

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Cowbridge Physic Garden Trust Ltd held on Wednesday 12 March 2025
at The Bear Hotel, Cowbridge

<p>Present</p>	<p>Josephine Homfray (Chair), Genevieve Thomas (Treasurer), Pamela Haines (Secretary), Mike Baker, Rob Evans, Matt Jones, Martyn Hurst, Melanie Hurst, Jan Thomas.</p>	
	<p>Jean Baker Helen Bigley Enid Child Catherine Clay Rose Clay Dan Clayton-Jones Sue Duffield Tina Edmunds Colette Evans Peter Evans Adrian Hill Deb Hill Patricia Hold</p>	<p>John Homfray Ailsa Jones Harry Jones Joy Kipling Sue Knight Sian Luke Chris Pollard Vivien Pollard Iris Simpson Angela Strong Mary Wallis Pat Watton</p>
<p>Apologies</p>	<p>Val Caple Elaine Davey John Foster Thomas Colwyn Jones Anna Mayer Rhian Rees</p>	

<p>Minutes of the last meeting</p>	<p>The minutes of last year’s Annual General Meeting are available electronically on the website. They were confirmed, as read, on the proposal of Mary Wallis and seconded by Jan Thomas.</p>
<p>Reports Chairman</p>	<p>Jo confirmed that we were notified last year by Buckingham Palace that -sadly-our Patron, Her Majesty the Queen, has had to relinquish this role due to the pressure of work, particularly since the Coronation of His Majesty. This is quite understandable, and we thank her most sincerely for the honour she gave us of being Patron for fifteen years. We are not going to replace her!</p> <p>We are lucky enough to still have our President, Mr Dan Clayton Jones, who is here tonight. For those newer Members or Volunteers, it was Dan who had the idea of creating a Physic Garden in Cowbridge whilst he was Chair of The Welsh Historic Gardens Trust. That was nearly twenty years ago.</p> <p>Sadly we have lost some loyal Physic Garden Members this year - to all their families we extend our condolences and thoughts.</p> <p>This has been quite a year for renovation and the work continues – the major one being that of the leaking fountain. We conducted several works on it hoping that the cheaper options would be the answer to the leaks – but alas they have proved that it requires a major overhaul which will start in the Spring. All the piping under the ground will need to be replaced and a fibreglass lining placed inside as well. This is a skilled and costly job, and I thank the firm of Russell Hawkins for agreeing to do it, and to date being very diligent in their assessments. I am hopeful that with such a thorough overhaul this fountain will then keep problem free for the rest of my life! I would like to thank Rob Evans, one of our Trustees, whose support and expertise in the field of landscaping was incredibly helpful in our investigations and decisions. Mike Baker who is on the Maintenance Committee will inform you of the other jobs which have taken place over the last year shortly. I suppose, after twenty years, wear and tear is inevitable. But the endless costs have certainly reminded us of how valuable our Members annual subscriptions are for the Garden’s upkeep, as well as any other income we are able to make by selling merchandise, plants and the donations boxes.</p> <p>Last September we held a Service of Blessing in the Physic Garden, inspired by our relatively new Rector of the Benefice, Duncan Ballard. It was beautifully staged and well attended – God even gave us a sprinkling of rain to remind us how important that is for any garden to flourish. Thank you Duncan and Ellie for your support throughout the year.</p> <p>The Garden continues to draw visitors from near and far, of all ages, and it is a delight to see. As always, I thank the whole Physic Garden team who all play their part in keeping it to the very highest standard. I welcome our wonderful new volunteers - it is great to have you on board. To ALL the Garden Volunteers my heartfelt thanks for a year of hard work in all manner of foul weather at times. And I would like to thank in particular Adrian and Deb Hill – Adrian is wonderfully skilled at all sorts of DIY and Deb created the most</p>

	<p>fabulous Physic Garden Angel for Holy Cross Church at Christmas and has made us some wonderful willow pyramids for our sweet peas. The Marketing Committee is managed by the Vice Chairman, Martyn Hurst, and I thank the Maintenance Team who seem to be faced with job after job! Genevieve, our Treasurer, manages every penny most carefully and is meticulous in her attention to detail. I would like to thank Stephen Mayled for once again verifying the accounts. Pam Haines, our Secretary, deals with the thorny issues of Health and Safety and legal requirements. To that end we have had new fire extinguishers installed both for inside the potting shed and even one for outside! Vale Caple produces a Newsletter – often making a silk purse out of a sow's ear! Matt Jones has put us on the map of Social Media -something the rest of us were woefully unequipped to do!</p> <p>Once this AGM is over you will all have a treat in store when Christina Shand, along with her husband David, will tell you about the creation of her spectacular garden near Fishguard, Dyffryn Fernant. Please do buy raffle tickets in the interval – it will be drawn at the end of Christina's talk.</p> <p>I thank you all here for your support – without which our enthusiasm would undoubtedly flag – it is great to know that you are all behind us!</p> <p>The re-appointment of trustees was proposed and seconded as follows:</p> <p>Rob Evans – Proposed Dan Clayton Jones, seconded Martyn Hurst Jo Homfray – Proposed Chris Pollard, seconded Jean Baker Rhian Rees – Proposed Matt Jones, seconded Martyn Hurst Genevieve Thomas – Proposed Chris Pollard, Joy Kipling</p>	
<p>Finance</p>	<p>Genevieve reported that once again that we had a very successful year when we produced a net surplus of £14,000 after depreciation of £7,000.</p> <p>This was greatly helped by some very generous donations giving a total for the year from Donations and Legacies of over £21,000. This includes £4,500 from membership, £300 less than last year.</p> <p>Other income from trading activities includes £3,400 from our annual events, £3,000 from weekly plant sales and £1,700 from the sales of books, cards and tea towels and garden tours.</p> <p>Due to the rise in interest rates Investment income has increased substantially to nearly £6,000.</p> <p>The total expenditure before depreciation was £13,800. £10,000 was for the upkeep and promotion of the garden, £2,000 less than the previous year, and the balance was the cost of Raising Funds from sales, the costs of putting on Fundraising Events and costs in connection with membership such as newsletters.</p>	

