

BIDEFORD GARDENER'S CLUB



SPRING & SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2026

**ALL MEETINGS NOW AT
BIDEFORD BAPTIST CHURCH HALL,
MILL STREET, BIDEFORD
PLEASE PARK IN PUBLIC CAR PARKS**

DETAILS OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Chairman -	Mr. Dave Hopkins Tel: (01271) 345246
Secretary -	Mr. Mike Avis, 19 Moreton Avenue, Bideford. EX39 3AY
Treasurer	Tel: (01237) 475914. Mobile 07710 454230 Email mikeavis44@gmail.com
Social Sec.-	Pauline Spencer (01237) 423587 for trips
Website -	www.bidefordgardenersclub.co.uk
Email	info@bidefordgardenersclub.co.uk

SECRETARY'S PAGE

Well Friends, During 2025 we held regular monthly meetings went on visits numbers are improving with new friends joining the club and indeed bringing others with them too. We have been engaging good speakers for each meeting and have had better attendance. In place of the September meeting we had an invite for a Cream Tea and garden visit at the home of members Mike & Pauline Wright and what a superb visit and a fantastic Cream Tea too with sconces that were to die for. We were more than happy to donate to their chosen charities for the excellent visit. Talks in October with Caradoc Doy on Preparing your garden for Winter and in November for the first afternoon meeting we had a regular speaker Jeremy Wilson with a superb talk on Tea, its origins and cultivation. No meeting in December but a very welcome return to the Crealock Arms, Littleham for a Christmas Lunch. In April we were awarded another £500 from the Bideford Town Council which along with the £1200 from Bideford Bridge Trust, ensures we can run the Show and events.

Meetings or events will now be every month including January for the AGM and February and in the afternoons with speakers and trips booked for the start of the year with newsletter and website updates made as this occurs. July will also be a speaker and the Show Preparation Meeting and we really do need a lot more helpers from the club. See out list of meetings and events that follow in this issue.

There are things to look forward to for us all and this year's 58th Summer Open Show will now be on 16th August 2026. If we could run our own refreshments in the afternoon it would be great as it is a much needed and excellent income for the show. However it is a lot of work and Carol and her staff at Pannier Pantry will provide this facility along with doing the show lunch for judges and stewards.

Your membership therefore now restarts following the deferred AGM in March 2025 at the same cost of £5.00. Make all payments to Bideford Gardener's Club and not to myself as bank charges are incurred by both club and me for such transactions. Use of the Post Office is also more costly and cheque paying in is also more time consuming having to fill out the envelope before taking a cheque to pay in. I think we should be looking for alternative methods of banking in the very near future.

If you wish to pay your subscription by bank transfer the details are as follows: Account name – Bideford Gardeners Club, sort code 40-10-17 and account 71302450. I have paid mine this way and it works correctly. What's more it will save the club money and I don't have to go to the bank or post office. Just one point regarding this is please let me know by email or a call to say its paid as the statement doesn't necessarily tell me who paid it.

We look forward to giving a big welcome back to all members and we hope all will continue their or renew their membership and help rebuild the levels by bringing

friends to joins as well. Thankfully we intend to continue and are bringing in good speakers so please support these events and we start with the talk in February with a return by Caradoc Doy, this time about the Plant Hunters & Pioneers of Devon. In March after a very long gap, it's Paul Rendell (Mr Dartmoor) with Wild Flowers of Dartmoor. We now have the right speaker for April in David Usher, formerly head gardener at Hestercombe to pre-empt the visit in June to the gardens. We will advertise the show in The Link Magazine but rely on Facebook and the Website to attract new members, which I have to say along with word of mouth is the best method. I'll be putting postings in Westward Ho! and Bideford Community pages on Facebook as often as I can so check there for details. The details are all on the club website but of course not all members have internet access. I would hope that members that do use the internet can pass on the details to their friends who normally attend and encourage them to come along for what we hope will prove a really attractive set of events.

