

## **SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

### **REPORT FOR AGM 15.11.18** by Jenny Bourne, RPA Social Secretary

The Social Committee team plans and organises the RPA social events. We are: Ruth Walker, Janet Baylis, Joanie Fulton, Flora Souper, Sarah Colclough, Anne Wingrove, who manages the Café, and myself.

This will be a summary of what's been achieved in 2018, with acknowledgements and thanks.

### **Plotholders' Question Time**

28 January '18

Another packed house (café!) for our third annual Plotholders' Question Time, to hear panellists Liz Rigge, Ruth Walker and Len Cowking answer questions ranging from crop rotation, tomato blight, weed disposal and the unsocial after-effects of Jerusalem artichokes!

Panellists' Top tips:

- befriend your neighbours – mutually beneficial
- take time to enjoy your plot – it's meant to be fun as well as hard work
- be thankful for all the rustic peace, quiet, fresh air and good companionship in an otherwise busy urban environment – all for 12 or 24 quid a year!

### **Seedy Sunday**

25 February '18

A hardy team braved a sunny but bitterly cold morning to set up outside the Cafe. Donated seeds sold alongside hazel beanpoles and pea sticks cut by Andrew Saunders from the RPA coppice plot. Conversation topics ranged from seed varieties, viability testing and how to keep warm in near arctic temperatures! In the (comparative) warmth of the Café, Carol Ager deployed her formidable powers of persuasion to sign up young and old for the Autumn Social pumpkin, sunflower and family Scarecrow competitions.

We raised a very respectable £117.93 net – good result for an hour's work! The Café also did good trade, with a selection of delicious home baked cakes and much appreciated hot drinks – thanks to the Café team!

Thanks to everyone who helped out on the day and to Janet and Flora for seedy sorting!

### **Mike's 20 Questions Quiz**

18 March '18

There was an unusual sound in the café for Mike Vesey's Quiz – the sound of silence! Teams put their competitive heads together over deceptively easy clues that tested novice and experienced plotholders alike (*a Scottish flier?\**; *Did it grow in Fawlty Towers?\**). Gill Hiley presented with a firm but fair hand and only one person tried to get away with using his phone! Well done to winners 'Team Read' and to the café team for providing warmth, hot drinks, cakes and a great atmosphere on a bitter cold day of March snow!

Thanks to Mike for compiling his clever clues – I'm pleased to announce that there's another quiz ready to go!

### **PLANT SALE**

13 May '18

Despondency at Saturday downpours turned to relief when Sunday dawned damp and overcast but no rain! The tent team set up in record time allowing the Sales Team to set up with time to

spare. Priority buyers had the pick of the bunch, before an opening rush as courgettes, cucumbers and squash flew off the shelves! We were concerned that the extremely cold start to the growing season might affect supplies but there was a good selection of veg, fruit and flower seedlings on offer with some quality F1 varieties for the discerning buyer. The sale of a donated battery operated lawnmower in excellent condition boosted overall takings. We made a total of £263.30, slightly up on last year.

Thanks to the tent team and the Sales team – expertise and sales acumen in equal measure! And thanks to the Café volunteers who kept us fuelled with hot drinks and cake.

**And thanks to everyone who donated quality plants and seedlings – without them there'd be no Sale. I'd welcome suggestions that would boost donations to the Plant Sale next year.**

## **AUTUMN SOCIAL AND PRODUCE SHOW**

16 September '18

Another successful Social, thanks to thorough planning and preparation, a good number of volunteers and, crucially, a day of sunshine! We kept the guest list fairly low key this year, inviting our Management Committee Councillors and guests from local organisations.

**Produce Show** tents went up early, giving Ruth time for set up and briefing of judges and registrars. We'd been worried that there might be a shortage of produce entries due to the unusually challenging growing season, but there was a high number of entries and winners as usual. A new floral category, 'Plants for Pollinators', produced attractive entries and the wildlife theme was continued in the Children's categories – 'Veggie Bugs' and 'Bug Hotels with some delightful entries. The Scarecrow competition was opened to families this year, with 3 splendid winners.

### **Awards Presentation**

Councillor Jim Millard awarded the Family Scarecrow competition prizes with great flair (and is keen to return next year). PC Dave from the Safer Neighbourhoods Team presented the Tallest Sunflower competition awards to the under 15s. 'Best in Show cup' was awarded for tasty 'Tomatillo' tomatoes. Andrew Hanson and JT from NPL presented an entertaining Pumpkin Competition. Entries were smaller this year, the winning pumpkin weighing in at 12.5Kg.

### **Raffle**

Joanie wasn't able to join her Raffle team this year but Gill, Angie, Tim and Denise ensured it all went smoothly – high quality prize vouchers from local businesses and spectacular Christmas cake were won by lucky ticket holders.

**The BBQ team** rustled up tasty hot dogs and bean burgers and the **Beer Tent** sold out of '*Naked Ladies*' quickly – memo for next year's supplies! There were fewer donations of jams, chutneys etc on the Home Produce Stall (perhaps everyone's hoarding in the event of a Brexit imports crisis!). The Café was very busy and hot drinks and cakes were much appreciated by all.

### **Takings**

Total takings for the Autumn Social (excluding Café) amounted to **£1,091.90**, with a net profit after expenses of **£556.81**.

### **Summary**

The Autumn Social is one of the year's RPA community highlights – a get together of ploholders, families, friends and guests to celebrate the end of the growing season in friendly competition

and conviviality. Feedback from this year's Social will inform planning for next year – one suggestion for the Produce Show has been a category for *'Funniest Vegetable'* – and we'll be reviewing times and schedules generally.

**Particular thanks to:**

- Ruth for organising the Produce Show so effectively – planning, rosette buying, co-ordinating and briefing registrars and judges, including for the 'Best in Show' cup
- Janet for co-ordinating the Children's and Family Scarecrow competitions and also for co-ordinating the floats and finances so efficiently
- Joanie for the Raffle, organising the event and obtaining quality prize donations from local businesses and to Gill Hiley and the Raffle team on the day
- Ruth and Janet for taking on the Beer Tent organisation – arranging supplies, providing detailed bartender briefing and price lists – and to bartenders Peter, Hugh, Trish and Nan
- Nick, Jem and Dave Gilbert on BBQ
- Marguerite and Cecile for the Home Produce stall
- Susan Saunders and Christine Thorpe as 'meet and greet' at the gate
- The registrars, judges and everyone who turned up to help on the day
- Anne and the Café volunteers
- Everyone who turned up to take part
- And David and Jenny who strimmed the whole area and the unsung heroes who keep the toilets clean for us all!

**General Thanks to:**

- The Social Committee team who put so much time and commitment into the smooth running of the year's social events
- All who helped out during the year to make these events work so well
- The RPA committee for their support

It's been another year of enjoyable and rewarding RPA community events. Next year I'd like to step back somewhat from organising the Autumn Social – it is very time consuming, but I'm confident that the Social committee team will take it onwards and upwards!

Christmas Café will be on Sunday 16 December and dates for next year's social events will be posted soon on the website and notice boards.

Jenny Bourne, 15.11.2018

\*Arran Pilot \*\* Basil