

Dorset AGS Group

Chairman's address to AGM 4 March 2021

This address covers two years and so my remarks are not all relevant to this last year. However, in these unprecedented times, it serves to remind us what we can look forward to. We have a thriving Group – or we did have before the pandemic – and we fully expect crowds to reappear at our meetings once the menace is under control.

Our strength lies in exchange of news, plants and advice, and in the large number of Members who lend a hand at all times. I would like to thank especially those that keep this Group running so efficiently.

Thanks to David and Christine Hughes. Christine arranges our interesting programme of speakers that draws in visitors regularly and she lets us know every month by email what to expect. As Group Secretary, David has been keeping up with the admin, as well as running all our photographic competitions and giving us fascinating lectures. They host many of our speakers and their travels and enthusiasm for alpine plants and people everywhere has been invaluable.

Since many are home grown, we should here thank those speakers who charge us nothing for their time and effort.

Thanks to Graham Poynter who has supported me as Vice Chairman and who looks after our projector.

Thanks to Peter and Christine Dixon; Christine for being the cheerful welcome at all our events, for keeping in touch with all our members and keeping records; and Peter for keeping the accounts, negotiating with venues, anchoring our Zoom meetings and so much more. Thanks also to Peter Williams and Jess Chapman for scrutinising the accounts.

We have light suppers at our AGM (except this year – bring your own to the Zoom), our October 'open' meeting and mince pies at Christmas – thank you to Maureen and Shirley who organise this and to all those who help out each month serving refreshments.

We have a fabulous table display each month, testimony to the success of many growers in our midst – thank you all for bringing your plants in for us to enjoy and thank you to Sue Collins who sets it all out and counts the votes – no mean task given the number of plants.

We have regular plant sales, augmented recently by collections that have been given to us. Thanks to Gill Chudley, Chris Hughes, Ben Turner and all others who have helped in collecting and potting the plants.

Our raffle continues to supplement our funds and spreads plants around within the group. Thank you to Vivien for being raffle-ticket seller. We could do with a few more plants – the general idea was to bring a plant in and take another home.

We have a library of books on a range of genus and alpine topics for you to borrow – thank you to Claire Horsey for housing them and bringing them in each month.

We run two shows each year – our spring show in March and the Rocky Flower Show jointly with the Hampshire Group. Thanks to Gill Chudley who has taken on the organisation of the Spring show at the Allendale – we haven't been so organised for many years! Thanks to the Hampshire Group for their friendship and support – it has strengthened both groups.

We would like to run another group holiday as the last was so successful. (If someone would like to take that on, we would be very supportive!), botanising holidays are the source of most of our plant photography.

So, since our excellent local show a year ago, we have been reduced to Zoom meetings – including our AGM. One of the benefits of these gatherings is that we can call on speakers who would normally be beyond our reach and interact with many people from around the country and even overseas who are keen alpine gardeners.

With the better weather and the vaccination programme well under way, we shall be looking at ways that we can gather outside in gardens. We look forward to getting together again in person.

A big thank you to everyone, whatever you contribute, and generally for being a Member of this Group.

Caroline Seymour
Chairman