

## **Rutland Group of The Hardy Plant Society AGM**

### **Chairman's Report**

Our last 'live' event was just one year ago, when we welcomed Kevin Hughes to talk to the group. Kevin had recently taken over the Cally Garden in Scotland and presented a fascinating account of the trials and tribulations of taking on the large walled garden, which was previously run by the late Michael Wickenden. This was also one of our last opportunities to purchase plants, as garden centres and nurseries countrywide were forced to close because of the pandemic.

We were fortunate to be able to meet, as a week later we were in national lockdown caused by the Covid 19 virus and all future activities were cancelled including garden visits and our much anticipated plant fair.

Since October 2020 meetings resumed with Zoom talks, which have been a welcome opportunity to catch up with our members and enjoy a varied programme of talks. To date, speakers have included Timothy Walker, Steve Edney, Andrew Ward, Simon Gulliver, Sarah Pajwani and Sue Fisher.

We have shared the talks and the cost of providing them with the Clwyd Group, a similar sized group to ours. It has been good to meet other HPS members and to be entertained and informed without having to leave the comfort of our own homes.

All of the zoom talks have been provided free of charge for our members, thanks to careful budgeting by our treasurer, using funds raised from previous plant fairs.

Plans for the rest of the year remain uncertain, but we are hoping that the 2021 Plant Fair will go ahead and that we will be able to resume our usual meetings in September. Perhaps we may even fit in a garden visit or a day trip too!

From the end of May this year the BT website for the group ceases to be free of charge. John Dyson has done sterling work to find an alternative free service. The previous address is currently diverted to the new address which is <https://hpsrutland.webador.co.uk>

After May, only the new address should be used to access our website. I urge everyone to have a look at the excellent content.

In the meantime, we would welcome nominations for new committee members and volunteers for the many tasks that could be shared within the group. We need you, our members to think about this and ensure the future of the Rutland Group.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee for all their hard work and help in keeping the Rutland Group going in the face of such adversity. Let us hope for better times ahead.