



**Association of the Friends  
of the University of Bristol Botanic Garden  
ANNUAL REPORT 2024  
Registered Charity Number 291159  
Forty-ninth Annual General Meeting  
Thursday 20 March 2025 at 7pm**



**AGENDA**

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of AGM held 20 March 2024
- 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.
  - a) To re-elect the following:

Patricia Davie	Proposed:	Seconded:
Janet Newland	Proposed:	Seconded:
  - b) To elect the following:

Robert Bristow	Proposed:	Seconded:
Ian Knight	Proposed:	Seconded:
Jose Tarnowski	Proposed:	Seconded:
- 7 Honorary Auditor: to approve the appointment of Edward Holcombe ACA
- 8 Any other business

**Association of Friends of the University of Bristol Botanic Garden**  
**Minutes of the forty-eighth Annual General Meeting**  
**Held at the Frank Lecture Theatre on Wednesday 20 March 2024 at 7 pm**

**1 Welcome**

The Chairman of the Friends, Pat Davie, welcomed approximately 35 Friends. The Agenda, Chairman's Report, Membership Report, Trustee's report and Financial statement have been made available on the website and she hoped that all had been able to access it. The Treasurer and Membership Secretary will give a brief summary and answer any questions.

**2 Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Professor Jane Memmott, Sue Beech, Sue Redfern, Sally Meadows and Rob Bristow.

**3 Minutes of AGM held 16 March 2023**

The minutes of the 2023 AGM which had been agreed by the Committee shortly after the meeting were unanimously approved.

**4 (i) Chairman's Report**

The Chairman gave a full report which is available separately. To summarise, 2023 saw a return to normal following the hiatus of Covid although visitor numbers were not quite back to pre-Covid levels. The Guangzhou Garden is nearing completion and will be officially opened on 1 May with dignitaries from the University of Bristol in attendance. It is hoped there will be a delegation from China at a later date.

Michaela Mottershaw, the new two-year trainee supported by the Friends, is currently studying the RHS courses and doing well.

The usual events took place, the Easter Sculpture Festival, the Bee and Pollination Festival, the Jazz concert with the Blue Notes and the Bristol Ukes. There were many guided tours. The lecture series included a special lecture in November with Adam Frost.

All of these activities will continue in 2024 starting with the Easter Sculpture Festival. RHS courses were not full this year, so Friends' help was vital.

The Newsletter is reducing to 3 editions –the early summer issue will be dropped. This decision has been driven by the cost of postage and the feeling that Friends' funds can be better used. Friends will continue to be kept up to date with the e-news which will be available at the Welcome Lodge for those not using e-mail.

The UoB is now cashless, but for the time being the Friends will continue to accept all forms of payment.

We are looking to move to a more automated membership system. The Chairman, who is herself standing down, expressed her thanks to Sue Beech for all of her work as membership secretary and expressed thanks to the Committee and volunteers, to Nick Wray and the Garden team.

**4 (ii) Membership Report**

Full report available. Eva Barrett who joined the membership team last year gave a brief summary. Membership at the end of 2023 was just over 2400. This is a reduction of about 400 following the post Covid surge. Almost two thirds of the 600 new members taken on after the pandemic did not renew.

Sue Beech having retired, the role of membership secretary is currently vacant. The team is investigating a new system to reduce reliance on manual records.

#### **4(iii) Treasurer's Report**

Full report available. The Treasurer invited Friends to get in touch directly with him if any further information is required. He explained that we have a core of subscribed members who remain loyal each year. Subscription income increased due to the increase in the rates. Thanks to all who have renewed. Membership tends to fall into 2 categories – those who join for a year and those who stay for many years. We hope to regain the lost members.

Legacies and donations are a little lower this year. Gift Aid generates £10-11k per year. We obtained a grant from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust towards the trainee support, which freed up funds to support the Garden in other ways.

