Storrington Horticultural Society November 2023 meeting report.

The meeting started with the AGM our chairman Mrs. Janet Webber reporting as a point of interest that the society being formed in 1864 next year would be our 160 anniversary.

Again this year we had enjoyed an excellent and varied speakers program at our monthly meetings; two outings had been arranged both well supported and two very enjoyable holidays one to Scotland the other the Wye Valley had been popular with the members.

There had been no Spring Show but the Summer Show had been a great success with a high number of entries. The Society continued to help other groups in the village when asked.

Following this was a talk from Felicity Lewis on the sustainability of black sheep’s wool.

Felicity, founder and owner of award winning eco friendly business WooLSHrEAD –offering sustainable and versatile British Wool, working in the horticulture and floristry markets.

Felicity explained that she had an innovative approach and keen focus on the environment; she is passionate about the sustainable, natural, versatile and biodegradable qualities of wool.

She started by examining published research on wool and by experimenting using her own Southdown sheep wool for gardening and soon established that wool can be used for many more applications. Why is it that wool offers so many uses as well as being as being excellent for our more traditional uses such as clothes, carpets and fabrics as well a multitude of other uses.

Well if you looked at a pure wool fibre under the microscope you would see lots of tiny scales. These are used to naturally control the environment around it by reactively opening and closing, pure wool fibres absorb air and moisture to maintain temperature and humidity a little like a natural thermostat. The fibres also appear to be serrated which helps them to stick together and trap even more air to aid this process.

It can also absorb up to 30% of its own weight with water and this water retention makes it an excellent natural material for plant hydration.

Many new uses have been found in horticulture for wool some of which are as a natural pest repellent for slugs and snails, an aid for water retention, including window boxes, hanging basket liners, mulch, capillary matting and weed repellent the wool will biodegrade after 6 – 12 months conditioning the soil with Nitrogen.

It also benefits wild life it is natural and perfectly safe offering birds as many other animals a good material for nesting.

The meeting closed with a raffle and light refreshments. Our next meeting on **9th December** at Storrington Village Hall is our Christmas afternoon tea from2pm to 4pm,admission by ticket only. There will be no speaker at this meeting.

Michael Webber

Web site:- storringtonhorti.org.uk