has done that, entertained the judges and awarded the silverware on Show Day, but he also rolls his sleeves up and gets stuck in helping with putting up

tents, shifting tons of hardcore when needed and storing and transporting so much of our equipment. John, thank you for your support.  
Simon Buist

### **Nominations and Election of Honorary Officers and Vice Presidents**

The following Honorary Officers were elected: -

**President** John Park proposed by Sally Black, seconded by Jan Archibald

**Chairman** Ann Burke proposed by Jan Archibald, seconded by Pat Dodd

**Vice-Chairman** Vacant

**Secretary** Catherine Dowlen proposed by Jan Archibald, seconded by Simon Buist

**Treasurer** Margaret Douglas proposed by Chris Howliston, seconded by Catherine Dowlen

**Vice Presidents** Sally Black proposed by Simon Buist and seconded by Pat Dodd

### **10. Any Other Business**

**An item to name representatives from the sub committees and nominate co-opted members to the Executive Committee was brought up, but due to a new chairman being voted in tonight this will be decided at the next Executive Meeting instead.**

**Chris Howliston thanked the committee for keeping the Show alive this year in very trying times and said he hoped that conditions will be better next year.**

**John Park reiterated his thanks to the conscientious group who put on this year's Show and hoped that circumstances will allow the Show to go ahead next year.**

**John finished the meeting by thanking Simon for his hard work, enthusiasm and commitment to ensuring the future of Warkworth Show. Members gave a show of their appreciation with a virtual clap!**

