



**The Association of the Friends
of the University of Bristol Botanic Garden**

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Registered Charity Number 291159

Forty-seventh Annual General Meeting

Thursday 16 March 2023 at 7pm

(This meeting is taking place by Zoom)



AGENDA

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of AGM held by Zoom 17 March 2022
- 4 Annual reports. To receive reports from:
 - i. Chairman
 - ii. Membership Secretary
 - iii. Treasurer
- 5 Annual accounts: to approve the financial statements
- 6 Committee elections. To re-elect the following:

Susan Beech	Proposed: Sue Redfern	Seconded: Tony West
Susan Redfern	Proposed: Sue Beech	Seconded: Janet Hathway

To elect the following:

Eva Barrett	Proposed: Pat Davie	Seconded: Sue Redfern
Lucy Davies	Proposed: Tony West	Seconded: Pat Davie
Hilary Philips	Proposed: Paul Mugford	Seconded: Tony West
Chris Radford	Proposed: Sue Redfern	Seconded: Janet Hathway
- 7 Honorary Auditor: to approve the appointment of Edward Holcombe ACA
- 8 Constitution: To amend Item 9 Para 2: 'All payments must be authorised by any two of four persons nominated by the Committee.' (Note from Treasurer: 'Payment' not 'cheques' as almost all banking is now done online. By expanding to 'any 2 of 4' it will aid the transition in Committee roles and provide better cover if required.)
- 9 Any other business

Association of Friends of the University of Bristol Botanic Garden
Minutes of the forty-sixth Annual General Meeting,
held by Zoom in view of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic
on Thursday 17th March 2022 at 7 pm

Introduction

The Chairman of the Friends, Pat Davie, welcomed about 36 Friends linked virtually through Zoom, thanks to technical support from Rob Bristow. A booklet containing the Agenda, Chairman's report, Membership report, Trustees' report and Financial Statement had been linked to the Friends' website as a pdf file and publicised in the 12/13 March 2022 edition of Friends' e-news. In March 2021 the equivalent booklet was circulated with the Spring Newsletter, but this did not fit the relative timings of the AGM and Newsletter distribution in 2022.

Welcome from the President

The President of the Friends, Jekka McVicar, gave a welcoming address. As a horticulturalist herself, she is well aware that Covid-19 has made the past two years a tough time for running the Garden and managing the Friends. The restrictions have been lifted at a moment when the conflict in the Ukraine is a source of big worries. In the coming months, the Garden will have special importance as a solace and meeting place. With climate change increasingly in the news, it is an important moment for people to learn about the importance of the plant kingdom, and its essential links with pollinators. We should treasure what we have.

Apologies

The only apology for absence was from Kathy Strawbridge.

Minutes of AGM held by Zoom, 30 March 2021

The minutes as circulated were unanimously approved.

Chairman's report

Pat Davie presented her report. This time last year, as the Covid-19 vaccines became available, we were all hopeful of having our freedom again. Who could have predicted a second year of restrictions? I can only reiterate my appreciation of how the Garden staff have continued to keep the plants alive, despite everything, and thank the Friends for maintaining their support.

Visitor numbers during 2021 were only about half of those in 2019. The Garden was not reopened after the winter lockdown until 12 April, and then only during the week and pre-booked. It was not until 23 August that it was safe to reopen the glasshouses. Chandos Deli was able to serve limited refreshments but visitors could only sit outside or under the gazebo. For a second year it was not possible to hold the big Festivals – Easter Sculpture, and Bee and Pollination in September – but we are all anticipating more success in 2022. As an additional attraction in a few months' time, the generous gift of the RHS Chelsea-winning Guangzhou Garden is being rebuilt in the garden of the Holmes Cottage. We would like to thank the Corporate members – Cleeve Nursery, Almondsbury Garden Centre, Rolls-Royce and World Odyssey – for their continued support in a challenging time for all businesses.

The exhibition planned for 2020 was finally able to open on 7 July, for three months until the end of September. The development of 'Displays Decoded' by artist Alex Hirtzel, with Dr David Lawson from UoB Biological Sciences, was supported by the Friends. They gave our Benefactor Members special tours of this fascinating new approach to how pollinators are attracted to plants. The Jazz concert on 14 August was the first time the Blue Notes and Hannah Wedlock had played together for 18 months. Everyone enjoyed it and seemed pleased to be able to socialise again. Tickets were limited to 150, which is less than half the usual number, but with the raffle it enabled us to make a profit for the Friends.

