

Chiseldon Gardening and Countryside Club Report for 2019

The club had a successful year with membership numbers reaching their highest level for quite a few years as well as ending with a healthy bank account. This was very pleasing given that the club was in real danger of folding only five or six years ago.

The club's programme for the year included talks on a diverse range of topics mostly with a gardening or countryside theme. It is difficult to pick out favourites but some of the most memorable included one given by Dr Jemma Batten on the Marlborough Downs – Space for Nature project and others covered the life of Richard Jefferies as well as the botanic travels of Charles Darwin. Alongside providing an interesting programme, the club aims to be friendly and welcome visitors to any of its events.

The club organised three visits last year which were well attended and most enjoyable. The one to the Cotswold Farm Garden will be hard to beat with the very friendly host, access to the house as well as the garden and being encouraged to pick figs!

On the social side, the BBQ scheduled for June was rained off but, instead, a very successful "American Supper" (bring and share) in the Church Hall followed by a beetle drive made for a fun and friendly evening. This was so well attended that the committee felt that this should be the model for future summer socials, either inside or outside.

In July, the club had a stall at the Chiseldon School Fête which was a new experience. Although a small profit was made, the aim was to promote the club and in this it was successful. We were made to feel welcome and our participation was very much appreciated. It was the club's intention to attend again in 2020 but, with the Covid-19 situation, this might not happen.

The November AGM was followed by a hands-on session making Christmas table decorations from local foliage, twigs, berries, cones, etc., and adding candles. The individuality of the finished decorations was astounding and it would have been very difficult to judge the best one. The year was rounded off by our Christmas Social at the Three Trees Farm Shop and Restaurant and as always was thoroughly enjoyed.

Finally, and when the lockdown situation is over, anyone reading this who would like to visit the club and attend an evening session will be most welcome. The club usually meets on the second Wednesday of every month at the Holy Cross Church Hall just off Butts Road at 7.30pm and the meeting usually ends around 9pm after everyone has enjoyed tea or coffee and homemade cake. For details, feel free to call Tony Henderson (Chair) on 01672 841444 or Richard Matthews (Secretary) on 01793 740022.