

WICKHAM MARKET & DISTRICT GARDENING CLUB

REPORT TO ANNUAL PARISH MEETING, 11th APRIL 2025

The club continues with a strong membership base of approximately 60 members meeting in Wickham Market Village Hall at 7.30 pm on the third Thursday of most months, where we welcome speakers on all sorts of garden related topics, hold a raffle & offer refreshments. In addition to our speaker meetings, we also hold an annual plant sale, our Autumn Show, organise a trip and hold two social events in the summer & at Christmas. Our current committee members are:

Josie Hopps – Chairman	Karen Edmonds – Secretary
Penny Jenkinson – Hon Treasurer	Brenda Claridge – Membership Secretary
Jill Balance	Debbie Barrett
Diana Bickerton	Simon Harrington – Rakes Progress
John Sculpher	Mary Sculpher

We have two vacancies on our committee presently.

At our April meeting we welcomed Ruth Goudy who gave a talk & demonstration on Container Gardening. Our annual plant sale in May was well supported with donations from our members. The funds generated help support the club in organising our yearly programme.

In June we heard from David Fryer, Ipswich Bonsai Society who also brought along some of his little trees and in July we visited Green Island Gardens in Colchester. We enjoyed Tea, Coffee & Cake on arrival, a guided tour & a light lunch following which members could explore the gardens again at their leisure. August saw us celebrating summer with our garden party held in one of our committee members gardens, the weather was kind, the food delicious and the wine plentiful. A great night was had by all.

September is a busy month for the committee with preparations for the Autumn Show held the 2nd Saturday. The committee is supported by additional volunteers during the weekend helping to set up on the Friday, acting as stewards & providing the committee & judges lunch. The Autumn Show was held in full this year. Sponsorship was better than the previous year, however the number of entries was down. The raffle proceeds held up well. Refreshments were popular, being provided by a long-standing club member and various Committee Members, as was the lunch for the Judges. The club made a small loss for the Show, due largely to the cost of renting the Hall, which has increased significantly in recent years.

October had us back in the hall with Lucy Skellorn 'My Family and other Irises' and 14 members also visited 'Fullers Mill' with 'Annette Hurt talking to us in November about 'Moving from chemical to natural control'. In December we held our Christmas Quiz with Fizz, Mulled Wine & Mince Pies.

Our January meeting was held via Zoom which allowed our speaker Richard Barnes "It's not all about plants" to be sourced from further afield and our members could remain at home in the cold, wet weather.

The club returned to the month of February this year for the AGM where we saw our long-standing chairman John Sculpher step down after a significant number of years as chairman and hand over to Josie Hopps.

Our speaker for March was Peter Skeggs-Gooch from Thorncroft Clematis, Chelsea Gold Medal winners since 2007 giving us 'A Complete Guide to Clematis'.

We are always keen to attract new members from the village and the surrounding area. Anyone interested in learning a little more about gardening is most welcome to come and join us and Club membership is neither expensive nor in any sense exclusive. We make no charge for interested visitors for the first meeting, so we encourage new members to come along and give us a try.

We produce a monthly newsletter called *Rake's Progress* that all members receive. This has reports on recent activities and details of future attractions, together with news of local events, gardening tips and weather reports. The Club is affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society.

We can be contacted by email wmgardenclub27@gmail.com or via our website <http://wmgardenclub.org.uk/>