

## SEEOG AGM: MONDAY 17 JULY 2017

### Chairman's Report

I present the accounts which show a healthy balance in the bank, but less than last year given that all forms of income are down slightly. Expenditure is up, though we have donated to Garden Organic, Soil Association, Pesticide Action Network UK, Northbury Primary School (Barking), GM Freeze, Heritage Seed Library and Lauriston Farm; and some speakers have forgone a fee, donating to Practical Action, Garden Organic and Huntington's Disease allotment plot.

New initiatives have been children's workshops at Leigh Community Centre; one at Easter (compost and seeds) and one to come, 'Seed Bombs and Summer Sowing'. This is thanks to Jane and Sharon as lead people. We have also taken part in Leigh Road Baptist Church's Plant & Craft Market and had a stall at the Radical Fair in the Railway Hotel, Southend – a very green affair.

We attended the Essex Schools Food & Farming Day, hosted by Writtle College, showing composting, worms, seasonal plants, fruit and vegetables.

There were the usual attendances at Leigh and Rochford Farmers' Markets, as well as Apple Day with Growing Together; also a stall at Canvey Island Wildlife Day and one at Manchester Drive Allotment Society's Open Day.

Growing Together host our talks and the annual SE Essex Seed Potato Day covered costs but gave a lower surplus, so tubers could go up 1p after staying the same for three years. We were able to support the Southend- in-Transition Community Allotment with a donation of surplus seed potatoes.

I have to thank all for your support of the group, and what it stands for, especially those able to be active helpers at events; things would not happen without you (the Humphreys come to mind).

The committee is to be thanked and acknowledged for unstinting input: Carole for her secretarial organising of talks, visits and networking; Vic's untiring support and crops for sale; Ray's support for all events and commitment to allotments; Graham for membership, keeping a tight rein, and raffles and printing work; Ane for keeping accounts that show how buoyant we are; Jane for ideas, hosting the committee meetings, enthusiasm and commitment to helping learning projects as well as harnessing Sharon into the fold.

Supporting the organic movement is important. We need change in the ways that food is produced, as Tim Lang of Garden Organic says along with Pamela Mason in 'Sustainable Diets'. More alarming is the effect of climate upon European crops this year, given how much we import and how fragile food supply chains are to our shops.

We need to think, change, be imaginative with science and understanding, continue to see soil and water as precious, and acknowledge how destructive conventional agricultural practices are to ecological systems – wildlife, people and planet, as we are all interdependent.

Thank you

Ron Bates