	<p>The capital expenditure of £2,700 was principally for the bench in memory of Jean Reader, half of which was contributed by Welsh Historic Gardens Trust.</p> <p>At the end of the year, we held current assets of £165,000 of which £161,000 was cash on deposit. These funds are held in reserve for the future maintenance of the garden.</p> <p>Finally, I would like to thank you all for your continuing support and also to thank Stephen Mayled for once again reviewing the Financial Statements for no charge. It was resolved that the Financial Statements for the year to 30 June 2024 be approved. They were proposed by Harry Jones and seconded by Martyn Hurst. The resolution was carried and Genevieve was thanked for her work as treasurer.</p>	
<p>PR & Marketing</p>	<p>Martyn reported that yet again it had been a successful year from the Marketing Team’s perspective. We have not had to either reprint or design and print a new leaflet to attract new friends, as we still have a stock of spare leaflets. Our relationship with Pear Communications who used to distribute Physic Garden leaflets around the South Wales area has completely fizzled out – so we have leaflets in stock and zero distribution costs!</p> <p>We support the National Garden Scheme in Glamorgan and Gwent by taking an advertisement in their booklet. They are promoting gardens in the area and the audience is perfect for us – keen gardeners who love to browse and admire other gardens at leisure.</p> <p>During the year we promote the plant sales – the next one is Saturday 3rd May by the way.</p> <p>We are responsible for sales of the book, cards and tea towels. Now that Bryan of The Bay Tree is no longer in the High Street, we have approached “Happy Days” directly opposite the Physic Garden to ask if they could carry a stock on our behalf.</p> <p>Our website is looked after by Pizelhaze, based in Builth Wells who, thankfully are very good value and efficient. Special thanks should go to Matt Jones who looks after our social media pages – and the number of “followers” is growing all the time.</p> <p>You all receive the Physic Garden Newsletter – you will have noticed we now have more than 50 issues. Our thanks to Val Caple for pulling all the articles together.</p> <p>Mary Parsons organises group tours to the garden and should also be thanked, together with our other members of the marketing committee, Genevieve Thomas, Pamela Haines and Jo Homfray.</p>	

<p>Maintenance</p>	<p>Mike reported his thanks and appreciation for many years as volunteers on the maintenance group of David Edmunds and Peter Jarvis who both stood down from active service in 2024.</p> <p>On the positive side, David Boulton has now joined the group and is duly incorporated in to the team. Welcome aboard, David!</p> <p>A sign of progress in communication methods was that (roll of drums) we have set up a Whatsapp group to which we have all leapt on board!</p> <p>I issued a grass cutting rota to all the maintenance volunteers and this should ensure that the grass is kept "tidy" throughout the summer. We do also have an ongoing contract for grass care with South Wales Lawn Care.</p> <p>Staying on the good news:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, New compost bins have been constructed and installed by Dave Tolcher James. 2. New locks have been installed on both the Potting Shed door and on the Old Hall end garden door. 3, The base of the Office door has been repaired. 4. The mower has been serviced by Adrian Hill and will leap into service next week at the start of the grass cutting season and Adrian will be the first to use the machine "in anger" as it were! 5. A new Donation box at the Church Street end has been installed to replace the old rusting metal one. Thanks to John Skalitsky. 6. Some use has been made of the Karcher Jet washer recently by myself with the help of my grandson as a contribution towards his commitment to his Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge. <p>As we have heard from our chairmen Jo Homfray just now, the future is looking much brighter (and drier) for the fountain in the future!</p> <p>Once the weather gets drier and warmer, we will need a rota of some kind to gradually clean the paths over the coming months. It will, I believe, need at least two volunteers on each occasion to carry out the cleansing. This is, dare I say, work in progress.</p>
<p>Garden Group</p>	<p>Sue reported that two new volunteers had been welcomed during the year – Joy and Nic and everyone is very pleased to have them. Several volunteers have left and our thanks go to Shelley and Parisa for all their help. Particular thanks are due to Tina who had been a volunteer since the beginning. She will continue helping with garden tours.</p> <p>The Plant Sale in April will be remembered for being bitterly cold. We hope this year on the 3rd May it will be warmer. Contributions are gratefully received on Thursday mornings.</p> <p>We have had very smart compost bins constructed to replace the old ones which were rotting.</p>

	<p>There has been more pruning on some of the pleached trees and the apples. The roses on the pergola have had a good cutting back.</p> <p>Some lavenders were replaced last year and more will be planted this year.</p> <p>We are managing to keep our box hedges despite the box blight and box moth caterpillar. We trim in June. The last few weeks have seen the addition of a layer of mulch on the outer beds.</p>	
AOB	<p>Jo concluded the meeting by thanking everyone attending and inviting them to stay for the talk by Christina Shand.</p>	