As reported last year we have set aside the funds to cover the traineeship of Steve Asman until March 2023. Another trainee will be recruited to start in the autumn. The Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust has promised to make a contribution to the costs, but the Friends will provide the balance.

In 2019 I attended the inaugural meeting of a Forum for representatives of Friends' groups from botanic gardens around the UK. We have had a number of Zoom meetings and increased our numbers to some 20 members. On behalf of the Forum, Nick Wray and I gave an online presentation in May 2021 which has resulted in a number of approaches for advice, as many gardens have only small Friends' groups and Bristol is considered a front runner in the use of volunteers.

The Friends' Association continues to rely on the many volunteers who give their time and energy and have kept everything going during the pandemic, with the unflinching support of the Garden and Admin teams, as led by the Curator, Nick Wray. Despite many additional responsibilities, Nick has continued with good humour to be positive that things will improve, and has kept the Friends informed with his fortnightly enews articles as well as in the newsletter.

Although there are still challenges and uncertainties we are all optimistic for the return of life without restrictions. It is 140 years since Adolph Leipner founded the first Botanic Garden at the University of Bristol. Let us celebrate with an exciting and successful Garden year.

Membership Secretary's Report

In introducing the report, Sue Beech expressed thanks to Sue Redfern and Jen Walker, with whom she works as a team. The membership totals for the year ending 31 December 2021 were 2358 members in 1589 households. These are close to those of 2018 but represent a 30% drop since the start of the pandemic. There are 42 Benefactor Members, which is 10% higher than a year ago. Some renewal subscriptions have included donations, which amounted to £1208. In response to members' expectations, payments are now accepted by bank transfer. We have noted that requests for seeds from *Index Seminum* are only from 12% of the distribution list, and are working with the Garden office on ways of reducing the associated costs. Geoffrey Blake, who so efficiently printed all of the Friends' mailing letters, constitutions, gift cards and membership cards has now retired. We would like to thank him for his reliable and efficient work. The team have maintained the distribution of the Newsletters while adhering to the pandemic restrictions in place on issue dates. Thanks are due to Pat Davie and others for help in assembling the mailings, and to Mike Austin who prepares and collects the envelopes for posting.

Treasurer's Report

Paul Mugford presented the Trustees' Report and Financial Statement. In the Income headings of the accounts, membership subscriptions are almost unchanged from a year ago, with a small but welcome increase in Benefactor Member subscriptions. Once again Covid restrictions prevented most events from going ahead. We were delighted to hold a somewhat reduced Jazz event that generated £1,888. We are grateful to Chris Purvis who continued with plant sales from home and contributed an amazing £1,165. Legacies and donations have increased to £2,620, while work done to collect Gift Aid generated £8,602. Nearly 90% of the Association's income is from subscriptions.

Turning to use of funds, the excess of Income, after expenses, continues to support the work of the Garden. This included regular maintenance and development amounting to £36,780, and Trainee support at £14,100. The major recurring cost, apart from the above, is stationery, printing and postage, mainly for the newsletter and seed list. We continue to explore the use of email to help reduce costs.

The available reserves are currently £83K, with about half being held in an Education and Training Fund (ETF) which underpins our undertaking to support further Trainee costs. The sad death of Chris Starr ends his support in auditing the accounts, for which we have been grateful since 1994. His successor will have the title 'Independent Examiner' (see below).

Approval of the Financial Statement was proposed by Jean Martin, seconded by Sue Beech, and approved unanimously.

Committee elections

Alice Maltby (re-election).	Proposed Sue Beech, seconded Jean Martin.
Pat Davie (re-election).	Proposed Paul Wood, seconded Tony West
Paul Wood (re-election).	Proposed Pat Davie, seconded Alice Maltby.
Janet Hathway (election).	Proposed Sue Redfern, seconded Jean Martin.
Rebecca Tregarthen (election)	Proposed Pat Davie, seconded Paul Mugford.

All unanimous.

