**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Cowbridge Physic Garden Trust Ltd held on Wednesday 13 March 2024 at The Bear Hotel, Cowbridge**

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| **Present** | **Josephine Homfray (Chair), Genevieve Thomas (Treasurer), Pamela Haines (Secretary), Mike Baker, Val Caple, Matt Jones, Jan Thomas.**  **Susan Bisson (minutes secretary)** | |  |
| **Jean Baker**  **Bill Clay**  **Catherine Clay**  **Gill Clay**  **Mike Clay**  **Rose Clay**  **Dan Clayton-Jones**  **Robert Cope**  **Elaine Davey**  **Graham Duffield**  **Sue Duffield**  **Tina Edmunds**  **Colette Evans**  **Peter Evans** | **Adrian Hill**  **Deb Hill**  **Caron Jennings**  **Biga John**  **John Foster-Thomas**  **Bernadette Fuge**  **Gillian Griffiths**  **Patricia Hold**  **Ailsa Jones**  **Anne Morgan**  **Derek Morgan**  **Gerald Price**  **Tessa Price**  **Jo Williams**  **John Winter** |
| **Apologies** | **Roger Bird**  **Rob Evans**  **Mary Gowan**  **Andrea Harries**  **Martyn Hurst**  **Melanie Hurst**  **Andrew Parker**  **Nina Parker**  **Sue Phillips**  **David Phillips**  **Chris Pollard**  **Vivian Pollard**  **Rhian Rees**  **John Sherratt**  **Carole Sherratt**  **Mary Wallis** | |  |
| **Minutes of the last meeting** | The minutes of last year’s Annual General Meeting are available electronically on the website. They were confirmed, as read, on the proposal of Derek Morgan and seconded by John Foster-Thomas. | |  |
| **Reports**  **Chairman** | Jo passed on the recent and pleasing news that The Physic Garden has been granted Fields In Trust status. This means that it will be kept as a green space in the centre of Cowbridge in perpetuity. Jo emphasised that the popularity of The Physic Garden is obvious to those who work there. She thanked Catherine and Mike Clay, particularly, for their input when The Physic Garden was little more than an idea and emphasised that Catherine’s tenacity as a council member ultimately pushed the creation of The Physic Garden over the line. Jo also thanked Dan Clayton Jones and Jean Reader for their subsequent support and the three Cowbridge counsellors who unanimously voted for this. Catherine and Mike’s input was acknowledged with a round of applause.  There has been no update on whether HRH Queen Camilla will remain as patron of the Physic Garden. We have not received confirmation that she has stepped down and, hopefully, she will continue but, at present, we have come to the end of the third of three five-year terms of patronage. A decision has been made to remove Queen Camilla’s name off all communications – for now.  The Physic Garden has received some generous donations in 2023/2024 including those from Judy Gardner, The Julia and Hans Rausing Trust, the Radcliffe family and The Swansea Building Society. All were sincerely thanked as their support helps to keep the garden flourishing and tended. Jo pointed out that the garden incurs expense as it ages; even the sturdiest oak bench rots in all of the rain we have had in recent months, which is why membership money is so important. Jo emphasised that we welcome new members and asked existing members to recruit, if possible.  Deborah Hill was thanked for making the wonderful willow angel for the Holy Cross Church Festival of Angels. Deb worked to a seemingly impossible schedule before Christmas and we were delighted and touched by her generosity.  The popularity of Rosie Hardie’s talk at the AGM 2023 was noted and Jo introduced Liz and Paul 0’Neill, AGM speakers 2024, with the promise that they would be equally engaging and enthusiastic.  Jo thanked the Trustees and the chairs of various committees, including Martyn Hurst, who is unflappable in his approach to marketing, Matt Jones for maintaining the social media profile of the garden, Genevieve Foster-Thomas for her forensic eye for detail as Treasurer and Stephen Mayled for verifying the accounts. She thanked the garden group, including Sue Duffield and Jan Thomas, for their enthusiasm, wisdom and knowledge and Pamela Haines for being a wonderful secretary whose legal expertise is called upon not infrequently. Jo thanked Mike Baker for heading up the maintenance team on a short-term basis until another willing maintenance volunteer steps forward to take on the role. She noted that there would be no newsletter without Val Caple and thanked her for coordinating membership. Sue Bisson was thanked for minute-keeping.  The re-appointment of trustees was proposed and seconded as follows:  Martyn Hurst – Proposed Dan Clayton Jones, seconded Catherine Clay  Matt Jones – Proposed Tina Edmunds, seconded Gerald Price  Jan Thomas – Proposed Elaine Davey, Seconded Catherine Clay  Mike Baker – Proposed Rose Clay, seconded Derek Morgan  Melanie Hurst – proposed Colwyn Jones, seconded John Foster Thomas | |  |
