

## GRACE & FLAVOUR O.G.M. 2021

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<b>Date &amp; Location:</b>	<b>Thursday 13th May 2021, 7.30pm via Zoom</b>
<b>Directors Present:</b>	Ray Beard, Ashley Brown, Amanda de Haast, Nicki Douet, Gerry Robbins, Rob Satow, Bob Spackman, Helena Stuart-Matthews, Rob Treble, Michael Trower & John Whitlock
<b>Apologies:</b>	John Fluker, Su Johnston, Jane MacIntyre, Ken MacIntyre, Tom Suffolk
<b>Chairman</b>	Amanda de Haast
<b>Minute Taker:</b>	Nicki Douet

### Agenda Items

#### 1. Welcome by Chairman: Amanda de Haast

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting. Copies of all the reports from this meeting are available on the G+F website on the Events link.

#### 2. 2020 OGM

There was no OGM last year as it was cancelled so there are no minutes for us to reference.

#### 3. Chairman's Report: Amanda de Haast

## GRACE & FLAVOUR O.G.M. 2021

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At our AGM in November last year we were in Tier 2, very quickly to move through Tier 3 into Tier 4 and there we have remained until a few days ago, but fortunately life in the garden has not been so traumatic. We have remained open and the online calendar shows a continuous presence of people visiting either to work or crop the almost everlasting winter vegetables and salads. Winter chores like cleaning and oiling all the garden tools have been done (thank you Bob) while some projects, like the drainage on the allotments, has had to wait because of the variable weather and a sensible decision to wait until most people had had their second vaccination.

At the end of last year Sarah Archer, Senior Estate Manager, NT, London & SE England, visited the garden to see what we had been up to. She was pleased with the extensive work that had been done to the west and north walls (which they had funded) and noted the large ash tree on the northern boundary was suffering with ash dieback. She will arrange for that to be taken down. Always a relief to get a good report from the landlord!

Over the winter we have been continuing with the paperwork to make sure we are 100% compliant with our various governance requirements: Insurance, Health & Safety, Risk Assessments and assorted rules and regulations have been reviewed and updated. Please make sure you individually complete the Insurance Skills sheet which is to be found in the folder in the Potting Shed. It will only take five minutes but it is a necessary requirement. And also note the Evacuation Procedure pinned to the wall. More paperwork can be viewed on our splendid new noticeboard. Nicki has worked hard to update the members Handbook to be found on the shelf above the desk, together with the accident book. We had hoped to have had four first aiders trained up by now but the pandemic has made accessing training courses difficult.

More good work was done to the website by Ashley, following a review by the committee. Content was changed and updated and we can now look forward to regular garden reports from John and quarterly updates from Gerry on the wildlife. Please feel free to send any additional reports, photographs or newsworthy items to Ashley for inclusion.

We are very grateful to the WHPC who, via a bequeath from the estate of local resident Roy Ackerman, have funded additional planting to our wildlife zone. Hedging along the north boundary has been punctuated by a small hazel copse at one end and a grouping of hollies at the other end. All will be a great benefit to a variety of wildlife in years to come. Our thanks to Councillor Sally Newman for her interest in making this project a reality. We have also replaced a pear tree on Hollier Avenue and are on the lookout for a medium sized mulberry tree, both funded from the same bequeath.

Helena must be congratulated again for a wonderful supply of daffodils this Spring. Apparently we cannot have enough of them and she and John Whitlock are on the hunt for some more growing space. We can now enjoy her colourful bouquets of tulips and other late Spring flowers.

The building team have kept themselves busy with a variety of jobs, constantly looking to repair and improve our working environment. With a grant from WHPC (Thank you) they, with Bob Spackman, have recovered one of the polytunnels. And on 18 May the team will start on the drainage works on the allotment. This will involve certain pieces of heavy equipment and machinery so you should take care when walking through that vicinity. It is expected to take a couple of days, weather permitting.

Articles and references to the garden can be seen in the excellent Parish Newsletter, this month's Surrey Life and the forthcoming Horsley Directory and HCPS magazine. The garden has been entered into The One Show-RHS My Chelsea Competition 2021 as a best community garden entry. Results will be known towards the end of the month. Robin gave a talk to members of the HCPS yesterday via Zoom and I am giving a talk on the garden to East Horsley WI next week

## GRACE & FLAVOUR O.G.M. 2021

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### **4. Garden Manager's report:** John Whitlock

We have had a pretty good year, possibly the best winter we've ever had.

Winter salads have as ever been great throughout the winter.

Great winter cauliflowers (100+) to follow summer and autumn successes.

Winter vegetables:

- Brussels Sprouts (best ever)
- Leeks (still cropping in May, which is the latest we have ever cropped them)
- Kale
- Purple Sprouting Broccoli
- Carrots
- Winter Cabbages
- Parsnips are still being eaten
- Swede
- Chard
- Coriander, Parsley and Chervil

Spring 2021

Started well. Spinach is plentiful; members can crop as much as they like at the moment. Asparagus and rhubarb started slowly but picking up.

Small problems

- Mice have eaten a lot of seeds & seedlings but we have managed to keep them away from the peas
- Red onion germination

Changes

- New polytunnel cover
- Renovated frame area
- Pea cage moved
- Flower bed in the main garden including sunflowers, dill and sweet peas.

We will be behind this year due to the weather; some crops may be up to 2 weeks late.

