

**MINUTES**  
**of the**  
**62nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**of the members of**  
**THE HARDY PLANT SOCIETY**  
**Saturday 30th March 2019 at 1.40pm**  
**Bishop Burton College, York Road, Bishop Burton, Beverley, HU17 8QG**

The 62nd AGM of the Hardy Plant Society was opened by the Chairman, Jan Vaughan, who welcomed everyone and thanked the East Yorkshire Group for hosting a successful day.

There were 134 members in attendance.

Apologies were received from Roy and Sue Lancaster, Pamela Clark, Lyn Miles, Helen Harrison, Ana Reynolds and Tony and Celia Rogers

1. The minutes of the 61st AGM held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2018 were approved.

Proposed: Anna Peacock      Seconded: Linda Crowther

2. There were no matters arising.

3. The Chairman spoke to her annual report, which had been printed in the February newsletter:

“My report was published in the February Newsletter, so I don't propose to repeat myself, but there are one or two things that I would like to add.

First of all I would like to express our thanks to the East Yorkshire Group for hosting our AGM, arranging 2 excellent speakers and generally looking after us with lunch, plant sales and gardens to visit. You have heard that it was with much regret that our President, Roy Lancaster, is not able to join us this year - only because he has important duties elsewhere with the anticipated arrival of a new grandchild - and I would like to thank Roy for the support and encouragement he continues to give the Society.

You will have seen that Clare has brought copies of a lovely new booklet on Pulmonarias. Margaret Stone has updated and revised Jennifer Hewitt's original text and there are lovely colour photos throughout. It was launched at the Pulmonaria Group AGM last weekend, when we also had the opportunity to hear Margaret talk about some of her favourite pulmonarias and then see them growing in her garden. The booklet will be available on the website in the next few days.

I want to thank Clare for coming today and bringing a good selection of literature with her, including a new and updated Membership leaflet - many thanks to Ana

Reynolds for her work on the redesign. It's lovely to see Clare because she has been very busy moving the office across the corridor to No 3 Basepoint Business Centre, a slightly larger space in which to accommodate our growing supplies of literature and archive material.

Now we have some more thanks: four Trustees are standing down today at the end of their term of office, John Dyson, Sharin Ingleby, Keith Scott and Ruth Plant. You will notice that I didn't say it was goodbye because we're not letting them go! John will continue to work with the Website content, Sharin to manage our Facebook page, Keith (along with Lois) have taken on the role of Groups Coordinator and Ruth is, well taking a step back, but never far away. So with four new Trustees our national team is looking in good shape.

Another farewell is to Sue Catchpole and we thank her for her work as Publications Coordinator, a newly created role that she was asked to step into and has evolved into an important link, particularly with overseeing the publication of new booklets. If you would be interested in filling this position, or know of someone who might, then please get in touch with me.

You will know that Pam Ratcliffe has decided to stand down from the post of Journal Editor and it is with much sadness that we will see her go. Like so many members, I look forward to receiving my copy of *The Hardy Plant* each spring and autumn and although Pam isn't able to be here today, I'm sure we all want to say a huge thank you and wish her well in the future.

(Pam was given a heartfelt round of applause in her absence)

The search has been on to find a successor, and I am delighted that Souren Ala has offered to take on the editorship. I'm sure that Pam and those who contribute regularly will provide valuable support and I hope that he enjoys compiling Autumn 2019 and bringing his own style to the Journal."

Jan then introduced Souren to the meeting and invited him to say a few words:

Souren Ala: "From what I can tell the HPS membership is a unique mix of renowned experts, unsung plant anoraks, gardeners with a lifetime of experience and enthusiastic amateurs. What fertile ground in which to find good gardening writing!

When I first joined the Society, not knowing any better, I was quite offhand about the journal but I was soon drawn in by the quality of the content. This is delivered in a clear, uncluttered style which is Pam's hallmark. 'The Hardy Plant' seeks to (quote) "achieve clarity and a balance between dumbing down and being pretentious" – no easy task.

I was keen to contribute myself and thereby discovered another of Pam's talents. Like all the best teachers, she makes you feel happy and proud of what you have written.

So, the bar has been set very high; and I am acutely aware of being at the bottom of a steep learning curve. Either that, or the top of a very slippery slope! Depending on you, Dear Members! Because in order to even begin, I need something from you: COPY with IMAGES (editor-speak for text with photos – always lots of photos please!).

I will of course be leaning hard on our stalwart contributors but it will be wonderful to hear from members who undoubtedly have a favourite topic; a cherished plant or plants; or a gardening encounter, which they have either not made the time, or perhaps lacked the confidence, to write about yet. As gardeners we all stand to benefit.

I will do my best to help, newbie though I am. But the journal ultimately depends on you, Dear Members! My contact details are in the Spring edition of The Hardy Plant. Please get in touch.”

The motion to adopt the Chairman’s report was approved unanimously.

