

**SOUTH MOLTON IN BLOOM MEETING  
AMORY CENTRE MARCH 7th 2022 10.30am**

**WELCOME SH**

Sue welcomed everyone and especially welcomed our two new members Sally and Kim. Thanks to Sally who has already got stuck in to doing some weeding at Liverot Walk.

**APOLOGIES**

Jane Lucas, Will Locke, Helen Waller and Becca Brewer

**PREVIOUS MINUTES**

December 6th 2021 minutes all agreed. Actions all carried out except still waiting for DAVID WORDEN to chase an answer to our letter re clearing the gutters of weeds before judging. **Action: David Worden**  
Elaine said she had enough foil etc.

**COORDINATOR'S REPORT SH**

**Please bear with me this report is unusually long as I feel having missed a meeting in January, I need to update you all on everything that has been happening and update the new people too.**

This year we need to build on last year and add more and go that extra mile to win The Champions of Champions cup. I am 100% positive that we can win gold again but it is the extra bit on top that we need to do to have an impact ...just like last year when we moved with the judge from Liverot to Squires Court ...the wow factor suddenly engaged him ! WE NEED TO BE DOING THAT WOW FACTOR ALL AROUND THE TOWN....but still with the emphasis on environment, community, horticulture, recycling, fundraising and we need to flood the town with the agreed colours of purple, white and silver, adding wellies and tiaras into the mix.

The shop windows are sorted by way of the front window competition which we are combining with the Jubilee weekend.

The Pannier Market is sorted by way of Elaine's hard work with the schools, Eastleigh etc and Bridget.

We now have permission from Andrew to put up proper display boards with tamper proof fronts both where they are now and also down the bottom of the market on the right hand side. We can therefore display our photos, sponsor posters etc without them getting damaged.

***Unanimous vote agreed to spend money on these***

Building on last year, Mary and Julie have already reassessed the tyres in Central Park and replanted many with roses. The two raised beds have survived and Henry wants to continue and have another go at his succulent and cactus bed. CCTV is on the agenda for this month's council meeting. Elaine and I have planted the heart of beech whips on the bank and I am waiting to hear about Dawn's tree from Devon Wildlife Trust and some trees that NDDC may be buying us. A beautiful aerial photo appeared of the heart on FB and the man who took it has agreed to do some photos for us.

***Dawn has yet to hear about the tree.***

The judge has recommended we have another go at Pride in Parks Competition and we get the result of last year's competition on March 24th. Elaine has secured some real oak window frames which will form two raised beds (when screwed together) to add in the park ..again with permission from Andrew. They then form 9 different squares at the top to plant. We were contemplating painting tyres and at the farm where we got all this stuff for our art/recycling display, Elaine and I noticed that their tyres were painted and the paint had lasted without deterioration so they are going to let us know what the paint is.

Liverot walk .. Sally kindly helped Bridget and I weed there this weekend...it needs a lot more planting to look incredible. SW water has taken up two of the rainbow circles and built us two more at the other end. If anyone is enthusiastic to carry on around the edge with the semi circles, please do not let us stop you ! Also Keith (Julie's husband) has built us some wooden planters as requested by Bridget so we can pop some fantastic climbers to go along the fence.

Squires Court .. Dawn has started weeding this but it needs loads more work. Kacper and Samuel wanted to take responsibility for the other end of the bank and offered to tidy up the edges too but they work full time and it is difficult for them to find time. March 20th is booked in at the moment. I would like to propose that we use the chap who did the raised beds in the park to spend three days doing our heavy work ie rotovating, building more beds and preparing verges for a sum of £450. This would get the heavy work out of the way and save our bodies, as I know we have all hurt ourselves in one way or another especially at Squires Court.

**Unanimous vote agreed to spend £450 with Marc Belton to get the heavy work done.**

Squires Court are going in for the Business Award, as are the two pubs and Quince by the way.. The more the better, as it raises the overall impression of South Molton in Bloom.

Obviously we need to maintain and improve all the beds in East St, North Rd, New Rd and of course the two new precinct planters which by the way Stephen is going to help us install on Wednesday morning.

Thanks to Elaine, we have lots of extra planters , a wooden gate, a plough, a wood chipper, a sit on mower and we have bought some feeding troughs and milk churns. Elaine has also acquired three bikes and a metal bed.