Independent examiner

The appointment of Edward Holcombe ACA as Independent Examiner of the accounts was proposed by Paul Mugford and seconded by Elaine Harris. Unanimous.

Approval of increase in membership subscription rates with effect from 1 January 2023

As explained, Friends' subscriptions have only changed twice in over 20 years, with the single rate being increased from £15 to £20 in January 2001 and to £25 in 2015. Over the past two years there has not been the usual increase in membership or income, which the festivals and other events provide. With the rise in the charge for entry to the Garden and current inflationary pressures the Committee have had to recommend an increase in membership charges to ensure we can maintain the level of support to the Garden and for the trainees. The proposed new rates of membership to take effect from 1 January 2023: Single £30, Joint £45, Benefactor £150, Life £750.

Proposed: Martin Webb. Seconded: Simon Levison.

Approved unanimously.

Any further business

There was no further business, so Pat Davie declared the meeting closed.

The AGM was followed by the last in the current series of autumn/winter lectures. *Exploring the impact of invasive acacias on plant-pollinator networks in the Fynbos*, by Maisie Brett. Maisie described findings during a recent Masters Degree project supervised by Prof. Jane Memmott, School of Biological Sciences, University of Bristol, where she is now a PhD student.

Annual General Meeting 2022

Report from the Chair

Since all pandemic restrictions were lifted and the Garden became fully open in the spring of 2022 we have once again been able to welcome unlimited numbers of visitors and volunteers. The Garden had missed the care of the volunteers as during lockdowns the Garden staff had to concentrate on maintaining the plant collections but after much hard work it has all recovered. Overall visitor numbers of 23,500 were more than the 15,000 in 2021 with its lockdowns, but still lower than the record years prior to the pandemic of 30,000 visitors. Numbers were helped by the introduction of DAISY days: on Wednesdays visitors can 'Donate As It Suits You' i.e. whatever people can afford, to allow everyone to enjoy the benefits of visiting the Botanic Garden.

2022 was a year of getting back to 'normal' and this started at Easter with the return of the popular Sculpture Festival with 20 artists displaying their work and over 3,300 visitors over the four day weekend enjoying the warm spring sunshine. The Friends plant sale raised £1816 for the funds. The Bee and Pollination Festival was moved to the August Bank holiday weekend to avoid the traffic problems caused by the road closures for the Downs concert and attracted over 2,000 visitors. Many other events returned including the Fascination of Plants, the National Garden Scheme open day on 17 July and the Get Growing Garden trail in September. The Friends' Jazz concert in July was another great success with over 250 guests and with an added attraction of music from a local ukulele band, the South Bristol Ukes.

The glasshouses were reorganised during lockdown and the fourth zone was fully opened to visitors. The installation of the generous gift of the Guangzhou garden from Chelsea Flower Show has been delayed but is now nearing completion, hopefully to be completed by Easter.

In July we were part of a weekend celebrating 75 years of the twinning of Bristol with Hannover in Germany. A Cornelian cherry tree was sailed over by a team of volunteers and planted by the Welcome Lodge by dignitaries from both cities.

Lectures continued to be by Zoom which still seem to be preferred by the majority as can be seen by the numbers who join and it has enabled us to hear from speakers who would not be able to travel to Bristol. Many organisations have returned to in person meetings and we will be looking at the options again shortly.

We would like to thank the Corporate members: Cleeve Nursery, Almondsbury Garden Centre, Rolls-Royce and World Odyssey who have continued their support as their businesses recover from the pandemic restrictions.

Although some people did not renew their membership over lockdown, as reported by our Membership Team, the Friends have continued to grow and now exceed the numbers before the pandemic. The Garden entrance charge was increased from £7 to £9 from March and as the Friends' annual membership did not immediately increase we benefited from many new members who we hope will renew in 2023 and continue to enjoy the benefits.

Some volunteers have not returned to the volunteer army but there are a number of new recruits who give their time and energy including those in the Welcome Lodge, gardeners, new guides for the tour groups of adults and school students, and the many other roles which ensure the smooth running of the Friends and events, with the unflinching support of the Curator, Nick Wray, and the Garden team.

I would like to thank in particular the following for their support, both personally and on behalf of the Friends:

Tony West has continued to act as Vice-chair as well as managing the Sculpture Festival.

