



# Flitwick Gardeners' Association

Issue 110

Summer 2019

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## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 17th August	Annual Show
Saturday 5th October	Autumn Show
Thursday 28 November	FGA Quiz

## **Flitwick Gardeners' Association**

We are an association run by members, for members. Our aim is to promote gardening in Flitwick and the surrounding villages.

We have a members' shop; The Seed Box, where we try to stock useful items including seeds, tools and chemicals at very competitive prices. We also have a library and a small range of loan equipment.

We run shows, organise an annual quiz and run the occasional trip to visit a garden. We're always pleased to welcome new members and always looking for help in running the Association and activities. We'd love to hear from you – just a few hours here and there would make all the difference.

### **How to find us**

The Seed Box is situated behind the site of the old Flitwick Leisure Centre on Steppingley Road, MK45 1TH.

For security reasons there's currently a temporary fence around the old leisure centre in Flitwick. The entrance gate has been fitted with a padlock that works with an allotment key. Please be sure to close and lock the gate behind you every time you use it.

When The Seed Box is open for trading a committee member will remove the padlock and then secure the site on leaving. We ask everyone to be vigilant to ensure no unauthorised persons enter the site.

### Seed box Opening Hours (first Saturday in February – last Saturday in November)

Friday	7.30 pm to 9.00 pm Feb to Nov
Saturday	2.00 pm to 4.00 pm Feb to Nov <b>(closed on Show Days)</b>

### Telephone

Outside of these hours you can always leave a message for us on the answering machine on **01525 717289**.

### Email addresses

General enquiries etc.	<a href="mailto:enquiries@flitwickgardeners.co.uk">enquiries@flitwickgardeners.co.uk</a>
Magazine	<a href="mailto:newsletter@flitwickgardeners.co.uk">newsletter@flitwickgardeners.co.uk</a>
Show info and entries	<a href="mailto:fgashow@flitwickgardeners.co.uk">fgashow@flitwickgardeners.co.uk</a>

### Website / Facebook address

Facebook Group	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/flitwickgardeners">https://www.facebook.com/groups/flitwickgardeners</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.flitwickgardeners.co.uk">www.flitwickgardeners.co.uk</a>

### Executive Committee

Colin Stennett	Secretary and Show Secretary
Jim Godden	Chairman
Leonie Coverley	Treasurer
J-P Carter	Deputy Chairman and Show Committee
Laurie Arnold	Seeds and Deputy Trading Coordinator
Kath Stennett	Membership Secretary and Show Committee
Ian Holman	Deputy Secretary and Show Committee
Alan & Carolyn Kirkdale	Magazine Editors
Ann Lutley	Publicity Officer
Sue Titchener	Seed Box Rota Coordinator
<b>Vacant</b>	<b>Trading Coordinator</b>

### Show Committee (not mentioned above)

Sonia Corfe

### Honorary Life Members

Linda Pitts, Syd Pye, Maryan Pateman, J-P Carter, Jim Godden

## **Cliff White**

Just as this issue of the FGA magazine was being finalised we heard that Cliff White had died. Cliff was a very keen grower of dahlias which he showed at all levels, including being a stalwart of the FGA Dahlia and other flower classes. What he showed always stood out and won many prizes. Having been a member of the FGA since long before I joined, I knew him first as a fellow member of the main committee and he continued helping on the show committee until very recently. At the Summer Show every year we will be reminded of Cliff as we look at the photographic section entries hoping to win the Cliff White trophy. Cliff will be missed and on behalf of all at the FGA I send our best wishes to Betty and family at this sad time.

Jim Godden  
FGA Chairman

### **AGM Report**

Another quiet Thursday evening must mean that I'm at the FGA AGM. A total of 17 members attended with a further 9 sending their apologies. Following the chairman's move to Yorkshire during 2018 the acting chairman thanked everyone for taking the time to attend. He then thanked Leonie Coverley for coming forward during the year to take on the role of Treasurer, Jim Godden for his work as Acting Treasurer and Trading Coordinator and Sue Titchener for putting together the Seedbox rota. He also thanked those members that had come forward as key holders for the Seedbox opening and all the people that continued their support as helpers in whatever capacity.