We have benefited from higher interest rates and have changed the method for deposit of funds using the Charity Aid Foundation which gives access to a range of accounts.

The Friends supported the Garden in a number of ways, through the subvention to the Garden, supporting the trainee, and in 2023 a further £33k for special projects including new interpretation boards, a polytunnel for RHS students etc.

Significant operating costs are printing and postage.

The Treasurer asked Friends to bear with us whilst we implement changes to the membership.

With regard to reserves, we benefit from the Cecily Jones Trust Fund of £62,500 but only the income from this can be used so the capital sum shown cannot be spent.

We always try to have £50k in reserve to ensure that we can honour the commitment to pay for the trainee for 2 years.

We hold full insurance.

Ed Holcombe, the independent assessor, has approved the accounts for which thanks were expressed. There were no questions.

#### **5 Annual Accounts**

Approval of the annual accounts was proposed by Jean Martin and seconded by Carole Webb and approved unanimously.

#### **6 Committee Elections**

Committee members retire by rotation every 3 years. Jean Martin and Paul Mugford are willing to stand again. They were proposed by Lucy Davies and seconded by Carole Webb. Re-elected unanimously.

Sue Beech having resigned, the office of membership secretary will remain vacant at this stage.

Tony West will become an *ex-officio* member. Ian Knight and Rob Bristow, who are much involved in researching a new membership system have agreed to join the Committee but will be co-opted at this stage. Jose Tarnowski has joined the membership team as an *ex officio* member of the Committee. As Curator of the Garden, Nick Wray attends committee meetings *ex-officio*.

#### **7 Honorary Auditor**

The re-appointment of Edward Holcombe ACA as Independent Examiner of the accounts was proposed by Eva Barrett and seconded by Rebecca Tregarthen. Approved unanimously.

#### **8 AOB**

Following the meeting Nick Wray and Lucy Davies presented Pat Davie with a large bouquet of flowers. In expressing her thanks Pat said it had been a pleasure to have been a volunteer for more than 25 years including serving as Chairman of the Friends twice, first for 6 years during the move to The Holmes and latterly for 10 years. It has been a very enjoyable part of her life. She wishes Lucy Davies all the best in her future role.

Lucy Davies gave a vote of thanks to Pat for her energy, humour and obvious love of the Garden, for training Lucy so thoroughly over the last year and for agreeing to remain as Vice-Chair.

To sum up, "Pat has kept us all going through thick and thin all these years."

On behalf of the UoB Botanic Garden Nick Wray thanked Pat for her huge commitment to the Friends to help the Botanic Garden grow and develop through interesting and challenging times, including the move of the Garden to the Holmes, and for her friendship and positive working relationship creating a partnership between the Friends and the Garden. A huge thank you from all at the Garden.

The Chairman expressed her thanks and to all those who attended the meeting which closed at 7.25pm. It was followed by a lecture from Dr Chris Thorogood, Deputy Director of Oxford Botanic Garden who completed his PhD at UoB, in a tale of his quest to find Rafflesia growing in the wild, in connection with his new book: "Pathless Forest: The Quest to Save the World's Largest Flowers"

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024**

### **REPORT FROM THE CHAIR**

In January 2024 we started on a high note with the Friends talk "Putting Nature and Imagination at the Heart of Sustainable Cities" which revealed the background to the creation of the Guangzhou Garden. We had healthy numbers online as well as in-person for this talk, showing a continued desire for online connection from our members. This fascinating talk acted as an introduction to the new Garden which was opened in May with a visit from the Vice Chancellor Evelyn Welch and the Deputy Mayor of the city of Bristol Asher Craig.

The talks throughout this year have been of a very high standard and thanks is due to Sally Meadows for her dedication and persistence in finding such great speakers. We are also delighted to welcome Rob Bristow who has volunteered to help us with technical support for the talks and lectures after some IT hiccups! As we settle into 2025, we are looking at ways to improve the numbers of those attending and reach more of our members.

