

**BERKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST (the “Trust”)
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at The Barn, Purley-on-Thames, Berkshire RG8 8DR on Thursday 8th October 2015 at 7.00pm.**

President: Lady Wroughton
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 the President, Lady Wroughton, members and guests present, especially The Lord Lieutenant and Mrs Puxley, the High Sheriff of Berkshire and representatives from Bray Parish Council, Leckhampstead Parish Council, Sulham & Tidmarsh Parish Council, Wokingham Borough Council, and Woodley Town Council.

Apologies for absence were received from Janet Fuller and Mr and Mrs Weightman. No proxy forms were received.

The Secretary, Fiona Hope, noted that 33 members were present in person and confirmed the meeting was quorate.

2. President's address

Lady Wroughton, President, addressed the meeting, emphasising that this had been a year of consolidation for the Trust. In particular, she paid tribute to the tremendous contribution of Ben Viljoen to BGT, especially in terms of his research gazetteer, IT and design work. She also applauded the sterling work of Gaila Adair, BGT and Watlington House Trustee, in redesigning the gardens in time for the launch in July 2015. Noting the creation of The Gardens Trust following the merging of The Garden History Society with the Association of Gardens Trusts, she referred to the increased expertise and savings anticipated as well as the importance of continuing BGT's research and planning work with support from this central body. Finally, she mentioned that she had enjoyed the visit to West Green House Gardens during the summer and was looking forward to 2016 events including the Tercentenary of Capability Brown, thanking all the committee for their work and the members for their continuing support.

3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting on 3rd October 2014

The minutes had been posted on the website with hard copies being available at the meeting. The minutes of the 2014 AGM were adopted by all members present, with no matters arising.

Proposer: Indra Townsend; Seconder: Vickie Abel.

4. Chairman's report

The Chairman's Report, which together with the Treasurer's Report formed the 2015-2016 Trustees' Report, had also been posted on the website with copies available at the meeting. In addition to reiterating his thanks to Ben Viljoen Charles Elly noted with regret that he was retiring from the BGT committee. He then outlined the plans being developed for 2016, mentioning in particular Ben Viljoen's lecture on Capability Brown scheduled for Thursday 17th March at Purley Barn and the guided visit to Eton College Private Gardens planned for Thursday 21st July, to which he hoped they would look forward.

5. Treasurer's report

Hugh Simon reported net assets of £12,146.38 at the end of the financial year on 31st March 2015, an increase of £1,045.48 over the year. The Trust's main income was still provided by membership payments helped by increased Gift Aid responses, with a small surplus from events at which the Trust aimed to cover costs. In addition, the Trust was most grateful for the lecture fees donated by Christina Hill Williams, Vice-President. He also noted that savings continued to be made through use of email for invitations and Newsletters. The cost of The Gardens Trust affiliation, insurance and website maintenance are still the current main outgoings. Finally he thanked those who had completed Gift Aid declarations on their membership and Brian Tubman, the Trust's Examiner of the accounts.

In response to a question from Clive Williams, he confirmed that the Trust had no current outstanding liabilities.

6. Adoption of the Directors' Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2015

Leading on from Item 5 above, Hugh Simon briefly presented this formal report which had been submitted to Companies House.

The Trustees' Report (see Agenda Items 4 and 5 above) and the Directors' Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2015 were adopted by all members present.

Proposer: Charles Elly; Seconder: Peter Thorn.

7. Election of Trustees:

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

Fiona Hope (Secretary), proposed by Mike Fellows and seconded by Christina Hill-Williams.

Bettina Kirkham, proposed by Marion Elly and seconded by Christina Hill-Williams.

Hugh Simon (Treasurer), proposed by Christina Hill-Williams and seconded by Michael Keith-Lucas.

Indra Townsend, proposed by Marion Elly and seconded by Bettina Kirkham.

This item concluded the formal business of the evening. Christina Hill-Williams then paid a personal tribute to Ben Viljoen as one of the four founding members of Berkshire Gardens Trust, with particular reference to his skills in graphic design, research and his huge contribution to her while she was BGT Chairman.

8. Presentation of the 2015 BGT Awards

Award certificates signed by Lady Wroughton were then presented by the Lord Lieutenant as follows:

Bray Enhancement Committee: *Outstanding*

Leckhampstead Former Pond Area: *Commended*

Tidmarsh Wild Flower Meadow: *Highly Commended*

Wokingham, Pavilions Border Community Garden: *Outstanding.*

Woodley Town Centre Project: *Highly Commended.*

Following the Awards presentation there was a break for refreshments prior to the AGM Lecture on Rousham Gardens, Oxfordshire, given by Michael Symes, Garden History Lecturer and Author.

Fiona Hope, 14th October 2015

Executive Secretary, Berkshire Gardens Trust.