

WARWICK HORTICULTURAL AND ALLOTMENT SOCIETY:

Warwick Horticultural & Craft Show, held on 28th/29th August 2022

Court House & Pageant Garden, Warwick

Supported by a Community Grant from Warwick Town Council

The **Warwick Horticultural & Allotment Society's Annual Show**, which has been running annually for almost 80 years, was renamed in 2022 as the **Warwick Horticultural & Craft Show** to indicate more clearly to the general public that it is more than just a specialist meeting for keen horticulturalists, but rather is a family day-out event, and this hopefully should attract more visitors. Apart from a cancellation in 2020 due to the pandemic, the Show has been held in the Court House Ballroom since 2017 over the August Bank Holiday weekend, along with marquees and gazebos in the Pageant Garden providing refreshments, plant sales and craft stalls from a variety of small local businesses. There is also a Tombola stall with an excellent range of prizes for both adults and children, donated by local companies and individuals.

The success of the Show is very weather-dependent as poor weather very much reduces the footfall from passing visitors. Fortunately, 2022 saw fine weather throughout, and the new arrangement of 21 gazebos and tents forming a 'craft village', rather than one tent and two large marquees as used in previous years, was much more attractive and encouraged visitors to browse and stop for a snack and a drink. For the first time in 2022, the WHAS also ran its own licensed beer tent selling local craft ales and cider, and there was musical entertainment over one lunchtime. This was very popular and hopefully can be repeated in future years.

Facilities and contractor costs have soared several-fold over the years that the Show has been run at this location, and the WHAS is very grateful to Warwick Town Council for its support over a number of Shows, during which the event has become an established feature in the events calendar for Warwick. With limited Community funding being available, the plan for 2023 is to make the Show more self-financing, hopefully with some commercial sponsorship, although in the current financial climate sponsorship is by no means easy to obtain.

With good weather, the 2022 Show was a financial success, contributing almost £600 to the Society's funds. This is the best result since 2017, which was an exceptionally hot and sunny weekend. The WHAS is a not-for-profit organisation, and all monies raised through our activities are fed back into educational talks, visits and other events held through most of the year, so the amount raised is most welcome. Details of the Society's 2023 programme can be found on the WHAS website, www.whasociety.org.

Around 300 visitors saw the Show in the Ballroom, with many more calling in to browse the stalls and displays in the Pageant Garden. There were 222 Show entries in 68 Classes covering floral art, flowers, vegetables, fruit, cakes and jams, and this is a significant increase over previous years. The Floral Art section included a special open Class to celebrate the HM the Queen's jubilee year. We are still finding it difficult to attract many children's entries, even though there are 10 entry Classes aimed specifically at 4 to 7-year and 8 to 11-year age ranges, with cash prizes, trophies and certificates to be won. We should also like to gain more entries for our flagship Group entry Class, the WHAS Growers' Challenge, for which a first prize of up to £100 is awarded depending on the number of entries (there were only three in 2022).

Trophies were awarded on the Monday afternoon by the Mayor of Warwick, Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi, who is President of the WHAS. The Silver Challenge Cup for gaining the most points in the Show was won by a WHAS Member, Nils Purser. Another WHAS Member, Nick Bainbridge, was awarded the prestigious Royal Horticultural Society's Banksian Medal, named after Sir Joseph Banks, who joined Captain Cook's expedition in the Endeavour for its three-year journey around the world in the 18th century. The WHAS Growers' Challenge was won by the Percy Estate Allotment Society with a splendid array of vegetables and fruit, and many other entrants won Class trophies and/or cash prizes for their exhibits.

As in previous years, the WHAS is indebted to the many local businesses from around Warwick who gave generous prizes of family tickets to local attractions, restaurant vouchers and gift vouchers for the raffle. And again, we are grateful to have had Warwick Town Council's financial support over a number of years. We all look forward to a successful return of the Show in August 2023.