Sharon Elliott looks after the provision of the teas at the meetings but we need some help to cover the afternoons and liaise with Sharon when she is working and not available to bring the milk and biscuits. Dave Hopkins will run the Raffle at the meetings as well and we count on you to bring along some prizes for that. Pauline Spencer acts as our Social Secretary, taking a burden off myself and has the role of organising speakers and trips and is doing a superb job with booking the speakers for our meetings and getting Raffle prizes for the Show.

We realise there has been reluctance to come out, of an evening but we have addressed that with afternoon meetings throughout the year and in a warm environment. As long as you have been a member and are rejoining you will get the benefits of any trips as it is you that supported the club and enhanced our funds over the years and this is our way of thanking you for that.

Best regards, Mike Avis, Secretary & Editor.

MEETING / EVENTS DETAILS

All meetings are now at Bideford Baptist Church Hall access from Mill Street or Hill Garden Close, Postcode EX39 2RS. Please use Car Parks away from the hall and access on foot unless disabled access is required in which case a limited number of parking spaces can be provided.

If coming in from Mill Street the church is set back from the street and door for access to the hall is reached by walking up to the right of the main church through the gateway and immediately on your left. I have our own key and open up to get the heating on for our comfort. There will not be any use of the entrance in the church as other meetings will be being held in the lower room.

TUESDAY 10th February 2.30pm – Plant Hunters & Pioneers, Caradoc Doy.
He came at short notice to give the talk in October and it was a very good

presentation that afternoon, so we've booked him again to the this talk on the plant hunters of the Victorian era from the major Devon nurseries in particular that of Robert Veitch who had nurseries in Exeter and Chelsea.

TUESDAY 10th March 2.30pm PAUL RENDELL – WILD PLANTS OF DARTMOOR

Paul is a Dartmoor Guide with many years of taking walking tours of the moor and always does a great illustrated talk with top class photography of the moor. He is a full time guide for groups and an historian of the past things on Dartmoor.

TUESDAY 7th April 2.30pm (One week early) David Usher, Hestercombe Gardens Taunton

David was the former Head Gardener there before he retired and will be giving a talk on it to pre-empt our visit in June.

Tuesday 7th July 2.30pm (one week early) Steve & Dawn Morgan – Passion Flowers and Show Preparation Meeting The time for the preparation takes a small mount of the meeting so we have Steve & Dawn Morgan who have been on Gardener's World in 2024 with their Passionflower collection they have at Allenstyle Fremington. This garden is open under the National Gardens Scheme and whilst quite small is full of interesting plants including their collection of Passionflowers both hardy and tender ones and tropical plants for growing in North Devon.

TRIPS – Summer 2026 in place of normal meetings

Sunday 10th May – Hartland Abbey and Gardens with a guided tour of the house included. The Club will fund the coach costs, but members will pay the £12.00 admission per person for the gardens. Guests will be welcomed at £25 each including admission to gardens. Entrance to the house is £2.50 which you pay individually on the day showing your group entry garden tickets Depart Bideford 1.30pm from near Victoria Park as usual and leave there at 5pm to return. Please check on the day but The Pill Car Park is free on Sundays unless TDC change the rules to make more money.

Sunday 21st June – Hestercombe House and Gardens, Taunton.

Depart Bideford near Victoria Park at 10.00 am and pickup also at Tesco Rose Lane Barnstaple 10.30am leaving there at 5pm for the return. Lovely House and Gardens and headquarters of Devon & Somerset Fire Service for 60 years. Costs Members £14 per person for admission and £30.00 for guests for travel and admission.

SUNDAY 16th AUGUST – 58th OPEN FLOWER SHOW.

The Schedules will be largely unchanged from 2025 other than Floral Art subjects; the new schedules will be available for the May Meeting. Staging of exhibits is from 7.30pm to 9.30pm on Saturday 9th August and on Sunday 15th

August from 7.00am to 10.00am. Show lunches will be provided for judges as always by Pannier Pantry and we also offer the facility for exhibitors travelling so far to exhibit and it's really appreciated by them. Our opener will be announced nearer the date. If you have trophies from the show can they be returned very soon so I know who to chase up before the show as we seem to have mislaid a few with the breaks in the shows. Schedules will be available for the May Meeting and will also be online or sent to existing Exhibitors.

