

Hello to all of you

It feels so strange to be writing this Report to an audience that I can't see looking up at me in the Hall, waiting for me to summarise another wonderful year that we have all enjoyed with our friends at the Dorset Hardy Plant Society. But this year has been different, as everything else has been.

We started 2020 with such high hopes. Our Day Trips were so popular that we had arranged duplicate trips for both the Encombe and Wildside Days Out, our holiday was fully booked within days, and we were due to host National's AGM in March. That feels like a lifetime ago!

Of course I don't need to go into the details as you are all aware of how the year unfolded. For those of you who have had Covid, I do hope that you are on the road to recovery. I am hoping that the majority of you will have had at least one injection, and that the rest of you will be getting it soon. It has been lovely hearing from so many of you, throughout the year, as you acknowledge your Hardy Times Newsletter each month.

This leads me on to my first and biggest "Thank You" of all. To Diana of course who has kept the Hardy Times going with her positive approach to getting out and about safely, when (or how) we could obtain seeds, or compost and hearing about so many wonderful plants. It has been a real treat and I would like to thank you, from all of us, Diana, for all your hard work despite the circumstances. The HT has kept us going and reminds us all that this is as much a social club as a gardening one! Thank you also to all those who contributed to the HT. It made it so interesting.

The Photographic Competition went well with many entries from so many of you. In fact if you look at the Archive section of the website you can see a year's worth of gardens as the seasons changed. Well done Helen with your winning entry, and also to Judy and Jane who came an equal second. The votes from the Committee were very decisive so it was obvious who the winner should be.

Zoom has changed a lot of our lives throughout this pandemic, and you may be wondering why we never actually set up a Zoom Speaker Meeting in 2020. I had responses from many of you, in fact 73 of you replied. The final count was 40 in favour, with 33 opposed but it was the comments I found most interesting. I had expected the unwillingness to use technology would be the primary cause, but in the end, most people come to the meetings because they like to socialise, eat cake and buy plants – as well as see the speaker. So, we wouldn't be able to replicate all that, no matter how hard we tried. In addition we had no one prepared to take on the organisation of "Zoom" so we had to choose not to pursue Zoom Meetings. I do hope you are all following the "Calendar of Events" on the website, as I am updating the Zoom Meetings for many other Groups.....and there are some interesting ones coming up.

Thank you to all my committee and thank you for agreeing to stand a further year. We have not had very much to do throughout 2020 but I am hoping, that once we can, we shall make up for last year. Who knows?

On a personal note, as you will have seen, I am now standing as Chair for a fifth year, and having also served as Treasurer three years before, I now feel I need to stand down from the Committee and let someone else takeover from next year. We had hoped someone would come forward to fill the Vice Chair vacancy, so that they would have a year to hand over, but no one has come forward. It is however never too late so if anyone comes forward during the year I will be happy to show them the ropes. I have enjoyed my time with HPS but would hate to walk away with no replacement.

Anyway, I am rambling.....let's say we had a tricky year but let's hope 2021 will be better. We are hoping to restart our Speakers in April but we cannot be sure until much nearer the time so please keep in touch and we'll let you know as and when we can start to reopen our events.

Take care and keep safe