

Annual General Meeting

Ventnor Botanic Garden Friends' Society

SECRETARIAL REPORT – Jenny Parker

The postponement of our AGM planned for 15 April was one of the first decisions made by the Committee at the end of March when we had little idea of what was to come. We were hoping that the effect of Covid 19 would pass quickly and normality return. As the summer has gone along we have all had to adjust our lives, be grateful for the good things and learn to be patient.

An AGM meeting is not possible at the moment and may not be until next year. We feel a Zoom meeting is not ideal for our membership but to postpone the AGM into next year means we will be due two AGMs very close together.

We have followed the Charities Commission Guidelines and submitted our accounts and reports as required for the year to Sept 19. We will also publish them on our website. Following our call in *Ventnorensis* for any resolutions for the AGM nothing has been raised.

No Trustees are due for re-election this year. Jane Clarke resigned from the Committee and Peter Coleman was elected to her role as Deputy Chairman. The current Committee is seeking re-election, which includes Val Pitts who was co-opted on to the Committee to take over as Membership Secretary when Caroline Peel took up her role of High Sheriff. Caroline remains an active member of the Committee.

There are no major changes for which we would require a membership vote.

It is proposed that the term of the current Committee be extended until an Annual General Meeting of the Society can be held, if the law permits, in April 2021 (date to be confirmed in due course).

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Robert John Bagshawe (Chairman) 20th July 2020

In 2018 - 2019 Ventnor Botanic Garden Friends' Society carried out activities as follows:

Through our Gift Aid programme, administered by the Ventnor Botanic Garden Community Interest Company (VBG-CIC), we were able to support the Horticultural Apprenticeship scheme that involves the part-time employment of a skilled trainer/mentor and two full-time apprentices. The Society has also funded extracurricular experiences for the apprentices to widen their understanding of horticultural careers. During the year, another apprentice successfully completed his two-year apprenticeship and a new apprentice was recruited onto the programme. The Friends also provide funds to purchase trees and shrubs, and food for the Garden's red squirrels.

Volunteer numbers grow in many areas of the Garden – horticultural maintenance, propagation, tour guides, seed cleaning and retailing, retail assistance, information and event management. Members continue to support the VBG-CIC by volunteering as guides for schools, groups and the general public.

Fundraising has taken many forms from a continuation of the 'talent-raising' scheme initiated in 2017, the proceeds of plant sales, soup lunches, Secret Art and donations at walks and talks. This year, the Friends provided photographs for greetings cards and an inaugural 2019 calendar which, as a joint venture with the VBG-CIC, will be an annual product.

The Friends' Health and Wellbeing scheme provided four family Annual Passes for disadvantaged families. The scheme is being extended by the CIC to include recovering cancer sufferers and more.

Botany Club and Café Botanique gave members and the public insight into specialist knowledge of expert speakers and leaders. A trip to Folly Farm in Berkshire was hosted by the past Curator of the Garden, Simon Goodenough.

Two issues of *Ventnorenensis*, our biannual magazine for members, were produced. Our website continues to develop as a promotional tool for events, along with regular emails for members. The requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) has been discussed and compliance implemented.

Membership: September 2018 480. September 2019 446

REPORT OF THE MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON 21ST FEBRUARY 2019

Sally Peake Chairman welcomed 37 members to the Echium Room at VBG on a dark February evening.

Apologies had been received from a further 6 members.

The Minutes of the previous AGM were agreed with no matters arising.

Chairman's Report

Sally Peake presented her report for the year which was submitted to the Charities Commission. She announced she would be stepping down as Chairman after 3 years. The Committee recommended John Bagshawe to take over.

The Financial Report and Accounts up to 30 September 2018

Copies of the accounts were shared with members and Tim Woodcock, Hon Treasurer presented his report (also for submission to the Charities Commission). A vote was taken to accept the accounts and for Roger Sims to continue to independently check and agree the accounts.

Membership Report

Caroline Peel reported membership to stand at 480 (Sept 2018) but hoped that the free passes for entry to the Garden now included with membership of the Friends would help encourage new members.

Sally Peake stood down as Chairman and the election of the Trustees, officers and Committee members of the CIC followed:

Appointment of Trustees of VBGFS

Sally Peake, Tim Woodcock, Caroline Peel and Jane Clarke stood down as required at the first AGM of the CIO and were re-elected.

John Bagshawe, Rosemary Stewart and Jenny Parker were elected as Trustees.

Election of Officers for the Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Chairman, John Bagshawe	Vice Chairman, Jane Clarke
Hon Secretary, Jenny Parker	Hon Treasurer, Tim Woodcock

Other serving members of the Committee were re-elected

Sally Peake, Caroline Peel, Colin Smith, Rosemary Stewart, Ros Whistance

New member of the Committee

Peter Coleman with a special interest in Health and Wellbeing was elected Chris Kidd and Colin Pope remain Ex officio members of the Committee requiring no election.

Any Other Business

A member asked why more interest was not raised on cash held in the bank. The Treasurer said interest earned was under review but decent rates were very hard to find.

The meeting closed at 19.35