

HERTFORDSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

MINUTES OF THE 26TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT GARRATS FARM, BENINGTON ON THURSDAY 13TH JULY 2017

Present:	Vice President	Mr Christopher Melluish
	Chairman and Schools	The Hon Lady Stuart-Smith
	Hon. Treasurer	Mrs Fiona Bancroft
	Research	Mrs Anne Rowe
	Events	Mrs Annie Saner
	Communication	Mr Roger Gedye
	Membership/Website	Mr John Craggs

Also present were about 60 members and guests of the Trust

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed members and their guests and some new members to the 26th AGM of the HGT. She thanked Sarah and Harry Bott for kindly hosting the event and remarked on the beautiful gardens which Sarah had personally laid out.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from the President, Lady Verulam, Vice President, Richard Walduck, Penny Figgis, Sonja Fillingham, Kate Harwood, Bob and Franey Williams and Cllr Peter Ruffles.

3. Minutes of the 25th Anniversary Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 14th July 2016.

4. Matters arising

There being no matters arising, acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Mr George Mitcheson and seconded by Mr Roger Gedye.

5. Chairman's Report

The Chairman congratulated Anne Rowe and her team for the excellence of their research. During 2016/17 their focus has been the work of Humphry Repton in Hertfordshire, to be published in book form during the coming year to mark the 200th anniversary of Repton's death.

Kate Harwood, as HGT's conservation officer, had initiated a successful campaign to protect and preserve Repton's landscape at Panshanger. The project to restore the Jellicoe Water Gardens at Hemel Hempstead, in which she has been a prime mover, is nearing completion. An HGT Study Day at Hatfield and a related event at Panshanger highlighted the significance of conservation in the work of the Trust and featured the excellent work that has been achieved by 'Friends' organisations throughout the county.

Members have supported a series of visits during the year, including a 3 day visit to seven of Norfolk's gardens: the Chairman thanked Sonja Fillingham and her team of organisers for these very enjoyable events.

The Chairman spoke warmly of the contributions over many years of the three members of the executive committee who would not be standing for re-election. For 14 years Annie Saner has been an outstanding organiser of events for the Trust, ranging from bridge days and plant sales to visits and talks. To mark this achievement the Chairman presented Annie with the Bunty Oakley vase. George Mitcheson has served the committee for over 20 years, always giving his support and sound financial advice to the Trustees. This year Fiona Bancroft will hand over the role of Treasurer to Sally Pool. The Chairman thanked Fiona warmly for her efficiency and support in the role and presented each of the leavers with a gift as a mark of thanks from all HGT members.

6. Hon. Treasurer's Report

The accounts show the Trust to be in a healthy financial position: income has exceeded expenditure by £2,412. Donations were down on the previous year. The Trust has a strong bank balance, which has increased during the current year. The Treasurer congratulated fellow committee members for their careful management of funds: the financial position of the Trust was secure for the future.

The Treasurer thanked Mr Warwick Wilson for examining the accounts. The adoption of the accounts was proposed by Christopher Melluish and seconded by Roy Johnson.

7. Election of Officers

Members of the executive committee are required to resign at the AGM each year. The retiring chairman, Bella Stuart-Smith, nominated Roger Gedye as her successor. Her formal proposal was seconded by Claire Taylor. Roger Gedye was duly elected and took the Chair.

Nominations for election:

Hon. Treasurer: Sally Pool (proposed by Roger Gedye, seconded by Jim Chambers)

Hon. Secretary: Penny Figgis (proposed by Roger Gedye, seconded by Christopher Melluish)

New Trustee: Anne Mitcheson (proposed by Roger Gedye, seconded by Roy Johnson)

Nominated for re-election: John Craggs, Sonja Fillingham, Kate Harwood, Bella Stuart-Smith (proposed by Roger Gedye, seconded by George Mitcheson)

All the nominees were duly elected.

Roger Gedye, thanked Bella and the members for expressing their trust in him as Chairman. Bella had steered a steady course for the HGT over the last 4 years and the committee and members owed a great debt of gratitude to her. Bella will remain as a member of the committee and trustee, leading the support of gardening in schools. Roger warmly thanked Bella for her outstanding leadership as Chairman and presented her with a bouquet of flowers.

The new Chairman then spoke briefly of his learning curve as a member of the HGT, since being persuaded to join the Committee in 2011 to edit the Newsletter. He has discovered the many and varied facets of the Trust and the expertise of its officers. He intends to further the historical research and conservation projects, and to promote the Trust's role as

an educator for members of all ages. He pointed out that Annie Saner's role on the committee remained to be filled and invited members to become involved in the organisation of the Trust's successful social events in the future.

Roger thanked Sarah and Harry Bott for their generosity in providing this splendid venue for the AGM.

8. AOB

Vice President, Christophe Melluish gave a short history of the Gardens Trust commenting that Joan Stuart-Smith had persuaded him to become chairman with Mary Laing as vice chairman. Shortly after Mary moved away from the county and Bella was asked to be vice chairman, which she had accepted on the proviso she would not have to be chairman! She had relented on Christopher's retirement and her position had been hugely justified. The committee and members of the Gardens Trust were immensely grateful and appreciative of all her work and enthusiasm over her 4 years as Chairman. The new Chairman echoed these sentiments.

The meeting was then closed.