### **5. Presentation of Accounts and Treasurer's Report:** Ashley Brown

Just over £6,000 in the bank which includes the allotment contingency plus our contingency account giving a working balance of £9,536

For full details please go to the G+F website – Events/Meetings and click on the “OGM & AGM Agenda / Reports” link.

### **6. Allotments Report:** Michael Trower

## GRACE & FLAVOUR O.G.M. 2021

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All plots are occupied. Waiting list of 3 people.

The PC's increased their management fee payments last year to £620 for each council, an increase of £54 p.a. which will enable a contingency fund to be maintained. We are grateful for the support from the Parish Councils and the allotments have been a great benefit to the plot holders during the past year.

All allotment holders have been advised they can enter the West Horsley In Bloom contest irrespective of where they reside, as the plots are in West Horsley.

Mowing rota has been continued and is working well. Thanks to those on it, and to those who strim around the site as well.

Drainage – the extensions to the drains are due to be undertaken by the building gang next week.

John Whitlock asked about 2 allotments; one is very rarely tended and the other has not been visited for some time. Michael asked that John send him details of the allotments in question and he would contact the holders.

### **7. Building Team Report:** Rob Treble

Little progress to report – G+F builders have in the main been in lockdown awaiting first and second jobs.

Some minor activities have been undertaken:

- Installation of allotments' lockable notice board. The timber noticeboard will be renovated.
- Temporary support installed for east wall and preparation for permanent support
- Installation of pea netting
- Weed bins built from pallets and another is under construction.
- Refurbishment of pine table

Planned activities:

- Completion of support to east wall
- Improvements to allotment drainage. Heavy equipment/machinery on site on 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> May.
- Hedge development in wild life corridor

### **8. Wildlife Report:** Gerry & Pat Robbins

## GRACE & FLAVOUR O.G.M. 2021

---

This will be a recap of what has happened since last summer.

**The main item to report is the planting of a new wildlife hedge** along the north border of the Grace and Flavour garden. This runs for approximately 40 metres. The spade work was mainly done by Robin Satow. West Horsley Parish Council kindly provided a grant covering the cost of the around 200 saplings. They were planted in February. The species mix includes hawthorn, privet, crab apple, hazel, wild pear, plum cherry, buckthorn, dog rose, field maple, holly (under the big oak at the eastern end) and a hazel coppice at the west end. The hazel coppice has been underplanted with wild garlic. A quick check on 9/5/21 showed only 6 failures. We are really looking forward to seeing the hedge “green-up” the bare fence and provide a wildlife corridor, food source and nesting habitat.

### **Nest Boxes**

A few new boxes have been introduced including a kestrel sized box placed high in the cedar at the north end of the allotments. This has been very neatly filled with twigs probably by a squirrel. A camera trap put up in early May revealed only a jackdaw visiting it at present. Bob Spackman has provided a very smart robin box with a novel design. This may help improve our lack of success with nesting robins.... but not so-far! One of the stock dove boxes was relocated away from the ash tree which is probably for the axe this year and a new box has been placed on one of the lime trees. Both of these currently have stock doves sitting on eggs. The latest survey shows of 22 boxes on site, 14 have some sort of activity, 3 contain young, 3 have brooding adults, 3 have stock dove eggs and 5 contain nesting material only.

Rob Treble assured the meeting that no hedging work would be carried out until any nesting activity had ceased.

### **Frog Mascot has yet another new suit**

You may have noticed that our colourful pond frog mascot was badly affected by winter weather. I am delighted to report that he has been given a new lick of paint and varnish. He is going back on show but will be retired to the potting shed at the end of September each year to avoid excess weathering and preserve his suit.

### **Other Wildlife**

Unfortunately mice have been eating lots of seed / seedlings in the polytunnel, a family of mice were also found in the herb garden by Helena. Field voles have been seen under the refuge. This tiny jewel was seen during the latest nest box survey, a green orb web spider.

### **Publications**

An article about the wildlife at G&F appeared in last summer's “Around and About Horsley”, the HCPS magazine.

An article about the new hedge appeared in the May 2021 Horsley Directory.

The new hedge was also mentioned in the WHPC Spring 2021 Newsletter.

### **Watch Out for Wildlife**

Please continue to let me know if you see anything of wildlife note around G&F.

### **Future Plans**

- Draw a large explanatory plan of the wildlife area for the display board by the pond.
- Ensure the new hedge survives the summer drought and does not get overgrown with weeds.
- Fill in gaps in hedging between G&F and allotment area - during the autumn / winter.

**9. Thanks and Close:** Amanda de Haast

## GRACE & FLAVOUR O.G.M. 2021

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This is my last OGM as after the next AGM in November I will be stepping down and I am delighted to confirm that Robin Satow will be taking over as your new Chairman.

There are so many people who should be thanked for their contribution to the success of the garden but I am not going to list them. We are involved with Grace + Flavour because we believe and enjoy in what we are doing, and it is rewarding enough to be part of this community. However a special mention must go to John Whitlock for overseeing the planning and planting, Ashley for keeping the finances and website in good order and all the other Directors for all their input and support. Away from the garden there continues much hard work and planning and we are all grateful for that.

And finally, in case you were wondering, a note from Tom.

*"The lavender has survived the winter, despite many thinking I had, yet again, pruned them too hard!! As you know weeding and maintaining the lavender is a big job and I am grateful for the support you give. I have obtained several hessian sacks as gifts and I will be trialling them as an eco-friendly mulch around the*

*lavender, similar as at RHS Wisley.*

*We, the bugs and bees, will all look forward to enjoying the lavender again this summer."*

Good night and again thank you for your company.