



VENTNOR BOTANIC GARDEN FRIENDS' SOCIETY

Annual General Meeting – 27 July 2021

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

Welcome Chairman John Bagshawe opened the meeting and welcomed the members. A short silence was held in remembrance of Brian Kidd our President who died this year.

John Bagshawe then announced that Mike Fitt had accepted our request to become President.

Apologies were received from Peter and Elizabeth Marsden, Mrs Spencer Smith, Susan Dobbs, John and Jonyth Hill, Avril Watson.

The Minutes of the AGM on 21 April 2019 and the substitute 2020 AGM (due to Covid restrictions) were agreed as a true record with no matters arising.

Prop: John Bagshawe Sec: Caroline Peel.

Chairman's Report

John Bagshawe presented his report for the year to 30 September 2020, attached.

The report reflected the impact of the loss of gift aid to the funds. The replacement RUFA (round up for apprentices) fund failed to match gift aid. An appeal for funds to support our apprentices raised a generous £3,370 from Friends and supporters. The volunteer numbers increased over the pandemic and a regular team worked hard in the garden or to package seeds for sale.

The Financial Report and Accounts up to 30 September 2020

Members were given a copy of the accounts submitted to the Charity Commission for the period and Tim Woodcock, Hon treasurer presented his report, attached. This confirmed the deficit for the year and the Society's worth at £80,296. A vote was taken to accept the accounts and for Roger Sims to continue to independently check and agree the accounts.

Prop: Chris Kidd Sec: Phil Le May, unanimous vote.

Membership Report

Val Pitts presented her first report and confirmed membership was 410, a fall from the previous year's total of 446 members. This decrease in numbers was partly due to the death of members during the year, notably Eric Everitt a long serving member of the Executive Committee.

Val ended her report on a positive note saying since Sept '20 new members were joining.

Appointment of Trustees of VBGFS

Rosemary Stewart retired as a Trustee and Jenny Parker stood down by rotation and offered herself for re-election.

Prop: Sally Peake Sec: Patricia Smith passed with a unanimous vote

Election of Officers for the Charitable Incorporated Organisation

John Bagshawe stood aside for Vice Chairman, Peter Coleman to take a vote for Chairman.

Prop: The Committee Sec: Chris Kidd

Hon Treasurer Tim Woodcock Prop: Caroline Peel Sec: Jenny Parker

Hon Secretary, Jenny Parker Prop: Sally Peake Sec: Phil Le May

Other serving members of the Committee were re-elected

Sally Peake, Caroline Peel, Colin Smith, Rosemary Stewart, Ros Whistance and Val Pitts

Prop: Bridgette Sibbick Sec: Chris Parker

Chris Kidd and Colin Pope remain Ex officio members of the Committee requiring no election

There followed two presentations of the **Harold Hillier Award** for Services to Horticulture on the Isle of Wight for 2020 and 2021

Chris Kidd presented the award to **Colin Pope for 2020** and **Sally Peake** presented the award for **2021 to John Harrison**

Update of Current Position

John Bagshawe then took the opportunity to update members of the current position of the Friends. John reported that our 2 apprentices, Indi and Ellis have both completed their course and left the Garden. Indi is working in horticulture on the Island and Ellis has won a position at Osborne for further training. The Committee had hoped that following the end of lock downs the CIC would reinstate Gift Aid but this now seems unlikely. In addition, changes to the way apprenticeship schemes are running on the Island means the successful scheme for our apprentices is no longer available. The result is that Trish remains at the garden with little help. We have agreed to support her there over the winter. Volunteers are a great help but the few gardeners are often busy with VBG at home or other projects and the garden is looking neglected.

Discussion with the members followed:-

Phil Le May said the Committee needed the mandate of members in finding the way forward stressing that Members need to know about problems and be given the opportunity to discuss solutions. Chris Parker asked the cost of an apprenticeship scheme, a ballpark of £60k annually for 2 apprentices and a supervisor was given. Jenny Parker said the Committee had tried different approaches with the CIC but these now seemed exhausted. Peter Coleman explained how difficult it was for the Committee to find a way with the two challenges of no gift aid and no apprentices. Chris Kidd said hard work was needed to get through the current problems and the apprenticeship scheme needed re-thinking.

The meeting was closed.

Chairman