Sue Beech, Sue Redfern and Jen Walker: The membership team have managed the increase in numbers, due to the initiatives outlined in the Membership Report, as well as technological changes. Jen Walker has

decided, for family reasons, to leave her role of Direct Debit manager and the team will miss her, but she will still help, when she can, at events and newsletter stuffing. Sue Beech will now be the contact for the Direct Debits as well as continuing as Membership Secretary.

We are pleased to welcome **Eva Barrett** who is gradually taking over the responsibilities from Sue Beech and in due course will become Membership Secretary.

Paul Mugford as Treasurer has maintained a steady hand on the accounts and has recommended better interest rates for the funds we hold.

We welcome **Hilary Phillips** who will be taking over from Paul, although he will remain to guide her through the transition.

Jean Martin: My co-editor of the newsletter.

Janet Hathway who will be looking after the Benefactor and Life members and helping to manage the Bee Festival.

Rebecca Tregarthen who will be looking after the Corporate members.

Jane Perkins who is delighted to be back organising the guides for a full programme of tours.

Sally Meadows who has organised the lecture programme.

Raymond Gallery who has dealt with all the technical side of our Zoom lectures.

Rob Bristow and Ian Knight who have been updating the website and are looking at technical improvements.

Heather Dunford and Roderick Macleod who have sent out the regular enews.

Mike Austin who has kept the membership team supplied with envelopes for newsletters and seed lists and delivered the thousands of letters to OnePost.

Chris Purvis continues to mastermind the plant sales and is looking forward to our main event at the Easter Garden Sculpture Festival.

Roger Mellors who, as well as his regular volunteering in the Garden and guiding tours, has continued to give talks about the Garden to local groups and manages the jazz concert (with a little help from me).

Ann Brake continues to be one of the main school guides and also does talks to local groups. These talks often result in a tour or visit to the Garden as well as a welcome donation.

Sadly we learnt of the death in April of **Paul Wood** who kept minutes of our committee meetings and looked after our Benefactor and Life members. Also **Alice Maltby** who, despite bad health, continued to keep the media world informed and arranged the speakers at the Bee Festival but sadly died shortly afterwards. We miss them both.

We are very pleased to welcome new volunteers to the committee: Eva Barrett and Hilary Phillips as mentioned above; **Chris Radford** is our new Minutes Secretary and has also held plant sales at her home to raise funds for the Friends; and **Lucy Davies** was already a new tour guide and is now getting to know the many and varied aspects of the role of Chair.

We very much appreciate the time given by the President of the Friends, **Jekka McVicar**, who has continued to be very supportive, including contributions to the newsletter and our lecture programme. After working from home much of the time the **Admin team** of Corinne and Helen were joined by Joyce Smith to replace Judy Cordell and are all now back to working back in the office, maintaining the Garden's smooth running whilst keeping up with all the queries. There has been a complete change from September 2022 of the syllabus to the RHS courses, which has meant a great deal of extra work for them and the tutors to enable the students to prepare for the first of the new exams in February 2022; added to which Corinne and Joyce are themselves studying for RHS Level 2.

The **Garden team** – the hard working but always cheerful Froggie, Andy, Penny, Vicky and Susan are very pleased to have the volunteers back full time to share the tasks.

Steve Asman will be completing his two-year apprenticeship in March 2023. He has thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity the Friends have given him and will always be grateful to us for providing this traineeship. We wish him well in his future and hope to welcome a new trainee once the recruitment process is complete. The Botanic Garden team continues to be led by the **Curator, Nick Wray**, who with all the responsibility for the safety of his staff and visitors as well as the plant collections has continued with good humour to be supportive and appreciative of the Friends.

2022 marked 140 years since Adolph Leipner founded the first Botanic Garden at the University of Bristol which has gone through many ups and downs but we are now looking forward to another exciting and successful Garden year.

Pat Davie

February 2023

Membership report

Membership totals for year ending 31 December 2022 (Numbers in brackets are for year to 31 December 2021.)

A total of **2892** (2358) members in **1885** (1589) households,. We have now fully recovered the losses in membership during the pandemic.

Sadly, there is a drop in Benefactor membership to **34** (42), due to death or people not renewing as Benefactors.

