SOCIAL COMMITTEE
REPORT FOR AGM 14 November 2019

The Social Committee team plan and organise the RPA social events - Ruth Walker, Janet Baylis, Joanie Fulton, Flora Souper, Carol Ager, Anne Wingrove, Café Manager and myself. This is a review for this year, with acknowledgements and thanks.

**Plotholders’ Question Time – 27 Jan**
A full house for our fourth Plotholders’ Question Time, to hear panelists Liz Rigge, Mary Downham and Jon Tarlton mull over questions from a packed audience, who also added their horticultural know-how to the mix! Topics covered included: secrets of roots and sweet potato growing; crop rotation; dig or no dig; composting; how to attract birds and other beneficial wildlife to your plot and what leaves to grow for stick insects!

Panellists gave their ‘Topical Tips’: Liz hoes with her trusty Swoe before covering the ground with permeable membrane; Mary recommended keeping up the weeding, also using a Swoe, and Jon said, ‘Get it done now - no time like the present!’

Thanks to the panel, to the Café team and to everyone who came along to take part and to contribute – next year we would really welcome newer plotholders with their questions and observations, or as panellists!

**Seedy Sunday – 24 Feb**
How lucky we were with an exceptionally hot February week! Temperatures in the high teens and a cloudless blue sky meant that sun lotion rather than a winter coat was the order of the day for the Sales Team. Ruth, Flora and Gill did a brisk trade selling seeds, RPA grown coppiced hazel sticks, bamboo canes and a range of tools, including a solidly built lawnmower and a wheelbarrow. In the cafe Carol and Janet used their formidable powers of persuasion to register plot holders and children for the Autumn Social competitions.

Thanks to everyone who helped out on the day, to the Seedy sorters beforehand and Café team who provided the usual quality delicious home baked cakes and hot drinks.

**The combined total takings from sales and competition registration was a record breaking £136.75!**

**PLANT SALE**
A successful and busy Plant Sale, with Ruth at the Sales Team helm; it was great to have two newer plot holders, Bob and Nick joining the Team this year. There was a good range and variety of home-grown plants for sale, flying off the shelves during priority buying for volunteers and plant donators. Thanks to the Café team who kept us going with hot drinks.

Thanks to everyone who donated quality plants and seedlings – without them there’d be no Sale. We welcome suggestions that would boost donations to the Plant Sale next year.

**Overall net takings were slightly down on last year, but for me the real profit was in having new volunteers helping out and sharing the camaraderie!**

**AUTUMN SOCIAL AND PRODUCE SHOW – 15 September**
A brilliant day of friendly competition, sun and socialising! Definitely the hottest Social ever – at one point in the Pumpkin Competition I looked up expecting to see the usual large audience for Andrew’s presentation, and there was no one there! Then I realised everyone was huddling in the shade of the trees and in the Café!

The Tent set up team and the Co-ordinators got everything up and running early - the good weather drew in the crowds for the Produce Show competitions, the Raffle, BBQ and Beer Tent, Home Produce stall and an earlier closing Café. We welcomed guests from local organisations; FBHP, St John’s Church, HWA and Sam Kemp from the Cricket Club.

**The Produce Show** drew the usual hotly contested entries! Ruth’s comments: ‘On the whole the produce show was a great success this year. The standard of entries was very high with amazing cucumbers, astonishing squashes, succulent fruit and stunning flower displays, delicious fruit jams, to give only a few examples. What was also very pleasing was the number of plot holders entering the competitions for the first time, giving the old hands a run for their money. The registrars did an excellent job sorting everything out and keeping good order and the judges worked really hard to come to their ranking decisions, taking great care to consider all entries fairly and equally. I’m extremely grateful to them all for the effort they put in. The only disappointing element was the lack of cakes and not
a single entry in the new Children’s category for cup cakes. If you have any ideas about how to invigorate the Children’s categories please let me know. I’ve already had some suggestions but more would be welcome.’ (Children’s categories in past years have included dish gardens, veggie monsters, bugs and selfies, bug hotels and homes and arrangements in recycled containers. We’d welcome suggestions from source, from the kids!)

Presentations
Andrew Hanson, NPL with daughter presented an entertaining (and topical) Pumpkin Competition, won by Emma, with Sam winning the People’s Pumpkin award for his small but perfectly formed pumpkin.

- Dave Auld, Police Community Support Officer, presented the Tallest Sunflower awards, with first prize to Molly.
- Nick Cheadle, Dedicated Ward Officer for Hampton Wick presented the Family Scarecrow Competition awards, also won by Molly (with some help possibly from the family!)
- And we were pleased to welcome Adele Dyer, of ‘Gardening Which’ and head of trials at Capel Manor in Enfield, who chose as ‘Best in Show’ melons grown on her plot by Vera Kenyon. Vera was somewhat overcome to receive the Trevillion Cup but was a most worthy winner.

Thanks to everyone involved in making everything come together so smoothly, efficiently and enjoyably:

- Ruth, Produce Show organiser for such an efficiently well-run Show!
- Joanie and the Raffle team – superb selection of prizes from local businesses and tight teamwork
- Janet for an excellent Family Scarecrow competition
- Ben, Max and Freja, Pumpkin competition registrars
- Jem, Mehi and Christopher – BBQ team
- Marguerite and Cecile – Home Produce stall (Marguerite would welcome more home made produce next year!)
- Tricia, Peter, Nan and Hugh – Beer Tent (Top drinks!)
- Andrew Stanley, ‘meet and greet’ for our guests at the gate and financial organiser
- The tent team and all who helped set up and clear away
- Nick, official sunflowers competition measurer and recorder
- Mandy, Sarah, Susan and Bethan – children’s fun activities
- The unsung heros – David and Jenny who strim the whole area and the compost toilet cleaners
- To everyone of you who came along to take part, spend, help and enjoy the day
- and last but not least, thanks to Anne and all the café volunteers who keep us going all year with hot drinks and the finest home baked cakes this side of Kingston Bridge!

Net takings: a record £819.94 going into RPA funds.
Finally, a name change – the ‘Autumn Social and Produce Show’ to become: the ‘Autumn Show’.

General Thanks to:

- All who helped out during the year to make these events work so well
- The RPA committee for their support
- And last but not least the Social Committee group!

We’d welcome your thoughts and ideas about our social events, and even more, your participation in making them happen! Publicity for all next year’s social events will be on the noticeboards and website.

Dates:
Christmas Café will be on Sunday 15 Dec

Dates for 2020:
Plotholders Question Time: 9 February
Seedy Sunday: 15 March
Plant Sale: 17 May
Autumn Show: 13 September:

Jenny Bourne