

## **BERKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST (the “Trust”)**

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Village Hall, Church Lane, Grazeley, Berkshire RG7 1LD, on Wednesday 18th October 2017 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, and members present. He also paid tribute to Rosemary Simon, Hugh's wife, who had died recently and whose attendance at and contributions to BGT events and committee meeting hospitality would be sorely missed. The Secretary, Fiona Hope, confirmed the meeting was quorate and noted that 26 members were present in person, with one apology submitted in advance.

### **2. President's address**

Lady Wroughton, President, addressed the meeting and referred in particular to the contributions of Peter Thorn (who resigned in April 2017 due to other educational commitments but is continuing his involvement as Minutes Secretary) and Gaila Adair (who did not seek re-election as a trustee at the meeting due to business pressures). She also thanked Janet Fuller for coming forward to replace Kaye Warner as the new Membership Secretary and reiterated the tremendous contribution of Ben Viljoen to BGT in relation to Capability Brown during 2016. She once again noted the numerous planning applications on which the committee had responded and stressed that there was a need for more volunteers to help with all the Trust's activities. Finally, she announced that she was stepping down from the role of BGT's President since its launch in 2009 and thanked the committee for their hard work, Charles Elly for his support, and the members for their continuing support to the Trust.

### **3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting on 18th October 2016**

The minutes had been posted on the website with hard copies being available at the meeting. The minutes of the 2016 AGM were adopted by all members present, after clarification by Hugh Simon, Treasurer, that the Trust was a charity for taxation purposes, hence being able to benefit from Gift Aid. There were no other matters arising.

Proposer: Indra Townsend; Seconder: Christina Hill Williams; all in favour.

#### **4. Chairman's report**

The Chairman's Report, which together with the Treasurer's Report formed the 2016-2017 Trustees' Report, had been posted on the website with copies available at the meeting. Charles Elly added to the President's thanks to Peter Thorn and Gaila Adair, as well as to Ben Viljoen and Janet Fuller, commenting on how well the current committee was working as a team. Finally, he thanked Lady Wroughton for her stalwart personal support as President.

#### **5. Treasurer's report**

The Trust had 88 paid up members in the year ending 31st March 2017, an increase of 4 from the previous year.

Hugh Simon reported that the Trust's assets, which are still mainly from continuing subscription income, had benefited from the BBC waiving payment for the first Caversham Park visit's refreshments and security, due to their oversights with respect to the former. Cash reserves at the end of the financial year were £15,954, an increase of £1,284 over the year. Net income for the year was £2,331.

The Trust continued to break even or make a small surplus from events, as well as sales of Ben Viljoen's Caversham Park booklet which had sold out. It had also benefited from £624 of donations from Shrieval lecture fees donated by Christina Hill Williams, Vice-President, contributions from expenses not claimed by committee members, and £295 Gift-Aided subscriptions from two-thirds of the membership.

The cost of BGT's affiliation to The Gardens Trust and insurance, as well as the website hosting costs (noting the recent adverse changes between the £ sterling and US \$ dollar exchange rates), 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.

Christina Hill-Williams asked about the Trust's cash reserves. Hugh advised that the committee had decided to deposit £10,000 in a Nationwide savings account, which meant that it at least attracted a minimal variable interest rate while still being available at 95 days' notice. He also noted that these reserves remained earmarked primarily for future research and 'capacity building' (increasing membership, research and other essential costs) of the Trust. Charles Elly added that Fiona Hope and Janet Fuller were working on long term plans to help promote awareness of BGT across Berkshire to like-minded bodies, especially in the east of the county.

## **6. Adoption of the Directors' Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2017**

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 2017 were adopted by all members present.

Proposer: Bettina Kirkham; Seconder: Gaila Adair; all in favour.

## **7. Election of Trustees:**

7.1 Having being co-opted to the committee during the year, Janet Fuller was elected for a term of three years in accordance with the Articles of Association.

Proposed by Charles Elly; seconded by Indra Townsend; all in favour.

7.2 Richard Griffiths-Jones, as vice-chairman, took the chair for this item. Charles Elly was then elected for a term of three years in accordance with the Articles of Association.

Proposed by Ben Viljoen and seconded by Vickie Abel; all in favour.

## **8. Any Other Business**

8.1 Ben Viljoen drew attention to the flag on display in front of the AGM top table, which was the new county flag for BGT to display at events.

8.2 Vickie Abel thanked BGT for its continued support for the Friends of Caversham Court, including the Capability Brown exhibition in its gazebo during 2016 as well as its concerned interest in Reading's Forbury Garden.

Item 8 concluded the AGM formal business. There was then a break for refreshments prior to the Autumn Lecture on William Robinson, *The Wild Gardener*, by Richard Bisgrove. Richard is the retired Course Director in Landscape Management at the University of Reading, author of several books on garden design and garden history including the recent publication on William Robinson, and a long-standing BGT member.

**Fiona Hope, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2017**  
**Executive Secretary, Berkshire Gardens Trust.**