



VENTNOR BOTANIC GARDEN FRIENDS' SOCIETY

Annual General Meeting - 20th April 2017

held in the Echium Room at Ventnor Botanic Garden at 1900 hrs
44 Members present

Apologies were received from Catherine Smith, Sue Beck, Judy & Nick Ballanger, Linda Darby, Mary Edwards, Phil Le May, Lucy & Timothy Deville, Dr Chris Kershaw, Kay Grist, Julie Strevens, Tim Woodcock

The Minutes of the AGM on 13th April 2016 had been distributed.

Prop: David Grist Sec: Jonathan Peel. All agreed as a true record. There were no Matters Arising.

Chairman's Report

Mrs Sally Peake gave her report.

Forgive me for keeping this report unusually short; I am conscious that we have important business to deal with and Members have only recently received the Spring issue of *Ventnorensis* which brings you up to date.

There are a few items that need recording through this forum:

- the smooth and highly successful introduction last May of the Gift Aidable donation on normal admission fees has enabled your Society to fund two additional members of the horticultural staff by regular donation to the CIC; this has had the effect of nearly doubling the horticultural expertise available to the Curator. I am grateful to Chloe Colboc from the CIC for her enthusiastic support with administration.
- Two successful grant bids have enabled the Friends to support diverse projects:
 1. The Hop Yard has been renovated and is now an attractive extension to the Garden but can also act as an external 'advert' for the pay-to-view VBG. Thanks to Tesco 'Bags of Help', the area beyond the coastal footpath is no longer a 'poor relation'
 2. The Big Lottery funding for 'Through the Garden Gate' has allowed us to plan a week-long range of diverse activities to celebrate the Garden's 45th birthday. Largely free to access, but not impinging on normal tourist income, this will present an opportunity to welcome the Island community to VBG and supplement the commercial marketing undertaken by the CIC in the run up to the successful YogaVibe weekend. I commend this programme to you all and hope to see many of you with friends and family as we celebrate the journey travelled from 'Steephill Pleasure Gardens with special botanic interest'; for a 21st century audience maybe that should read 'From SPG to VBG'!

For both these grant bids, the Society is indebted to Lucy DeVille for her expertise and support.

This year I must record personal thanks to all of your Committee for their unwavering support. That they, with one exception, feel able to stand again is extremely satisfying and will give the new Committee momentum and drive, coupled with expertise and experience - a real winning combination. I am sad that Di Sichel has been unable to support our work in the way she originally

envisaged but I know she will remain a stalwart member who can be called on for special projects as do so many of our loyal members. You will have noted from the Agenda that we hope to strengthen our Committee further - another stepping stone towards our Vision for the future of VBGFS. Thank you.

The Financial Report

Members were given a copy of the report. The new Hon Treasurer, Mr Tim Woodcock, was unable to be present so Mr David Grist presented the accounts. He announced that the Society had made a small surplus for the year. Funding is set aside for the remaining panels to complete the Tropical House when the weather gets warmer. He thanked Alison Ellsbury for acting as Independent Examiner again. She has now moved to Scotland so he asked anyone interested in taking on this role to get in touch with

Mr Woodcock. Prop: David Grist Sec: Jan Wyers. The report was accepted.

Membership Fees

The Executive Committee was not proposing to raise the Membership Fees in view of other fund-raising initiatives.

Membership Report

Mrs Peel said that sadly the Society is losing members despite a special offer at Christmas. There are 469 today as opposed to 487 last year. She thanked all the present supporters. Mrs Peake said that some of this decline is due to members who have taken out the CIC passes for the Garden and do not feel the need to add the extra to become Friends.

Application to the Charity Commission to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Mrs Peake set out the reasons for applying to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and read out the views questioning or supporting these in letters from members Ms Susyn Andrews, Mr Peter Marsden, Mr Eric Everitt and Mr Philip Le May. There were further questions from the floor.

The changes to the wording of the Constitution were agreed thus enabling the Executive Committee to proceed with the application. This would help the Friends to be prepared to take on the management of the Garden at some future time, with all the legal and financial obligations that that would entail, but not be obliged to do so.

There was a unanimous vote in favour of the changes from the 44 members present.

Officers re-elected to the Executive Committee

Chairman, Sally Peake

Prop: Mr Grist Sec: Mrs Wyers

Vice Chairman, Jan Wyers

Prop: Mrs Peake Sec: Mrs Kelley

Hon Secretary, Rosemary Stewart

Prop: Mrs Peake Sec: Mr B Kidd

Hon Treasurer, Tim Woodcock

Prop: Mr Grist Sec: Mrs Peel

All agreed

Other serving members of the Committee were re-elected en bloc:

David Grist, Caroline Peel, Colin Smith,

Ros Whistance

Prop: Mrs Hill Sec: Mr Kelley

All agreed

New members had been proposed and seconded:

Jane Clark
Jenny Parker

Prop: Mrs Peake Sec: Mrs Peel
Prop: Mrs Peake Sec: Mrs Peel

All agreed

The meeting closed at 19.35