Chair Person's Report for 2026

January - January kicked off with the committee inviting everyone for drinks and nibbles to toast the new gardening year. Then we were joined by Hannah Corps who told us about Forest Schools offering outdoor learning, valuing bio-diversity and fostering a sense of belonging with the woodland and sharing food and stories. It took us back to our childhood when we naturally played outdoors and climbed trees!

February – At the beginning of February Philip Duly told us about the History of the National Garden Scheme. A potted history nationally and more detail about the NGS in West Sussex. He told us that 3000 dedicated garden owners open their gardens to the public to raise money for numerous charities with over £3.5 million being donated to vital nursing and health related charities in 2025. West Sussex has 52 open gardens and Shalford House in Kingsley Green is a great one to visit nearby.

March – In March we held our ever-popular Quiz Night in Fernhurst Village Hall. The tables were set beautifully, a lovely meal, great questions and a fabulous system for scoring. The money raised from the raffle went towards Cancer Research as we have known, loved and lost several members and friends recently.

At the end of the month we held our Spring Show which as usual filled the Village Hall with joyful, colourful spring flowers in abundance.

April – We had a seed propagation workshop run by several committee members. We set up 3 stations focussing on growing from seed. At the first station, one of our members was researching peat-free compost. It is very different to using peat compost with the initial germination of seeds being trickier as peat-free can appear to dry out on the surface so it can easily lead to over-watering of your seedlings and cause rot, One of the team had great success using a mixture of vermiculite and coir, see our website for more details. I focussed on the actual sowing of seeds and the choosing of the right receptacle either pot or tray. The

last station was in the warmth of Louise's greenhouse where she focussed on pricking out the seedlings and getting them garden ready.

May – Fernhurst Revels. We absolutely love this event and had so many fantastic plants and seedlings given to us. Many we had provided ourselves and many were donated by generous locals. We were lucky with the weather, it was perfect, not too hot or cold or wet!

June – In June we held a new event in the Parish Room, Horticultural Floral Coffee Morning, Let's Talk Gardens! We had a "Bring a Flower to Admire" (BAFTA!) and we voted for the best one. If you look at the photos on our website, you will see how amazing it was.

July and August – the committee took their summer break to enjoy their own gardens! Having said that on the 1st July we had our official launch party for the Medicinal Garden at the Fernhurst Surgery. A lovely warm evening with a glass of fizz and some nibbles to celebrate the hard work of the many people involved in this project.

September – Our Autumn Show did not disappoint. After such a challenging summer of heat waves, hose pipe ban and more heat waves I thought all was lost but NO, the show did not disappoint. It was phenomenal, again look at the photos on our website.

October – Pruning, a General Guide, Mark Saunders on the how, why, what and when. For me, the most important fact was to look after your tools and keep them sharp and clean.

November – The Herbologist's A-Z of Herbs. Unfortunately I will be busy cycling in Vietnam for this talk. I'm sorry to be missing it but I'm sure it will be a very interesting one.

Finally it just remains for me to say you you so much to my committee for putting in such a remarkable amount of time and hard work over the whole year. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all.