Donations received from members joining or renewing membership, amounted to **£1737**. The number of gift memberships has increased to **55** (33) during the year plus **29** (11) as Christmas gifts to give a total of **75** (34).

The team continue to meet the challenges of the increase in membership. Two initiatives have helped manage the workload. Firstly, members who join and pay when they visit the Garden receive their membership pack and cards immediately. Secondly, we have a 'Join the Friends' table at the entrance to the Festivals where membership can be purchased prior to entering the event.

Following a successful request for volunteers in the summer newsletter we have a new recruit to the membership team, **Eva Barrett**, who will be taking over as membership secretary in the coming year. **Sue Redfern** is continuing to give her valuable support. For family reasons **Jen Walker** will no longer be able to give her time assisting with the team and we thank her for all her hard work during the past three years. The team still do much of our communication by Zoom - an unintended benefit of the pandemic - as we all work from home.

The seed list survey, started in 2020, has revealed that 28% of households would like to receive it by email and 10% by post, with 42% not at all. This was a worthwhile exercise which will save postage and printing costs as well as volunteer time.

We would like to express our thanks to two volunteers who give the membership team enormous support: **Mike Austin**, for printing the envelopes for the newsletters, delivering the boxes of newsletters to One Post and much more; and **Roderick MacLeod** who manages the distribution of enews, our regular email newsletter update. This year he has carefully checked and updated our email addresses for those members who pay by Direct Debit which will enable most of our Direct Debit notifications to be sent by email in future years.

Sue Beech

On behalf of the membership team: Sue Beech, Sue Redfern, Jen Walker and Eva Barrett

January 2023

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Association of Friends of the University of Bristol Botanic Garden

Hollybush Lane, Stoke Bishop, Bristol BS9 1JB Charity No. 291159

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 December 2022

Constitution

The objects of the Association are to advance public education in, and to promote research into, Botany and its related subjects and to publish useful results of such research. In pursuance of these objectives the Association supports the work and further development of the University of Bristol Botanic Garden. The garden is unique in the West Country and the plant collections have been chosen to provide teaching and research resources for the University. Its mission to educate, communicate and conserve has also established a valuable amenity for local schools and a cultural attraction for the public.

Committee

Management of the Association is vested in a Committee (the Trustees) and its powers and duties are set out in the Constitution, including the procedures for appointment, nomination and election. Regular meetings of the Committee provide opportunity to apply risk management criteria in the assessment of the viability of potential fund-raising initiatives, whilst being dutifully aware of its charitable objectives.

The following members served the Committee during the year:

Patricia Davie	Chair	Paul Mugford	Treasurer
Chris Radford	Secretary (co-opted)	Tony West	Vice Chair
Susan Beech	Membership	Jean Martin	
Susan Redfern		Janet Hathway	
Rebecca Tregarthen			

We were sad to learn of the death during 2022 of two Committee members, and long-term supporters of the Garden: Paul Wood (Secretary and Benefactor members) and Alice Maltby (Marketing and Publicity Officer).

Nicholas Wray, Curator of the Garden, and other volunteers as appropriate may attend Committee meetings in an *ex officio* capacity.

Important aspects of the Committee's role are to encourage new members of the Association and to stimulate interest in the Garden through a variety of events and activities. Income generated by such initiatives, and from members' subscriptions and donations, after meeting expenses, is used to support the maintenance and development of the Garden. The Committee acknowledges the support of those members who have become involved directly in Friends activities and 'hands-on' work in the Garden.

Accounting system

Our accounting system is a simple cash book approach that is acceptable to the Charities Commission and reflects the straightforward financial activity of the Association. The cash book approach simply means that we record income and expenditure when it happens whilst taking care to note any significant items due (not paid or received) for the current year.

Income

During the year membership subscriptions increased significantly £54,528 (£41,422) with a decrease in our Benefactor member subscriptions £4,500 (£5,250). Covid restrictions were eased enabling a larger annual Jazz event that generated £4,347 (£1,888). We are also very grateful to Chris Purvis and Chris Radford who contributed an amazing £3,447 through plant sales and Christmas wreath workshops.