4. The Hon. Treasurer, Stuart Senior spoke to his Report which had been handed to members on arrival. He noted that this is the only Society he is aware of that doesn’t circulate accounts in advance of the AGM – more of that later – so members have little time to look at them. Stuart invited members who have any queries after reading the report to email him. Stuart drew our attention to a few points:

- ‘unrestricted funds’ comprise our normal business; ‘designated’ funds are those assigned to the Kenneth Black Bursary Scheme and the annual photo competition.
- 2018 saw a loss on the value of our investments, compared to previous years where we have done well from ‘paper profits’. However, our income from these investments more than covered the paper loss.
- our net income is very healthy
- we are spending more of our designated funds, which is good – the money is there to be spent
- we saw an overall increase in membership of 40 in 2018; as we had 670 new members this represents around a 9% ‘churn’ (Judi Deakin, Hon Sec stated that some of this may be attributable to Clare having cleaned up the database, giving us more accurate membership figures)
- there are still some difficulties with income being assigned correctly; this is partly due to our membership year starting on October 1<sup>st</sup>, while our financial year ends on December 31<sup>st</sup> and also that standing order payments still have to be entered manually from the bank statements. We are hoping that the new IT system will help resolve these problems. There is no doubt that the total income is correct, but the individual headings may contain some errors.
- Overall a very successful year, especially for the Kenneth Black Scheme

There were no questions.

Stuart then proceeded to consider the 2019 budget, noting that Postholders give best guesses as to their requirements for the year. The 'contingency' is the difference between the expected income and proposed expenditure.

The motion to adopt the Treasurer's Report was proposed by Henry Woolston, seconded by Peter Reagan and approved unanimously.

#### 5. Election to the Chair of the HPS.

There was one nominee. JAN VAUGHAN was proposed by Derek Cooper, seconded by Keith Scott and elected unanimously.

#### 6. Election of Officers

Standing for election as Vice-Chair: LINDA CROWTHER

Proposer: Sue Lander                      Seconder: Margot Grice

Standing for re-election as Honorary Treasurer: STUART SENIOR

Proposer: Roy Stickland                      Seconder: Lady Rosemary FitzGerald

Standing for re-election as Honorary Secretary: JUDI DEAKIN

Proposer: Yvonne Morecroft      Seconder: Jan Vaughan

Each candidate was elected by unanimous vote

#### 7. Election of Trustees

Four nominations were received for 4 vacancies. All the following were elected as trustees to serve from 2019 - 2023

**SALLY ADAMS**      Proposer: Linda Crowther      Seconder: Margot Grice

**COLIN CUTLER**      Proposer: Gwen Beales      Seconder: Alistair Johnston

**DIANE PUNCHEON**      Proposer: Anna Peacock      Seconder: Keith Scott

**LORRAINE SHEPHERD**      Proposer: Lynn Ronayne- Belhadj      Seconder: Marcelle Maloney

Jan welcomed the new Trustees to the Committee.

8. Members considered the proposal from the Trustees that changes to the constitution be approved to allow the AGM to be held later in the year. The changes under consideration were:

6, a.      delete 'end of March' and insert '1<sup>st</sup> October'

6, a. i      delete 'for the current year'

6, e.      delete 'before 31<sup>st</sup> December' and replace with 'not less than 12 weeks'.

7, e. add "For the purpose of these rules a year is deemed to be the period between one AGM and the next.

Jan Vaughan reminded members of the reasons for these proposals as they appeared in the February newsletter. Judi Deakin noted that the wording of the amendments allows the AGM to be held at any time up to the 31<sup>st</sup> September.

Proposed: Lois Scott      Seconded: Eileen Shome  
Approved unanimously

[It was noted that the 2020 AGM will be held in March as arrangements are already underway]

9. Members then considered a further recommendation from Trustees that the following clauses be deleted from the Constitution:

3, c. The Officers of the Society shall be jointly empowered to apply a lowered subscription following a request for this arising from financial hardship on an ad hominem basis.

Jan explained that Trustees believe our subscription is comparatively low, there is no mechanism by which to apply this rule and, as a national society, we are not in any position to obtain the evidence.

The motion to delete this clause from the Constitution was proposed by Peter Reagan, seconded by Sandra Hartley and carried unanimously.

4, d. ii. submit a copy of their approved statement of accounts to the Society's Administrator

This prompted some discussion as to the relationship between the groups and the national society. The point was made from the chair that the Society has no financial responsibility for the Groups and therefore it is considered to be unnecessary for the groups to submit copies of their accounts to the office. Groups are accountable to their own members in this respect.

The motion was proposed by Linda Crowther, seconded by Diane Puncheon and carried unanimously.

10. Appointment of Haynes Watts as Independent Examiner of the Society's accounts:

Proposed: Cathy Rollason      Seconded: Henry Woolston  
Approved unanimously

Jan again thanked the East Yorkshire Group for hosting the meeting today and all those who make the Society what it is.

This concluded the formal proceedings.

### **Open Forum**

The question of using paper covers for posting out our publications was raised and answered by Lynne Hackett, Newsletter Editor, who has done considerable research into alternatives. Lynne made the following points:

- Our covers can be recycled at the plastic bag drop at supermarkets
- Discussions have been ongoing with our printers but there are currently not enough customers requesting the change to make it viable as the potato fibre wrap disintegrates within 3-6 months so cannot be bought in bulk and stored
- Ordinary paper is much heavier, will significantly increase postage costs and doesn't disintegrate in landfill.
- Changing printers involves risks re reliability and quality
- BUT the world is changing. We will keep the situation under review and hope that when we undertake the new tendering process in 2021 we will be in a position to move away from single use plastics.

Members showed their appreciation of Lynne's hard work by a round of applause.

There were no other issues raised.

The meeting closed at 2.30pm.

Judi Deakin  
Honorary Secretary