



## **BERKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST (the "Trust" or "BGT")**

### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Purley Barn, Purley-on-Thames RG8 8DR on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021 at 1.45pm.**

President: Dr Christina Hill Williams

Chair: Bettina Kirkham

Vice-Chair: Janet Fuller

Treasurer: Hugh Simon

Secretary: Fiona Hope

#### **Chair's Welcome**

Bettina Kirkham opened proceedings and thanked participants for their time and support at BGT's Zoom AGM in September 2020. After introducing herself as the Chair, Bettina then introduced the committee members and gave the Health & Safety Notices. The AGM would be followed by the Autumn Lecture given by Vanessa Berridge, and then refreshments would be served. Bettina also thanked The Handmade Cake Company who had responded to Alison Mihail's request and generously donated the wonderful spread of cakes.

Bettina then reiterated her personal thanks to her predecessor as Chair, Charles Elly, who had been a great support to all the committee, continuing to contribute to BGT Planning Application responses until shortly before his death in March this year. She also thanked the Committee, and especially Janet Fuller, Vice-Chair, and her husband, John Salmon, BGT's website designer and manager, for their hard work behind the scenes. Finally, she said that the AGM covered the year from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, as reported on BGT's website, with copies handed out to attendees on arrival at the AGM by Janet.

Fiona Hope confirmed that the meeting was quorate with 24 members present; apologies from 15 members; one proxy vote had been submitted. Finally, Bettina explained the voting procedures for the re-election for a three year term of herself, Janet Fuller, Fiona Hope and Hugh Simon as Trustees, as well as the election of Deborah James, who was co-opted by the Trustees on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021, ending with a reminder that only members may vote at the AGM.

### **President's Address**

Christina Hill Williams welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the AGM. Giving her summary of BGT's year from her perspective as President, referring to Charles' passing and saying that he was a lovely man who gave a great deal of thought and time to his roles as BGT's Vice-Chairman and then Chairman. She then referred to the *Newbury Weekly News* and a recent article about a horticultural project at a centre she had attended with the Mayor, as well as Prince Philip's Memorial Service at Reading Minster, where she had met Lady Wroughton, BGT's first President. Finally, she mentioned that there were some new designs of the botanical cards being sold to raise additional funds for BGT.

### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020 (held by Zoom video communication)**

These had been posted on the website with no corrections submitted. Helen Parvin proposed and Helen Tweedie seconded their adoption as a true and accurate record of the proceedings, with all eligible attendees voting in agreement.

### **Chair's Report**

Bettina Kirkham noted that the last financial year had been difficult, with two Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns and other restrictive measures in between, though she was pleased that the Trust's Zoom lectures had been well supported (including bookings from non-Trust members) and that BGT would continue with some Zoom lectures, as they were a good way to reach out to wider audiences. She also thanked Alison Mihail for taking the minutes and John Salmon for the Trust website's continued development and upkeep, as well as Helen Parvin for her tremendous work on planning applications, especially in Windsor & Maidenhead to which Charles Elly had previously responded. Janet Fuller was also thanked for her work on the six garden visits which had taken place in the current financial year.

Noting that there had only been a few members not renewing their membership, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, Bettina also commented that, along with many other bodies, BGT had a number of elderly members who were not always able to participate but still supported the Trust, which had 101 paid up members on 31 March 2021, an increase of one member on March 2020. She concluded by mentioning BGT's appreciation of the support

by three Corporate Members: Newbold College, Sonning & Sonning Eye Society and West Berkshire Council.

Bettina invited everyone to read her full report, including an update for the new financial year, which could be found on the BGT website.

*There were no questions arising.*

### **Treasurer's Report**

Hugh Simon reported that the full financial accounts for 2020/1 were on BGT's website having been approved by the Trustees and passed by the Independent Examiner, Brian Tubman, who was thanked for continuing to do this for the Trust. Hugh also thanked Janet Fuller, for keeping up to date membership records.

BGT had a £700 surplus for the financial year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, when the bank balance was £18,800, including £10,000 on deposit earning minimal interest. Owing to the absence of garden visits and lectures caused by the pandemic, most of the income came from membership subscriptions, with 47% of these attracting Gift Aid.

The Zoom lectures had provided a surplus of £300. Principal expenditure was £540 for insurance and affiliation to The Gardens Trust and £270 for website hosting and Zoom subscription; John Salmon, who maintained the website, did not charge for his time.

The current bank balance was £9,900 at National Westminster Bank, plus £10,000 in a Nationwide deposit account.

*There were no questions arising.*

### **Adoption of the Directors' Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

The adoption was proposed by Kaye Warner and seconded by Susan Lee, with all eligible attendees voting in agreement.

### **Election of Trustees**

*Janet Fuller took the Chair:*

Celia Lines proposed that Bettina Kirkham be re-elected for a term of three years, seconded by Hugh Simon, with all eligible attendees in agreement.

*Bettina Kirkham resumed the Chair:*

Susan Lee proposed that Janet Fuller be re-elected for a term of three years, seconded by Celia Lines, with all eligible attendees in agreement.

Kaye Warner proposed that Fiona Hope be re-elected for a term of three years, seconded by Amanda Martin, with all eligible attendees in agreement.

Helen Tweedie proposed that Hugh Simon be re-elected for a term of three years, seconded by Helen Parvin, with all eligible attendees in agreement.

Susan Carter proposed that Deborah James be elected for a term of three years, seconded by Heather Kay with all eligible attendees in agreement.

*This concluded the formal business of the AGM. It was followed by an appreciation of Charles Elly by Bettina Kirkham and Hugh Simon, and by Vanessa Berridge's lecture on three generations of women gardeners at Kiftsgate, Gloucestershire.*

**Fiona Hope, Secretary**

29<sup>th</sup> October 2021