The Friends have continued their regular contribution to the running of the Garden. We have also paid the salary of the trainee Michaela Mottershaw, donated the funds for a polytunnel for the RHS students and the replacement Luke Jerram's Glitch bench to future proof its presence. The accounts for the year to December 2024 show a healthy surplus. We therefore start the year in a steady position as the new Membermojo management system goes live in full. We anticipate some fall off in income during this period as the new system beds in but as our accounts show we have some flexibility to respond to any fallow periods. We also hope that the interest generated by our 50/20 Anniversary will engender a spike in membership as the year progresses. Thanks to Pat Davie for organising an Events' Committee to ensure these celebrations go with a swing.

The Committee has been very supportive of the work of the Membership Sub-committee on the introduction of Membermojo, our new online management system. The minutes show the strenuous and thorough attempts of its members to plan carefully for the changeover in a way which does not exclude or ignore membership requests or requirements. I would like to thank Jose Tarnowski who has taken over the role of Membership secretary at a time of great change, Eva Barrett for holding the fort when both systems were running in tandem, Ian Knight for the overall creation of our Membermojo site, Paul Mugford for his skilful liaison between all parties and keeping us all on the straight and narrow and Rob Bristow for his creative engagement with the planning of the new site. As a committee we have set up various ways for members to feed back any challenges or queries to us, such as the focus group meeting at the Linnaeus room, the regular Coffee-catch ups and the many email responses from the membership team as and when members require. Since the Friends is run entirely by volunteers, we decided that we could not offer a dedicated phone line service and member queries are sometimes forwarded to us from the

Botanic Garden office staff. We are very grateful for their help and cooperation at this crucial time. I must mention Joyce Smith who has been a fount of all knowledge, and we are very grateful for her support.

We were delighted with the success of the Easter Art and Sculpture Festival. The weather was mostly kind to us, we welcomed a pleasing number of visitors, and we were able to pilot our new Membership system via handheld technology which seemed to run very smoothly. The plant sale, one of our major fundraisers, was yet again very popular and many thanks to Chris Purvis and her team. The guides were on hand to give new and familiar faces tours of the garden, now including of course the Guangzhou Garden. Many thanks to Jane Perkins for her tireless organisation of the guides this year and for many years. This is an event where the force of the volunteers is really in evidence. From car parking to stewarding, making tea to answering questions, a very big thank you to all the many members who gave us their time to make the day such a success. I would like to thank Tony West who has continued to mastermind the whole event with the skilful support of Andy Winfield. Tony will be working with a new volunteer, Lydia Daniels, at the next Sculpture Festival, and we are delighted to welcome her.

We received only positive feedback from members about our newsletter changes this year. The editorial team of Pat Davie and Jean Martin ensure that the standard is as high as ever, something we are very lucky to have. The decision to produce three editions rather than four was not an easy one but we feel is more suited to us as we move forward because of time and money constraints on volunteers. Thanks are also due to David Myring, Roderick Macleod and Heather Dunford for their support with the newsletter and the enews. We would like to make more use of digital means of communication and are going to conduct a review to this end, including the Friends' presence on the Botanic Garden website. The help and advice of Ian Knight and Rob Bristow has been invaluable in giving us the confidence to move forward on this issue.

As a new Chair who is still learning on the job, I would also like to extend my thanks to Chris Radford. She keeps the most excellent minutes, a complex skill, as well as raising significant amounts of money for the garden in a myriad of ways.

The RHS courses have been a great success again this year, bringing a welcome band of students to wander in and learn from the Garden and we are hoping to persuade more graduating students that they would benefit from a membership with us!

On the corporate side I would like to thank Cleeve Nurseries, Almondsbury Garden Centre, Rolls Royce and World Odyssey who have been corporate members of the Friends. We will be reviewing our corporate offering in the months ahead to see what more we can do in this area.

