

**ASBY GARDENING CLUB - CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT -
May 2018 to May 2019.**

I've learnt so much about gardening this year! Not just from the knowledgeable speakers and the variety of visits we have undertaken, but from you members.

Asby Gardening Club came into being in May 2018 after a very well attended open meeting, a year gone by already; a core group was formed & from that Maggie & Roy volunteered to become Secretary & Treasurer respectively. Membership charge was set at £10 per year, with Jackie Lambert becoming our first member. Membership has risen steadily over the year to the current total of 25, with several members who live outside of Asby Parish joining the Club.

We have held events at different times of the day & week, to allow as many members to attend as possible and to experiment with what works, but also to remain flexible. Our very first event in June was to Gresgarth Hall in north Lancashire to visit these stunningly beautiful gardens; July was an open garden event at Maggie's in glorious weather, we saw how she & Dave are developing different areas of their land, including the newly planted orchard. Our next event was a visit to Eggleston Hall Gardens, the Secret Garden of the North, near Barnards Castle, another beautiful, interesting & unusual place.

The summer agenda continued with a very successful open garden at the home of club member, Val Reynolds, in Church Brough. Val opened her garden to all comers, providing refreshment & a lot of information on her garden with so many differing areas. This event raised a large amount of money towards AGC funds. Later in September we held a Plant & Produce Sale at the front of the pub, with very kind support from Amanda & Dave who also provided delicious bacon sandwiches in the pub; this sale also raised a good amount towards our funds - both of these fund raising events meant that financially the club was in a reasonably good position for the winter programme when more costs would be incurred, for the hire of the Village Hall & charges for speakers.

The first of our winter talks was a presentation from club members Maureen & Lawrence Wood about their recent visit to see the 'Wildflowers of South Africa', a wonderful trip with lots of beautiful photographs. The Christmas get together was a very informal social with a fun quiz, mulled wine, nibbles and lots to learn, a very convivial gathering providing a chance to get to know and chat to fellow members. In February Hilary Wilson imparted lots of apple know how, in her 'Growing Apples in Cumbria' talk & demonstration, whilst in March Julia Pigott's presentation about 'Gardening for Bees' was fascinating, telling us that bees and gardening were inseparable & giving us many ideas on how to encourage pollinators into our gardens. The main message I took away was to leave an area of garden wild and untended, very easy to do!

With the lighter evenings in April we went out to Weasdale Nursery near Newbiggin on Lune, it is one of the highest nurseries in the country where they specialise in growing trees at altitude. Early in May we had another evening visit to Vista Veg in Crosby Ravensworth. The cooperative run a veg box scheme which grows vegetables and distributes them weekly to almost 200 customers, a daunting task! Both visits were enlightening and impressive.

There is one more visit planned, early in June, which is part of this year's report as it replaces the presentation which had to be cancelled in November. Emma Greenshaw was going to

tell us about her flower growing business 'Fellside Flowers', instead we are going to her grounds in Long Marton to be given the 'live tour' by Emma.

You can read about most of these events in the 'blog' on the Gardening Club section of Asby Parish web site, also on our page is a 'hints & tips section', the latest newsletter (not updated since July I'm afraid), details of membership and contact details for the core group. There is also a link to a forum for members to ask questions & other members to reply, unfortunately this isn't currently working as the various software elements on the site hasn't have an internal conflict; but this may be rectified at some point! Asby Parish Messaging Service reminds those registered to receive messages (not just members) about forthcoming events in a timely way, however the most common means of disseminating information has been by e mail direct to members. We have been fortunate to welcome many non members to our events, for a fee of £3 per visit.

I have big thanks to give to Roy & Maggie for their ideas, hard work and support this year, and also to Jackie Frankish & Andrew Frisby for their contribution earlier this Gardening Club year. To Geoff Johnson for his help and guidance with all things 'technical' and to everyone who has helped in any way at all, serving refreshments, setting up, opening their gardens, sharing transport and to all of you for supporting the club as members.

I hope you've enjoyed this year as much as I have.

Gwen Hadrill
Chairman