The Treasurers Report was read out in her absence and it stated that trading surplus was up, despite lower sales, as a result of successful reduction in stock. See elsewhere in this magazine for the full report.

The Membership Report showed that there is an increase on the number of members compared to the same period last year, although a number of 2018 members have still to renew. We have also achieved a 97% completion of GDPR form completion by members for 2019.

All reports, including those in the previous magazine, and the accounts were accepted by those present

Jim Godden was elected as the new Chairman of the FGA which means we are now looking for a new Trading Coordinator, as no one had put themselves forward for this role prior to nor at the meeting.

Jim then reported that we had had meetings with Flitwick Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council concerning our requirements for a new Seedbox, should the existing site be needed for development, but there is still no news as to where it would be nor when it is likely to happen.

At the end of the meeting both Jim Godden and J-P Carter were given life memberships to the Association in recognition of their outstanding service, commitment and hard work for the Association over a number of years.

Colin Stennett  
Show Secretary

### **Spring Show 2019**

Spring sprung surprisingly early in 2019, which was good for everyone and everything except for some classes of daffodils. Most of the large trumpet daffodils had been wonderful displays in people's gardens before the show. The weather did however mean that other classes of daffodil such as small cup and doubles were available for picking. Exhibits at the show were slightly down on previous years but members ensured that a great display was given. With the added bonus of some wonderful flower arrangement displays; courtesy of Mid Beds Flower Club and some excellent homemade cakes for sale; courtesy of FGA members, a great time was had by all who came to look around.

Thanks to everyone who raided their gardens, or cooked a marble cake, to ensure a really good show. A special thanks to all those people that helped in whatever capacity. We wouldn't be able to run the shows without everyone's support.

Colin Stennett  
Show Secretary

### **Annual Show changes**

We've always had Novice Vegetable and Flower classes in the show with the aim of encouraging the entry of exhibits by members who are new to showing or who have never won a first place in the main classes at the show.

We are now trying to encourage more children and grandchildren to enter these classes, as they too enjoy growing things. The section names are changing; for example 'Section B - Vegetable classes - Novice and children only'. If a child does win the section trophy they would not be disqualified from entering in these classes in future years.

We are also supplementing the 'original painting' class with an 'original drawing' class for those members that enjoy drawing rather than painting.

### **2019 Annual Show Photographic Classes**

103	Colours	104	Letters of the Alphabet
105	Numbers	106	Shapes

The children's photographic class will be Colours.

## Chit Chat from the (new) Chair

I know it's a long time ago that Syd Pye left, but I'd like to start by thanking him for many years of sterling service to the FGA in many different roles and to wish him and his family all the best in the frozen North.

Secondly, thanks to J-P Carter for reprising his years as Chairman by stepping in as Vice-Chairman to provide continuity to the AGM when I was fortunate enough to be elected as Chairman for 2019/20. I hope to be able to continue the good work of the previous two incumbents.

Over the last few years we have seen tremendous changes in gardening. When I started as Trading Secretary, the flower garden dominated; particularly seed sales now the pendulum has swung far towards vegetables, which now dominate everything. The average age of active gardeners is increasing steadily, and many younger gardeners seem to do most of their shopping on-line. The FGA has struggled to react to these changes but with new blood slowly coming on board to assist with trading, the future looks much brighter than even a couple of years ago. Thanks to all those stepping up to assist; whether as till operators, key holders, bag shifters or any other role.

Having said the above, we still need someone to act as Trading Co-ordinator (secretary). If you are interested, please see me to discuss what may be involved in this new role. For the foreseeable future I seem to be lumbered with continuing to develop the trading team as de-facto Trading Coordinator. I'm also very keen to get more people overseeing areas as part of that team.

By the time you read this, the outline planning permission for the re-development of the (old) leisure centre site should have been decided. The officers of the FGA have been discussing with both the Town Council and Central Beds what our future may be. I was hopeful that we would have some news, but we continue to wait for others who are really deciding our future.