The Jazz Concert was another success this year with the perennial hits the Blue Notes and Hannah Wedlock. This is a major fundraising event which takes many hours of careful organisation. Many thanks are due to Roger Mellors and Pat Davie for their continued dedication. We are hoping the Jazz in 2025 will be our biggest and best yet so do hope to see you.

In August of 2024 the Bee and Pollination Festival was also another success despite competing with the Massive Attack concert on the Downs. Janet Newland was the mastermind of the whole thing, working in close collaboration with the Garden staff so thanks to all. The lectures and talks which run as a part of this two-day festival were a particular highlight for me with many excellent and thought-provoking topics and speakers.

We have continued to have a few queries about the fact that the University is now cashless. We will continue to accept cash and cheque although we do now have card machines charged up and ready to go on site.

And to finish...Tipping Point in October. What a memorable note to end the year! A simulation of a forest fire by the award-winning artist Luke Jerram, with sound by Bafta winning artist Dan Jones, created a spectacle which transformed the Garden into a fiery inferno - but safely, raising awareness. This was partly funded by the Friends. Those of us who saw it will, I'm sure I am right in saying, never forget it.

My thanks to everyone who has helped during the year in so many different ways, in particular all the Committee who have supported me in my first year, all the volunteers who make the events a success as well as those involved in the general administration of the Friends and the upkeep of the Garden throughout the year. And finally, my sincere thanks to Nick Wray and his wonderful Garden team all of whom who work so hard and have made me feel so welcome.

We all look forward to an exciting year of celebrations in 2025.

**Lucy Davies**  
**February 2025**

### **MEMBERSHIP REPORT 2024**

The Membership Team now comprises Jose Tarnowski who has been appointed Membership Secretary with Eva Barrett acting as her assistant.

In 2024 we attracted 646 new members in total, higher than 2023 but less than the post Covid year of 2022. The total number of members is 2436. Life memberships comprise 51 members and Benefactor memberships 42 members.

2024 has been a year of transition to our new membership management system, Membermojo. Using a sub-committee to plan out the steps we have designed a system that both members who wish to be part of this and those who prefer to pay using 'manual options' can use. There is still the option to pay by cheque or cash, although we see that diminishing over the next few years. The process of loading everyone's details has given us the chance to check that all the data held is correct and secure. It will also mean that we no longer hold our members' banking details.

Renewals will be monitored closely as we are asking members to use the Membermojo online process themselves. We will no longer be providing Direct Debit or Standing Order options, but we will support those who choose to renew either through Membermojo or via the team. We will train Welcome Lodge volunteers in how to deal with both renewals and new members.

Thanks are due to all those who have helped with the introduction of Membermojo, including all the Committee and also those volunteers who help with the distribution of the newsletter and at events.

**Jose Tarnowski and Eva Barrett**  
**Membership Team**  
**February 2025**

## 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 31st December 2024

#### 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:

Lucy Davies	Chair	Patricia Davie	Chair
Paul Mugford	Treasurer	Chris Radford	Secretary
Jean Martin		Josephine Tarnowski	Membership
Eva Barrett		Janet Newland	
Rebecca Tregarthen		Robert Bristow	
Ian Knight		Tony West	Retired 2024
Susan Redfern		Resigned during 2024	

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 remains 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 dropped to £60,433 (£62,078) as have Benefactor member subscriptions at £4,800 (£5,250). There is always some movement and probably reflects a further loss of the post Covid boost. The annual jazz concert generated £3,204. Plant sales amounted to £5,114, driven by Chris Purvis and Chris Radford, who also raised £1,441 from the sale of hand knitted gloves. Our volunteer speakers who visit groups generated £1,065.

Legacies and Donations amounted to £86,809 driven by The David Machin Will Trust (£60K) and legacies from Alice Maltby (£20K – thanks to the Family) and Sylvia Wilton (£2K). Gift Aid generated £11,371 (£10,097). 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.

