

PLANT HERITAGE
SOMERSET GROUP – 17 National Collections
(Registered Charity Nr: 1059504)
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in Edington Village Hall
on Saturday 09 December 2017 at 12 noon

Committee Members Present:

Mrs Sheila Chambers - President
Mrs Margaret Adams - Chairman
Mrs Penny Berry - Treasurer
Mrs E Ann Celer - Secretary
Mrs Pauline Clapp - Programme Secretary
Mr Don Everitt - Plant Fair Organiser
Mr Ken Armstrong - Website master
Mrs Barbara Barnwell - Newsletter Editor/Membership Secretary
Mrs Gaye Hicyilmaz - Publicity/Refreshments

27 Members were present.

1 Apologies for Absence: Hilary Tudgee

2 Minutes of the AGM held on 03 December 2016

Minutes of the AGM held on 05 December 2016 were available for members to read on our website together with the Agenda. The Chairman Margaret Adams asked members if they were willing to accept the 2016 AGM Minutes as a true record. They were unanimously approved and signed.

3 Matters Arising: None

4 President's Welcome:

Welcome to another AGM, another year and some stirring thoughts in prospect as our Chairman will tell you.

Next year will be the 40th Anniversary of the founding of Plant Heritage or NCCPG as it was then. We are fortunate to have among us some founder members including Don Everitt, Maureen Hudson, Elizabeth Honnor and Roy Cheek and they have given us a very solid background and continue to do so.

We are very proud of our National Collections in Somerset now numbering I think twenty three of very diverse genera from Drosera to Bromeliaceae to which last we enjoyed a very interesting visit in September (including a gorgeous tea!). We are especially pleased to welcome Jane Lindsay owner of four National Collections, to talk to us today.

Our main fund raising events are of course the Plant Sales and Fairs. This year we are reduced to two, in Spring and Autumn, partly because sadly as we grow older the whole task becomes harder and also there are now so many plant fairs in the South West. We are so grateful to Don who has organised these for us for many years, with his numerous contacts in the nursery world, finding growers to bring their plants for us to enjoy. Thanks are also due to Dr R J R Vanderplank who offered us the site at Congresbury again. Our new hosts for the Autumn Fair were David and Alison, at Midney Gardens Somerset where they made us very welcome and apart from the rain, we enjoyed their unusual and beautiful garden and we are looking forward to going there again in 2018.

Every year we give a £100 Bursary to an outstanding student at Cannington College. This year Don and Joan presented this to Dominic Thompson who is actually going on to do a Master's degree in inotive biology.

We are always looking for new Committee Members and have been so lucky this year in that Gaye Hicyilmaz has joined us and has already been a great help, producing an excellent new Somerset Plant Heritage leaflet which you will have seen around and offering lots of new ideas and ways of working.

I now come to Pauline who has decided reluctantly, to resign from some of the many "jobs" which she has done for us over the years, particularly arranging the excellent programme of lectures (transporting equipment for sales) and who has stood as our Council Representative for six years (involving arduous visits to London) and for the past eleven years has arranged some brilliant garden visits and holidays (?holidays – three visits a day!) including three abroad to Normandy, France and Amsterdam.

Pauline we thank you so much for all that you have done for us and only hope that you will pass on some of your expertise to all the people waiting in the wings to follow you! Sheila then presented Pauline with a bouquet of flowers. The meeting was then handed over to our Chairman.

5 Chairman's Report:

Margaret thanked Sheila and went on to report that:-

It is good to see so many members here and I hope you are all able to stay for the lunch and the talk by Jane Lindsay afterwards.

The main thing I wish to notify you about is that H/O is pushing us to make a decision about our Charity Status. The Somerset Group alone has its own Charity number which H/O is saying is causing a clash with the National Charity. They have given us three options to remedy the situation.

These are briefly:-

- 1 To stay as an independent charity. The National Collections and Collection Holders would be separate from us.
- 2 To dissolve our existing Charity and become a branch of NCCPG/Plant Heritage.
- 3 To remain independent and become affiliated to NCCPG/Plant Heritage. We would be subject to an affiliation fee.

The Somerset Committee would like to add a 4th option – to stay as we are; as the Charity Commission has no objections.

We have asked H/O for clarification on a few points and when we have more facts we intend informing all Somerset Members by publishing them in the Spring Newsletter. We will give options for voting by post, email or telephone. We do not want to spend time discussing the subject today please; so on the table are some forms where you can submit your comments or queries. Also there are some copies of the Board of Trustees choices for you to read. Maybe you might like to talk about it over lunch.

My thanks go to the Committee for all their hard work. I will mention Pauline again (as she has produced an amazing programme and another super holiday to Anglesey and North Wales this year. You will have seen the programme she has planned for 2018 in the Autumn Newsletter but she is giving up this role next year and we desperately need someone to take on her job.

Sheila helped by Gaye, has arranged our publicity and Plant Exchange. Barbara does a fantastic job with our Newsletters and keeping up to date with our membership. We could not do without our Treasurer Penny, Secretary Ann and Webmaster Ken. Also thanks to Gaye and Hilary and their helpers for our refreshments at meetings.

I do hope you all enjoy today and I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

6 Programme Secretary's Report:

We have had an amazing programme of lectures in 2017 and visits to Anglesey and North Wales. Pauline has kindly organised the 2018 programme including a visit to Chatsworth Show in June 2018 but will then relinquish the post. The equipment has also become too much to store, lift and carry now.

7 Delegate to Council Report:

Head Office had applied for Heritage Lottery money and been awarded £95,000. A Professional Group of Advisors had been employed and we await their findings perhaps for a trial period of one year. Some Trustees had resigned. No Groups had been asked their opinion before making this decision.

Pauline would attend her last Council Meeting in March 2018 and Jane Lindsay (owner of Tynings Nursery and holder of Four National Collection) is hoping to join her and become our new Council Representative.

8 Treasurer's report:

The Treasurer had distributed copies of the accounts ending October 2017 to members and these were agreed as correct. Proposed: Jill Larbalestier Seconded: Gaye Hicyilmaz

We had had a deficit this year so were unable to contribute to H/O funds. Our reserves are healthy however it is far from ideal. There are things we could cut out, not necessary yet but we must be aware of the situation.

9 Collection Co-ordinator's report:

Jennie had been busy this year visiting all our Collection Holders and being updated on how the year had gone for them. She attended the Regional Co-ordinator's Meeting and it seems they all had at least one difficult Collection Holder and a myriad of different problems with Collections. Amongst others in the Spring she had visited Margaret Webster's Primula (British floral variants), David Stephens Biarum spp., Crocus spp, Dr Harbour with his potential Collection of Haemanthus so it can go into next year's Panel Meeting which had been given the go ahead by H/O.

Jennie was waiting for final documentation for Rob Evans' Gladioli Collection and was also waiting to hear from Greencombe Garden Trust about their Collection of Erythronium, Gaultheria (inc. Pernettya), Polystichum, Vaccinium.

10 Election of Committee:

The following Committee Members offered to stand:-

Margaret Adams Sheila Chambers Penny Berry Ann Celer Pauline Clapp Don Everitt
Barbara Barnwell Ken Armstrong Gaye Hicyilmaz and (Jennie Baker our Collection Co-ordinator but not a committee member)

All were unanimously elected.

11 AOB:

Rosie thanked all the Committee for their hard work over the year.

Seed Distribution Centre – Saving Seeds. Jane from H/O, who is leaving in March, will let Jill LARBALESTIER have the telephone number.

The meeting closed at 12.45pm

Signed
Chairman Margaret Adams

Date 08 December 2018