I've been watering my allotment which is itself a rare event, as I wait until plants ask for water before doing so. What is unprecedented is that I'm watering strawberries and blueberries in April. I'm hoping that this is not building up to another summer as dry as last year, which could be a disaster, as I would expect to see watering bans.

Perhaps we should try to get some de-hydrated water to sell!

Lastly a big thank you to the committee and the members for electing J-P Carter and myself Honorary Life Members of the FGA. Congratulations to J-P and I feel honoured to be placed alongside a man who has given so much to the FGA over many years.

Jim Godden  
FGA Chairman

## TRADING REPORT Summer 2019

I started my last report complaining about the cold weather curtailing my golf after only 9 holes. I now sit here with weather forecasts suggesting amazing temperatures for Easter weekend; in fact we have planned a barbeque for Saturday, in April! There have been amazing sales of much of the compost this year. Last year I sold one pallet of farm manure this year our one pallet was sold before the end of March. It was a similar story with peat and professional compost. Taking an early view of the compost order for next December has me worried, as I'd intended to concentrate on Clover compost, which we buy by the lorry load (20 pallets) and at present, it's looking very likely we will be looking for about 25-30 pallets in total. A nice worry to have!

Slug pellets containing metaldehyde are banned from sale from late June and banned from use from late 2019. We are selling our remaining stock at reduced prices to avoid having to dispose of them later. Other types of slug pellets will still be available and barrier type deterrents are also available; yes barriers do work, in fact some, like wool or crushed egg shells are very cheap if you have a suitable source and have the advantage of having minimal environmental issues.

By the time this hits your email or letter box it will be well into hanging basket time, I am going to put a display of the main items on the large display board this weekend. May I also remind you that we are concentrating on the Draper watering system as it is much cheaper than Hozelock! To date I have found the two systems to be totally compatible! I hesitate to mention that we have some very good value 1 gallon (5ltr) watering cans as I'm sure they will not be required this summer.

I think generally, trading is stable and that we have managed to reduce overall stock levels without much impact on availability of items that members want. I do keep a note book at the Seed Box to note requests/comments/suggestions/etc so if you have any please see me. If you find an item of interest to our members please let me know, or even put a piece on our Facebook page for all those registered to see. Thanks for your continued support for the FGA. If you like what we are doing please tell everyone, but if you have a problem, please tell me and just me.

Great Gardening

Jim Godden  
FGA Temporary Trading Coordinator

## Treasurer's Report 2018

Back in 2014, my husband and I first turned our hands to growing our own fruit and vegetables, taking on an allotment at the Steppingley Road site. We both thoroughly enjoyed the challenge and the fantastic people who have helped and advised us along the way – despite our lack of experience! Wind forward four years, and in 2018 I took the opportunity to give back some of my time to the FGA and use my professional knowledge as an accountant to take on the role of Treasurer. It has been a pleasure for me to get more actively involved and I thank Jim for doing the lion's share of the work this year until I took over in the Autumn and prepared the Year End statements.

Trading surplus for 2018 was £2,445, up on prior year surplus of £2,233, despite slightly lower sales. This was owing to a successful reduction in stock and also lower trading expenses.

Conversely, net income (after all expenses) for 2018 was £122, slightly down on prior year income of £174. This was owing to certain cost increases: notably printing costs rose by £397 and a new expense of £137 for fire extinguisher rental. The cost of insurance has also been creeping up and is now £902 per annum, so we will investigate whether it is possible to reduce this in the future.

A big success in 2018 was the net Show & Social income, £397 and up from £195 in the prior year. I want to take this opportunity to thank both the committee for their fantastic work in organising these events and everyone who attended and supported the various FGA shows. It was wonderful that the Quiz Night could be reinstated this year and to raise enough money to donate half the profit to Keech Hospice and the excellent work that they do.

On a personal note, I want to thank everyone for their understanding that with a young family (children aged 5, 3 and 0) I have a restricted ability to get out and about in the evenings! Thank you to all those who make the effort to drop off and pick up the till from our house and even let me host committee meetings at home, to enable me to attend with a newborn baby! We definitely ought to focus more on growing those fruit and vegetables rather than growing our family...

Leonie Coverley  
Treasurer