Interest on deposits increased to £10,461 (£3,234) as a direct result of the legacies and short term rises in interest rates.

Subscription Income (Subs + Gift Aid) accounts for 41% of the Associations total Income. 74% (72%) excluding legacies.

## **Use of Funds**

We continue to support the work of the Garden and during 2024 this included a regular maintenance and development payment amounting to £43,574 (£40,705); Trainee support at £27,052 (£17,786), and one project at £4,000 – the successful Tipping Point event.

Our most significant recurring operating cost, apart from the above, remains stationary, printing and postage at £9,658 (£14,739); the reduction directly attributable to reducing the newsletter to 3 times a year. A further £1,028 has been spent on non-recurring equipment costs - laptops etc. Bank charges including Bank, Bureau (for Direct Debit maintenance) and Card fees.

## **Reserves**

Having set aside the Cecily Jones Trust Fund of £62,565 (as custodians of the capital we can only use the interest) and the Education and Training Fund (ETF) at a nominal £56,000 we currently hold £131,649 (£43,205) in the general fund. The ETF underpins our undertaking to support further rolling Trainee costs and over 2 years.

## **Investments**

All funds are held with either Lloyds Bank or Flagstone, and nominally with Barclays Bank.

Our move to the Charity Aid Foundation's (CAF) Charity Deposit Platform (CDP), operated through Flagstone, enables us to access a range of fixed term deposits.

## **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.

**Independent examiner** Ed Holcombe A.C.A

**By order of the Trustees**

**March 2025.**



**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 2024**

	2024		2023
	£		£
<b>INCOME</b>		<b>INCOME</b>	
Membership Subscriptions	60433		62078
Benefactor Membership	4800		5250
Corporate Membership	500		1650
Stanley Smith UK Trainee Grant			15000
Donations	4879		1277
Legacies	82000		
Social Events - Jazz concert	4332		4747
Glove sales 24 (Christmas wreath sales 23)	1441		233
Plant sales	5114		4403
Book Sales	41		222
Gift Aid (2022)	11371		10097
Interest received	10461		3234
Visiting Speakers	1065		850
Lectures			1820
Sundry receipts / petty cash (rounding)			-1
	<u>186437</u>		<u>110860</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Garden support and development	43574		40705
Education & Training Support	4000		33402
Garden Support - Trainee	27052		17786
Social Events -Jazz Concert	1128		1163
Lectures	899		2254
Term Deposits Management Fee (CAF/Flagstone)	156		361
Bank charges			
BACS Bureau	1944		1872
Card Charges (Sumup)	402		146
Entertaining	638		362
Equipment	1028		
Insurance & affiliation	145		135
Stationery & Printing	4621		7861
Postage	5037		6878
Service charges/ subscriptions	758		29
Sundry (Software)	95		452
Miscellaneous	516		137
	<u>91993</u>		<u>113543</u>
<b>Surplus/(-) for the Year</b>	<u>94444</u>	<b>Surplus/(-) for the Year</b>	<u>-2683</u>
<b>BALANCE SHEET as at 31st December 2024</b>		<b>BALANCE SHEET as at 31st December 2023</b>	
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>Net Assets</b>	
Barclays Bank C/A	4209		4802
Lloyds Bank C/A	3710		-4902
Lloyds Business Savings	8191		1002
Petty cash	56		221
Restricted: Barclays Bank (ETF) - closed			5123
Restricted: CAF Charity Deposit Platform / Flagstone	234048		149524
	<u>250214</u>		<u>155770</u>
<b>Profit &amp; Loss Account</b>			
Brought forward	155770		158453
Major donations (Legacies)	80000		
Net profit /loss (-)	14444		-2683
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>250214</u>		<u>155770</u>

Approved on behalf of the Committee

**P Mugford (Honorary Treasurer) 21 January 2025**

**Independent Examiner - Ed Holcombe ACA**