The plan is to make a farming display draped with flowers around the tree near The Stags sheep pens, where thanks to Julie and Keith we have a water butt next to it. The three bikes are going on the enhancement again draped with flowers. The milk churns are going to be fixed in some way in front of The Amory Centre. Also Sainsburys has given us permission to use their green which is monitored by CCTV and there is a meeting with the managers this week.

We need to weed and update the four raised beds and we need to maintain the bed near Lorry Wash too.

In the Courtyard Garden here .. us and The Dementia Group who now meet here are going to be revamping it. Harriet who runs this group, Margaret and I have already pressure washed it and we have bought loads of grey and purple pots plus Julie has lots of silver ones too.

The Medical Centre is looking so much better with the planters outside and the little beds at the front and again thanks to Keith we have a water butt there too. Keith is going to put a hanging wall garden there for me to put some succulents in.

I think by focusing on brightening the Medical and Amory Centres and The Enhancement, we also need to focus on Church Walk and add far more colour. Dawn keeps an eye on this area and has the key to the Welcome Fryer for watering. Julie's stumps add colour to that end of town and I know she has even more plans this year. The area opposite Market vets we can now do too.

South Street is an area that we have not addressed and due to the narrowness of the street, it makes it quite difficult, unless anyone has any ideas?

Then there is the Gateway Pathway off Station Rd, where we will probably add some more beds and do the wild flower meadow around the trees.

The arboretum being organised by The Council has ground to a halt at the moment.

Lastly the Memorial Area is being totally redone, as Sue and I managed to secure £2000 from The Royal British Legion solely for that purpose. Elaine again needs to be thanked .. this group would be nothing without her .. she has arranged, as you will have seen from FB this weekend, for Alan to use his digger to churn over all the stubborn roots and so that on top of what Elaine, Margaret, Sue and I have done, means it is now ready for raking and planting. This area will look amazing with £2000 and another £200 that has come our way specifically for the Memorial area. We have also planned for an arborist to tidy the arch going through to the cemetery.

The area behind the Amory Centre is still to be maintained and the new bed is doing well.. Jane is going to plant some seeds for wildflowers there too. ( I asked Glenys whether she will be needing any help with the library gardens and Glenys said No but if she did she would ask. I also asked if she would be sticking to our colour scheme and Glenys said maybe because she did like purple and white and also that she had £500 in the library account.)

We also may be doing bus stops but that is to be confirmed with Andrew.

We have also gained £2499 from North Devon District Council and part of what we need to do for this is seed some verges around town especially at the entrances. SM Tool Hire has agreed to lend us equipment for free as sponsorship..so we can hire rotovators and scarifiers. Julie has also identified a bed that we could probably plant ..

In addition to all this money, I have also managed to secure £2000 from a company called Condate in South Molton in return for making their name better known in the area. As their business is about producing all the gas for SM, it is environmentally friendly so in tune with The RHS aims. They would like a bed with their plaque in and so we have agreed that we either do a raised bed in front of the hospital which is their first choice and I am working on getting permission or we do one opp me which is second choice.

Do you remember we were going to do a Picnic in the Park for all our sponsors? Well I've been brainstorming this idea with various members in the group in between meetings and so we are going to hold a do up in the Assembly Hall on Friday April 29th 6/9pm. We will provide a free finger buffet for all our sponsors who will be invited formally and we will offer a bar which Elaine can organise with Bray Valley. We will then extend this to the general public for a charge of £15 and now to the exciting bit .. we will have two guest speakers 1. Darren from Condate who will speak about 'The Renewable Energy Secret in South Molton' and Kacper from Quince will talk about 'The Importance of Bees and How to Encourage Them'. We can hold a raffle again and I can use it as an opportunity to secure more sponsorship.

Lastly a few odd things :

Mervyn has given us £300 for a shed .. we will be looking at a steel shed and we can put it on YMCA land .. Andrew is trying to secure us insurance. SMBA have put us on their insurance to save us money but that is public liability, so we cannot buy the shed until we get insurance.

Matthew Tapp has agreed to update our website for free and he is going in for the RHS award.

Big thanks to Gail and Darrelyn for doing fundraising at the end of last year , the calendars and the stalls were a huge success. Thanks too to Helen for all the hard work she put into the calendars and also our banners. The council has our banner to go up above Church Walk and they will put up as soon as they can and Day Lewis paid for it.