RAFFLES / COMPETITIONS – Flower of the Month

At all these events, we shall be having a raffle at £1.00 per strip. We welcome prizes to be added to these raffles and of course, Raffle prizes for the Summer Show, which Pauline Spencer will co-ordinate and we hope for a superb set of items to attract the public to participate. Please try and donate a nice prize for the Show Raffle to reduce the need to buy in as many as before.

All meetings will have the usual Flower of the Month competition, and we welcome entries for this but again this appears to have dropped off a lot. It's just a bit of fun to bring along a seasonal or even out of season flower from you home.

REFRESHMENTS AT MEETINGS - With the lack of numbers and the wish to get away early from the afternoon meetings there haven't been many Teas or Coffee at meetings in 2025 and that is a shame as it gives a chance to socialise with new members and get to know them and their interests regarding plants they grow. Some meetings Sharron Elliott cannot make due to her work pattern as a carer but if that is the case then we can always bring the items to make a cuppa and some biscuits. The new venue has an excellent kitchen and servery hatch so much better than at the old hall.

CLUB WEBSITE

The website itself has been developed and maintained by myself using Serif Web Plus8 which I have for business purposes but have been having some difficulty recently due to changing protocols for uploading of the changed content. Our webhost IONOS 1&1 have been helpful and I hope this has now been resolved. This makes it compatible with Smart Phones and Tablets. We also have a Facebook page running too and link to Bideford and Westward Ho! Community pages as well. One thing it does provide is a live source of information that I can update with any changes of details on speakers, events, trips etc. It is far more suitable than the newsletters we issue but of course they will still be available for everyone and they are available on the website at a touch of a button to download, read and print. The website is accessed from www.bidefordgardenersclub.co.uk. Make sure you type that in correctly. This is a short newsletter to cover the start of the year and will be updated after the AGM with a Spring/Summer edition giving details of other Meeting, Trips and Events.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

These are now due once again and remain at the rate of £5.00 and cover two people at the same address. As mentioned earlier in this issue we try and avoid as much postal cost as possible so if we can send your newsletter by email or if you can download from the club website www.bidefordgardenerclub.co.uk then we save quite a bit and it's quicker to get the information. You can pay direct into the club bank account, details in the opening pages and repeated here.

Account name – Bideford Gardeners Club, Sort code 40-10-17 Account Number 71302450

FINAL NOTES

You are more than welcome to bring guests to any of the normal club meetings, we do now ask for a £2.00 admission charge at normal meetings in the hall for casual guests and of course would waive this should they become members, which we hope will be the case. Thankfully with continued support from Bideford Bridge Trust, with £1200 in the Autumn and £500 from Bideford Town Council in April the club is really buoyant and able to engage good speakers and run the trips for our members in some cases without charge for the travel, which makes it a very good club to belong to. It may also be pertinent to now think of reinvesting some of our static funds into a money market account with HSBC like we had before the interest rates plummeted. With reasonable rates now it could well offset the bank charges we now incur however the AGM held this over at present.

We have speakers already booked for the Autumn and Winter as you will see on the website if you have access to that. Saul Walker is in September and he has been organiser of Chelsea Flower Show and for October we have Sue Minter who does Gardening talks on Saga Cruises, November still needs to be confirmed and for December we hope to have Christmas Floral Art.

As a final note to many new members, thanks for joining us after Covid like many clubs we held back on events, trips and curtailed meetings but in the last year we have gone back to holding monthly events throughout the year. It will mostly be an indoor meeting at our new venue with a speaker, or a trip to somewhere we know will be popular. And for the first time since Covid we had a Club Christmas Lunch so we are moving forward and not stagnating. We wish you a very Happy New Year and a warm welcome and hope you will find the Club very friendly and informative. It is your club we as club officers only try to arrange events and meetings to suit you all. Suggestions are always very welcome and it is these that have resulted in the trips and the speakers we have this year. Bring your friends along and we are sure they will enjoy it too. For £5.00 per year there can't be much better value for money.

Mike Avis,
Editor & Secretary.