



Minutes of Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Date: Sunday 10th November 2024.

Place & Time: BPCG Barn, 15:00-16:14

Attendees: 27 members (includes Trustees Joanna David, Lawrence Osei-Kwaku, Ian Brotherston, Janet Worth, Lucie Russell, Omar Alghali, Deborah Ajia), 7 votes via Proxy, and 9 non-members/staff

Apologies:

Chair acknowledged apologies from the following

- Trustee Verena Kotonski
- Trustee candidate Liza Aberkare

Members:

- Anne Philips
- Hilary Joyce
- Katy Turrell
- Stella Clarke
- Sue Waters
- Susan Fabian
- Imogen Ward
- Tony Smith

1. Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed all attendees.

2. Approval of Minutes of the 2023 AGM

The minutes of the 2023 AGM were reviewed and approved unanimously.

3. Chair's Review of the Year 2023/2024

Overview of the Year

Visitor Numbers: Over 6,000 visitors attended, with 300+ new volunteers joining.

Awards: Received the RHS Outstanding Award, a testament to the dedication of volunteers, staff, and trustees.

Events and Hires: Successful year with high demand for site hires, especially indoor events in the new Barn space.

Education Programs: The education team achieved significant growth, including successful out-of-term activities.

Site Improvements: Replacement decking was completed, enhancing practical and aesthetic aspects of the site.

Overall, the organisation is in a strong position, and well-prepared for continued growth under the new board.

4. Financial Report

Unrestricted Activities

Revenue Increases:

Total unrestricted income rose by 38% (approximately £23,000).

Retail sales, kitchen income, and alcohol sales all increased, with honey sales and site hire income up by 76% due to high demand.

Special thanks to Stephanie Prior for her role in managing site bookings.

Expenditure Increases:

Staff wages rose by 30%, making up the largest portion of costs.

Administrative expenses increased by 51%, largely attributed to community events.

Restricted Funds:

The Barn project remains the largest restricted fund, supported by nine funders. The board expressed gratitude to all funders.

The minimum reserve requirement stands at three months of operating costs (£39,000); current reserves cover approximately 6.8 months.

Debtors:

Debtor balances increased from £14,000 to £25,000.

Overall, the year marked a period of financial stability, with the board expressing satisfaction with the organisation's current financial position.

The Chair apologised for initially omitting specific acknowledgment of the kitchen's role in these financial successes and gave special thanks to outgoing Trustee, Janet Worth for leading the kitchen team.

Member Feedback:

Member Ingrid Glass suggested it would be beneficial to have a more detailed breakdown of income and expenses.

5. Elections and Appointments to the Board

Reappointments

Existing trustees

Lawrence Osei-Kwaku, Omar Alghali, Deborah Ajia, and Ian Brotherston, who have all served less than a 5 year term were reappointed, with Ian Brotherston stepping down as Treasurer but remaining on the board.

Jo David, (the chair), and Lucie Russel both stepped down from the board, with Janet Worth retiring after a 5 year term, the chair expressed gratitude for their service.

Election of New Trustees

Uncontested Positions.

The candidates for Treasurer, Samantha Faulkner, and Chair, Georges Michael, briefly introduced themselves, and both were appointed via an en bloc show of hands.

Contested Trustee Positions

Initially, four candidates had stood for election; however, Kate Risti withdrew due to a family bereavement and Liza Aberkare sent her apologies on the day.

The other two remaining candidates, Carla Clarke and Jamie Laing gave brief introductions of themselves, after which the Chair read out Liza Aberkare's statement.

Non-voting attendees were asked to leave the room before ballot counting.

Election Results:

Liza Aberkare: 16 votes

Carla Clarke: 30 votes

Jamie Laing: 18 votes

Kate Rist: 0

Carla Clarke and Jamie Laing were duly elected as trustees..

Departing trustees were presented with gifts by the Secretary.

6. Any Other Business (AOB)

Volunteer Engagement: Member Lesley Harper noted that many volunteers were unaware of the organisation's strategy document and suggested involving volunteers in its development.

Garden Volunteer Meetings: Volunteers requested clarity on when regular Garden volunteer meetings would resume. The board will discuss this and feedback to volunteers

Visitor Feedback: Member Dafydd Walters reported that many visitors come to the site specifically for the garden itself rather than formal meetings or events.

The meeting closed at 16:43.