Legacies and Donations have seen a modest increase to £3,547 (£2,620) and work done to claim Gift Aid generated another £11,669 (£8,602). The Education and Training Fund - set up in 2014 to enable the

Garden to employ trainee horticulturalists - continues to benefit from subscriptions from our Benefactor and Corporate members along with Life Memberships.

Subscription Income (Sub + GA) accounts for 96% of the Association's total Income (89%).

Use of Funds

The excess of Income, after expenses, continues to support the work of the Garden and during 2022 including a regular maintenance and development payment amounting to £38,766 (£36,780) and Trainee support at £21,040 (£14,100) - NB adjusted for 2021 £7,050.

Our most significant recurring operating cost, apart from the above, remains stationary, printing and postage, mainly for the newsletter and seed list, at £9,659 (£10,273).

New costs are BACS Bureau charges, due to the enforced change, including some 'one off' payments, and Card Charges to enable the use of card readers. Legal fees relate to the Trust Deed changes required for the Cecily Jones Trust Fund. Miscellaneous includes a new screen for the membership team and Card readers, both 'one-off' payments.

Reserves

Having set aside the Cecily Jones Trust Fund of £62,565 (of which we are custodians of the capital and can only use the interest) and the Education and Training Fund (ETF) of a nominal £50,000 (£42,488) we currently hold £45,930 (£41,388) in the General Fund. The ETF underpins our undertaking to support further rolling Trainee costs over a 2 year period.

Investments

The NS&I account has been closed and transferred to a new Charity Aid Foundation (CAF) Charity Deposit Platform (CDP) managed by Flagstone. All remaining funds are still held by either Lloyds Bank or Barclays Bank. The move to the CAF/ CDP enables us to access a range of fixed term deposits with minimal administration and inbuilt safeguards.

Insurance The Association's activities are covered by a Public / Employers' Liability Insurance Policy under the Affiliated Societies Insurance Scheme operated by the Royal Horticultural Society.

Auditor: Independent examiner Ed Holcombe A.C.A

By order of the Trustees

March 2023.

The Association of Friends of the University of Bristol Botanic Garden
Registered Charity No 291159

Income and Expenditure account for the year ended 31 December 2022

	2022		2021
	£		£
INCOME		INCOME	
Membership Subscriptions	54528		41422
Benefactor Membership	4500		5250
Corporate Membership	1650		1150
Donations	3547		2620
Social Events - Jazz concert	5240		2550
Miscellaneous	120		
Plant sales	3090		1165
Christmas wreath sales	357		
Gift Aid (2020)	11669		8602
Interest on bank deposits etc.	456		521
Visiting Speakers	610		50
Book sales	10		
Sundry receipts / petty cash			
	<u>85778</u>		<u>63330</u>

EXPENDITURE		EXPENDITURE	
Garden support and development	38766		36780
Education & Training Support			
Garden Support - Trainee (Adj. for 2021 £7,050 provision)	21040		14100
Social Events -Jazz Concert	893		662
Lectures	250		200
Bank charges	802		462
BACS Bureau	1158		
Card Charges (Sumup)	162		
Entertaining	78		40
Insurance & affiliation	125		110
Legal Fees	462		
Stationery & Printing	6265		5699
Postage	3394		4574
Service charges	29		22
Sundry (Software)	146		192
Miscellaneous	459		530
	<u>74030</u>		<u>63371</u>
Surplus/(-) for the Year	<u><u>11748</u></u>	Surplus/(-) for the Year	<u><u>-41</u></u>

BALANCE SHEET as at 31st December

Net Assets		Net Assets	
Barclays Bank C/A	2572		37386
Lloyds Bank C/A	12556		4002
Petty cash	131		265
Restricted: Barclays Bank (Education and Training Fund)	5147		42488
Restricted: CAF Charity Deposit Platform / Flagstone	138048		
Restricted: NS&I Investment (Cecily Jones Trust)			62565
	<u>158453</u>		<u>146706</u>
Profit & Loss Account			
Brought forward	146705		146746
Net profit /(loss)	11748		-41
TOTAL FUNDS	<u><u>158453</u></u>		<u><u>146705</u></u>

Approved on behalf of the Committee

P Mugford (Honorary Treasurer) 31 January 2023

Independent Examiner - Ed Holcombe ACA