| **Finance** | Genevieve was, again, delighted to report a very successful year when we raised a net surplus of over £12,600. This was largely due to some very generous donations, giving a total for the year from Donations and Legacies of over £24,000. This includes £5,000 from membership fees.  Other income from trading activities includes over £3,000 from functions, the annual plant sale and members’ party and also over £5,000 from weekly plant sales, books etc.  Our investment interest has also risen substantially in the year to £2,500 and will be over £4,000 in the current year.  The total expenditure before depreciation was £16,000, which is the same as the previous year. £12,500 was for the upkeep and promotion of the garden and the balance was the cost of Raising Funds from sales, the cost of putting on fund raising events and costs in connection with membership - such as newsletters.  After depreciation of the garden of £6,800 there was a net surplus for the year of £12,600 .  The capital expenditure in the year of £4,700 was to replace the unsafe curved bench and was for the purchase of four zinc planters.  At the end of the year we held current assets of £147,000, of which £144,000 was cash on deposit. These funds are held in reserve for the future maintenance of the garden.  Genevieve concluded by thanking all members for their continued support, which manifests in so many ways and also thanked 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 2023 be approved. They were proposed by Elaine Davey and seconded by Derek Morgan. The resolution was carried and Genevieve was thanked for her work as treasurer. | |  |
| **PR & Marketing** | Pamela Haines presented the PR & Marketing report on behalf of Martyn Hurst, who was unable to be in attendance. Pamela reported a successful year from a marketing perspective.   There is some uncertainty about whether Physic Garden leaflets are regularly distributed as Pears, the supplier, do not respond to queries and we have not been invoiced by them. We currently hold a stock of leaflets. We took out an advertisement in the National Gardens Scheme leaflet and have advertised The Plant Fayre, which is on 27 April 2024.  The website is managed by Pixelhaze in Builth, who are very good.  Pam gave thanks to Matt Jones as, due to his input, our followers on social media grow. We have also reached a landmark 50th edition of our newsletter.  Mary Parsons was thanked for her input in arranging trips to the garden.  Sales of cards and tea towels continue and Gillian Griffiths our garden volunteer, who is also a talented botanical artist and RSH gold medalist, has produced a new tea towel design featuring yellow iris.  Jo was hopeful that the new design would tempt a previous and enterprising tea towel customer, who fashioned a bra and pants set out of the magnolia design, to get out her sewing machine and update her spring wardrobe. | |  |
| **Maintenance** | Mike reported that the fountain was re–filled in mid-April 2023 but Sue Duffield then noted an ongoing leak. Russell Hawkins mended both the fountain and a door lock.  Simon’s Cycles mended the existing plant stand and Adam Jones has produced a new plant stand.  He has also quoted to sand the wooden doors but has not yet done the job because of inclement weather.  The grass cutting rota is established and Mike has met with South Wales Lawncare about ongoing grass maintenance.  Mike has purchased a Kärcher power washer and a long cable so that all of the garden paths can be cleaned. Mike and fellow maintenance volunteer Peter Jarvis had cleaned a section of path on the morning of the AGM but the ground is still so saturated so the build-up of sludge cannot be easily removed.  Mike has organised an on-site meeting for maintenance volunteers and will devise a rota.  A new maintenance volunteer, Adrian Hill, was welcomed. | |  |
| **Garden Group** | Sue noted that the box hedging in the four inner beds has been replaced. Unfortunately, not all of the new plants have thrived. Once the awful wet weather desists and the beds dry out we will re-plant, in some areas. The box hedging on the outer beds looks really healthy.  We are currently planning the April plant sale. Donations of plants for this will be gratefully received on Thursday mornings.  In the summer two pupils from Cowbridge Comprehensive completed work experience in The Physic Garden relating to The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Sue Duffield was their mentor and reported that they were great to work with and were given a range of jobs. The Physic Garden would be very happy to repeat the experience.  The garden survived the hot, dry spell in the summer because a rota was drawn up for daily watering. We do not water the main beds and no new planting was possible, at this time, because of extreme heat.  Sue thanked Deb Hill for producing the wicker angel, at short notice, for The Festival of Angels and noted that she will be brought out of storage, again, at the earliest opportunity.  The garden is maturing and some trees need attention. We contacted tree surgeons and a survey was carried out, which led to some remedial work.  The endless wet weather over recent months has presented a challenge as it has been almost impossible to work the beds. Despite the challenges posed by a changing climate the garden is coming back to life. Sue will start seed sowing seed again soon. Aconites and snowdrops are coming to an end but masses of narcissi were planted to ensure ongoing colour and interest in the garden. | |  |
| AOB | Jo concluded the meeting with the observation that The Physic Garden is a very special place, which is becoming more well known. The age range of visitors is extensive and we also have international visitors.  Bryan Bird was thanked for donating posies of flowers for the tables which were available for purchase at £5 per pot. | |  |