

WINSHAM OPEN GARDENS

Well, what a fantastic day that turned out to be!

We sold an amazing 286 tickets and from start to finish everything appeared to go like clockwork, even the weather was perfect. No rain and just enough sun for visitors to bide their time and enjoy a cream tea, bowl of strawberries or jacket potato and a pint whilst admiring all the hard work that the gardeners had put in.



The village was awash with smiling faces and folks generally enjoying the opportunity to be out and about chatting to people again. Throughout the day the Covid rules were being adhered to but in a subtle enough way so as not to put a dampener on proceedings, but they still allowed people to feel safe.

In total there were 17 gardens open, all varying in size and style but all with something of interest for the visitor. Water features large & small, ponds stocked & unstocked. Statues, sculptures & sundials. Gnomes, fairies & fancy wind-chimes. Immaculate lawns, wildlife areas, shady slopes & sunny sites, with superb views. Rabbits, ducks, dogs & chickens, many real and wandering around, others simply artistic impressions. Lots of pots & hanging baskets all bursting with colour. We had it all from the quintessential cottage garden to a multi acre arboretum but the thing they all had in common was that their owners had been battling with the crazy weather of late frosts, drought & un-seasonally high temperatures to make them look their best for everyone to enjoy.



The gardens were dotted around a 2-mile circular walk and although there were a few disabled parking spots scattered around the village most opted to do the loop by foot. To avoid congestion visitors



using the main carpark, by the football pitches (the use of which we thank the Winsham

Recreational Trust for), were asked to do the loop in alternate directions and those using the paddock carpark, very kindly supplied by the McCallum family, started at garden no.5.



The various scarecrows, plethora of pom-poms and occasional window art were also the topic of many a conversation. Visitors were choosing their favourites and could be heard commenting on how life-like Bet the Vet looked and expressing thanks that they weren't being operated on by those on our drive!!

Our 286 ticket purchases came from far and wide; one family had travelled from Guildford another had been held up for an hour of so on the M5 due to an accident. David, the "assistant gardener" from the Old Yardhouse greeted people from Salisbury & Taunton as well as more local villages such as Beaminster, Chard & Crewkerne and was amazed at the "tremendous outside interest". Bev, owner of garden no1, said it was "lovely to discuss gardens and plants to our heart's content". Colin, father of the cream tea specialists at Church Farmhouse, welcomed over 200 visitors who "brought us a great deal of joy as they drank in the garden and supped lots of cups of tea! We absolutely loved it."

Peter & Janice of Oak Gates had fun attempting to answer some highly technical queries about roses and their names and being told by several visitors that their Hosta display was the best ever!! They also amused the smaller visitors with a hidden dinosaur!

Another of our gardeners Angela Brooke-Smith said "it was a pleasure to be part of it... I really enjoyed the day".

Janet Smart, whose garden was the only one that needed to be driven to, said "it really was a lovely day and a number of newcomers to the village had made their way up to Hazelwood which was great".

Having wondered round the gardens Rita Miller emailed me to say, "I thoroughly enjoyed my day, and I am hoping it is going to be an annual event!!!!" Well Rita I'm not sure about an annual event but we're hopeful we can do it biannually operating in alternate years to the street fair. So, if there are any gardeners out there who'd like to open their garden in 2023 then please get in contact with me - there's nothing like a bit of forward planning!



The event raised £1635 - £500 for the Horticultural Society (which will go towards the funding of the marquee for the annual show) and £1155 for Alzheimer's Research UK. Of that £1135 ticket sales accounted for £715 the other £420 was made up of very generous donations from Deb & Trevor Harris' cream tea sales, the Village Shop, our refreshment & bric-a-brac sales, Liz Copas' plant sale, The Bell Inn, Janet

Smart's plant sales, Peter & Janice's bric-a-brac sales, Alison & John Llewellyn's strawberries & cream sales and finally the £50 won by the "Gardeners" quiz team that week at The Bell was also added to the pot along with a generous £20 from the Washbornes.

Finally, I'd like to thank all of you who bought tickets, opened your gardens, made scarecrows, decorated the village with pompoms, sold your wares on the street, provided refreshments, helped with the car parking and generally joined together as a community to create such an enjoyable & memorable event.

Debbie Murray-Snook (Higher Wynyard).