This year Anne and Debbie are kindly both going to do plant sales again.

The Bingo night was a huge success and we all must congratulate Elaine. I do not think one of us believed it would make much and it was overwhelmingly successful making £1147.59 profit but we will be banking £1277. I think Elaine deserves a round of applause and we will arrange another one in the Autumn after judging. *Group applauded Elaine and discussion followed about possibility of a Quiz night first at the Coaching Inn and then a Bingo night to be organised again by Elaine but neither before judging.*

Lastly Lady Arran has agreed to be our Patron and is tremendously supportive of us. And Mole Valley have agreed to sponsor us another £75.

PHEW now everyone knows what has been agreed so far but to do all this we need active and enthusiastic gardeners who can devote time especially over the next few months leading up to judging in July. If anyone knows of anyone who could join us , please let us know.

**Margaret Chester proposed a round of applause for all the work Sue does behind the scenes as she works so hard.**

*Discussion following points raised in the Coordinator's Report*

*Kirstie suggested we do one of the circular beds on the enhancement in the colours of the Ukraine flag ..**unanimous vote for this***

*Dawn suggested Devon Flag and discussion ensued as to where and if we get agreement to do the hospital bank and put the raised bed there, it was agreed to do it there.*

*Many of the group insisted that they did not want to get involved with the Arboretum, as it was a council not a SMIB project. Sue put it to a vote and everyone voted against planting and watering the trees.*

*The group agreed we should get some tools to put in our shed for general use. Sally said she has some spare tools and Kirstie has a wheelbarrow which as we have two already, we said we would plant that too.*

*It was agreed to ask an expert about planting wildflower seeds **Action: SH to talk to Ian at Quince***

*Kirstie came up with what the group thought was a good idea to use wraps for the bus stops with images from the Queen's reign and also flowers etc*

## **Treasurer's Report**

You have all had the AGM report on 11th Feb and so very little has changed on expenditure except money has been spent on art materials and bingo materials and prizes for Elaine and we have bought lots of summer bulbs, pots for The Courtyard Garden and wildflower seeds which Elaine has spotted as bargains in BM Bargains.

The Cash Balance as it stands today is £18 and the Bank Balance is £7177.80

The biggest change has been the income with Sue raising £2499 from NDDC and £2000 from Condate and £65 for the banner from Day Lewis Expenditure has been £654.46 Next month we will give a far more detailed scenario but this meeting needed to focus on plans for the next few months.

## **REGULAR GARDENING DAYS**

The group agreed to make every Wednesday a gardening day, meeting in the Central Car Park at 10am and agreeing there who would do what with suggestions on Gold Diggers where needed doing. Gold Diggers whatsapp only to be used to spread the news of what needed doing where and gardening days in addition to the Wednesdays .. no need to reply if going though ..just turn up. Weekends would also be done ..suggested alternate Sat and Sun .. again to be confirmed on Gold Diggers but maybe starting with March 20th. This Wednesday would be the exception as people would meet on the Enhancement. Elaine and Sue will be there from 8.30am as Stephen has agreed to help install the new planters.

### **JUBILEE WEEKEND**

Friday we are to do a stall in the market .. offering wellies that are planted ...but on condition we can get enough wellies. Kirstie suggested approaching Sainsburys. We are going to do our specially written song Friday 4/6pm but it is dependent on there being a band.

### **FRONT GARDEN COMPETITION**

Julie has spoken to Blue/Orange Signs and sorted the signs for winners' windows and she has sorted out some free prizes. Flyers are up but we are to do leaflet drops. **Action: Kirstie to speak to Slimming World about a joint drop or Kirstie happy to do some drops. David is happy to print.** Shops being sorted this week **Action SH** Judges arranged i.e. previous winners, Lady Arran and Christina Williams, Gold Medal Winner at Chelsea Flower Show.

### **ARTWORK/RECYCLING**

Discussed throughout meeting so left as running out of time

### **AOB**

Dawn raised repair of Central Park Entrances ...Sue S said council had a pot of money specifically for the Park **Action: SH to ask Andrew to repair**

Elaine mentioned signs about us winning on signs into South Molton .. said Andrew had agreed only to three ...group disappointed .. Sue said she had agreed to clean signs but only on those where a winner sign was attached.

