

**BERKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST (the “Trust”)
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Purley Barn,
Beech Road, Purley-on-Thames, Berkshire RG8 8DR
on Friday 12th October 2018 at 7.00pm.**

President: Dr Christina Hill Williams
Chairman: His Honour Charles Elly
Treasurer: Hugh Simon
Secretary: Fiona Hope

1. Chairman's welcome and apologies for absence

The Chairman, Charles Elly, opened the meeting and welcomed Graham Barker, the High-Sheriff; Carol Jackson-Doerge, Chair of West Berkshire Council; Margie Hoffnung, Conservation Officer from the Gardens Trust; and all members present and their guests. He then paid tribute to Richard Griffith-Jones, former Vice-Chairman, who resigned as a Trustee earlier this year due to ill health and died in June. He also announced formally that the Trustees were pleased that Christina Hill Williams, the Trust’s first Chairman and subsequently Vice-President, had agreed to become its new President following the resignation of Lady Wroughton due to family health issues. This appointment was formally endorsed by the meeting and the Chairman thanked the outgoing President and new President for their support to the Trust. The Chairman also welcomed Janet Fuller’s appointment as Vice-Chairman for the coming year.

The Secretary, Fiona Hope, confirmed the meeting was quorate and noted that 32 members were present in person, with 9 apologies submitted in advance.

2. President's address

Christina Hill Williams, President, addressed the meeting and welcomed three new co-opted Trustees to the committee: Ellen Crumly, ex-Mayor of Thatcham, Bruce McKenzie-Boyle, already a Trustee of South Hill Park, Bracknell and Alison Mihail, formerly Chair and now an Ambassador for the Prince’s Trust. She also spoke warmly of others who have supported the Trust since its launch in July 2009. Finally, she referred particularly to Summer 2018 visits to Rooksnest near Lambourn, West Berkshire, and Buscot Park (formerly in Berkshire and now in “occupied Berkshire”) and the September ‘brainstorming meeting’, thanking the current and former Trustees and others for their help with the Trust’s future strategy and development.

3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting on 18th October 2017

The minutes had been posted on the website with hard copies being available at the meeting. The minutes of the 2017 AGM were adopted by all members present. There were no other matters arising.

Proposer: Bettina Kirkham; Seconder: Mike Fellows

4. Chairman's report

The Chairman's Report, which together with the Treasurer's Report formed the 2017-2018 Trustees' Report, had been posted on the website with copies available at the meeting.

Charles Elly added to the President's thanks and thanked Christina Hill Williams for her continued and active support for the Trust, especially donations which she gives from her Shrieval talks. He reiterated that although his original intention was to follow Christina's example and serve five years he would continue as Chairman for now, although he hoped there would be a new Chairman for 2019-20 if not sooner. Finally, he mentioned that the committee really appreciated the time and effort which John Salmon, Janet Fuller's husband, had put in, free of charge, to provide the Trust with a new website and urged all to have a look, commenting that any contributions relating to garden visits, books and so on, are welcome.

5. Treasurer's report

The Trust had 85 paid up members in the year ending 31st March 2018, a decrease of 3 from the previous year.

Hugh Simon reported a net surplus of £1,436 for the financial year ended 31st March 2018 leaving an accumulated fund of £17,731, of which £16,987 was held as bank deposits, including £10,000 on 95 days' notice at the Nationwide Building Society earning minimal interest. The Trust's income continued to be mainly from subscriptions and donations, which comprised Christina Hill Williams' donations from Shrieval lectures, committee members waiving expenses and Gift Aid from two-thirds of members' subscriptions. There was a small surplus after event income of £454. Hugh Simon noted that the aim remained to break even from events. BGT's affiliation to The Gardens Trust and insurance, as well as website hosting costs, remained the main outgoings.

Finally, Hugh thanked Janet Fuller for her excellent keeping of membership records which had been a great help at the end of year reconciliation and Brian Tubman, for continuing to act as Examiner to BGT's accounts.

6. Adoption of the Directors' Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2018

Hugh Simon presented the Directors' Report and Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31st March 2018, as approved by the Examiner and which had been submitted to Companies House. This was adopted by all members present.

Proposer: Janet Fuller; Seconder: Richard Bennett.

7. Election of Trustees:

7.1 The following Trustees were elected for a term of three years in accordance with the Articles of Association:

Fiona Hope, proposed by Charles Elly; seconded by Kaye Warner; all in favour.

Hugh Simon, proposed by Kaye Warner; seconded by Bruce McKenzie-Boyle; all in favour.

Bettina Kirkham, proposed by Gaila Adair; seconded by Ellen Crumly; all in favour.

Indra Townsend, proposed by Carol Jackson-Doerge; seconded by Richard Crumly; all in favour.

7.2 Having been co-opted by the Trustees during the year, the following Trustee was elected for a term of three years in accordance with the Articles of Association:

Ellen Crumly; proposed by Janet Fuller; seconded by Bettina Kirkham; all in favour.

The Chairman explained that Bruce McKenzie-Boyle and Alison Mihail would continue to serve as co-opted trustees for the coming year as their appointment had missed the deadline for notice to members of the annual general meeting.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 Margie Hoffnung, Conservation Officer, was invited to say a few words on behalf of the Gardens Trust. She took this opportunity to thank the Trust, especially Charles Elly, Bettina Kirkham, Fiona Hope, Ben Viljoen and Helen Parvin for responding to planning applications using their local knowledge, experience and skills.

8.2 Janet Fuller summarised current promotional activity which the committee is working on and invited all members to complete a Member's Questionnaire designed to help with this, either before they left the meeting or subsequently.

Item 8 concluded the AGM formal business.

There was then a break for refreshments prior to the Autumn Lecture on *Folly Farm: A Restoration – Lutyens and Jekyll Reimagined* by Simon Goodenough. Simon is the Estate Manager for Folly Farm, an Associate of Honour RHS, a Member of the RHS's Tender Ornamental Committee and the Worshipful Company of Gardeners. He has worked at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, been curator of Ventnor Botanic Gardens, Isle of Wight, gone on various plant hunting expeditions, with associated plant propagation and collecting credentials. He was also involved in setting up the Isle of Wight's first Gardens Trust.

Fiona Hope, 23rd November 2018
Executive Secretary, Berkshire Gardens Trust.