

PLANT HERITAGE
SOMERSET GROUP- 17 NATIONAL COLLECTIONS
(Registered Charity Nr: 1059504)
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in Edington Village Hall on Saturday 08
December 2018 at 12 noon

Committee Members Present:

Mrs Sheila Chambers - President
Mrs Margaret Adams - Chairman
Mrs Penny Berry - Treasurer
Mr Don Everitt - Plant Fair Organiser
Mr Ken Armstrong - Website Master
Mrs Barbara Barnwell - Newsletter Editor/Membership Secretary

24 Members were present in total

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Ann Celer, Pauline Clapp, Jennie Baker
2. **Minutes of the AGM held on 09 December 2017**

The minutes of the AGM held on 09 December 2017 were available for members to read on our website together with the Agenda. There were also paper copies available. The Minutes were unanimously accepted by those present and the Chairman signed them as a true record.

3. **Matters Arising:** None.
4. **President's Welcome:**

Welcome to you all to the Annual General meeting of the Somerset Group of Plant Heritage in this 40th Anniversary year, and a special welcome to our Trustee Representative Sally Nex who has come on her first visit to us. Sally lives in Somerset and I am sure will be able to keep us up to date about policy and changes in the way Plant Heritage is run under the new management regime which Margaret will enlarge upon in her address. We celebrated 40 years of Plant Heritage with a special Plant Sale here in July and a talk by Don Everitt on the origins of NCCPG as it was then, especially relating to the Somerset Group as we were one of the first groups to be set up, followed by a delicious free tea with lots of cake!

Our committee work hard to keep the group going. Margaret keeps us all in order and we would be lost without Ann's excellent minutes. Ken makes sure that all our details are on the web and reminds us faithfully of what we should be doing before each meeting or event. Barbara's Newsletters are a work of art, illustrated each time with amazing photographs. As you will see, Penny our Treasurer, has had a hard time this year keeping us afloat, but the best thing is we can always understand her reports – they are so clear! As well as planning yet another interesting programme of talks, Pauline took us for what I think was her 11th garden visiting trip, this time including

the Chatsworth Show in June.. Such a lovely setting for the Show and those incredible orchids! On the way back we visited Renishaw Hall and I think the garden there was the best maintained that I have ever seen. Next Year Pauline has planned a visit to some of the gardens in S Wales which I am sure will be full of interest. She keeps saying it will be the last one but I wonder

Our grateful thanks to Don for many years of outstanding service in organising and setting up our Plant Fairs at different venues all over the County. It is very hard work and he now needs some help- so, volunteers please!

We have lost two more committee members for family reasons- Yvonne who was our vice chairman for a number of years has resigned due to ill health. We do thank her for all her hard work for the group: Noni, who after looking after our Collection Holders for many years, has still offered to cook our Collection Holder's lunch in February and Gaye who did stalwart work serving tea and coffee at meetings and contributed lots of good ideas, particularly for publicity. Jennie who took over as Collections Coordinator has a difficult job to visit our now 20 something National Collections. It was pleasing to hear of a number of awards won by our Collection Holders at National Shows this year. Jennie attended a PH conference in Scotland in November.

Each year we give a Bursary of £100 to the outstanding Horticulture student at Cannington college and we are grateful to Pam Burrough and Odette Badman for undertaking this task last June. It gives us a link with the College and we always hope that one or two students might join us: however weekend football and other activities seem more exciting! At least they will have heard of us!

So keep on propagating and bringing unusual plants for the monthly sales as well as the Plant fairs as that is what Plant heritage is all about.

I now hand you over to Margaret for her Chairman's report.

5. Chairman's Report:

Thank you all for coming to our AGM and I hope you will stay for our "bring and share" lunch, followed by a talk by Deborah Hastings about "Gardening in Gold and Silk".

This has been a busy 40th Anniversary year for us.

I expect you will have all seen the new and in some ways simplified, branding and logo for Plant Heritage in action. I think it looks really good and the brand promise- "We conserve the diversity of garden plants for people to use and enjoy today and tomorrow" is just right. We are now officially called Plant Heritage and not NCCPG. Other changes have been the abolition of the Council: to be replaced by one member, one vote at the AGM; and the introduction of the 3 working panels – Conservation; Resources and Skills and Membership and Supporters, who have already been working hard on our behalf. Hopefully, a grant will support the only one, new paid post of Conservation Officer at Central Office. (from now on the name "Central Office" replaces "Head Office") There will now be meetings for chairmen- I attended the first on Nov 6th when we were updated on the finances and looked at the Business plan for the next few years. I have put copies of that on the table.

As Sarah Quarterman has left, Cecilia Bufton is Acting Chairman and together with the other Trustees has brought the finances under control and the books are expected to balance in this financial year. Our Somerset Group will still have to consider its future as a separate charity or part of the main charity. Hopefully a decision by members, can be reached in this coming year when all the facts are known.

Here in Somerset we have struggled to increase our funds in the last financial year and have finished the year with a deficit. In the coming year we have only one Plant Fair planned at Smallways Leisure Centre in May but we are looking into having stands for publicity and plant sales at other people's plant fairs. To help raise more money, we are asking you to contribute 50% rather than 25% of your plant sale proceeds at outside fairs. Your share will remain at 75% here at our Edington member's plant sales. We will of course be very grateful for your continued gifting of plants on any occasion and encourage you to help us in this way if you can.

We do have some sad news: Lord Skelmersdale the husband of our Collection Holder of Narcissus, Lady Skelmersdale, died in October: Rosie Lishman kindly represented us at his memorial service on November 29th. Also, Bob Parker who had the Bromeliaceae collection died suddenly last month. Most of you will know that he frequently came to our Saturday meetings here at Edington. His funeral is this coming Wednesday at Bishops Hull Church at 12.30pm.

My thanks go to all the committee for their hard work. Pauline has continued to plan the programme for 2019 despite having to cope with illnesses in her family. Yvonne Radford has resigned as Vice Chairman after many years of service on the committee and we are all very grateful to her for all she has contributed over the years. Please do consider joining us if you can- we only meet about 4 times a year. We could do with some new input and ideas. Also, my thanks go to those of you who run the refreshments at our meetings. I hope you enjoy the rest of today and wish you all a Happy Christmas.

6. Report from Council Delegate:

Pauline and Jane Lindsay attended the April Council meeting and Pauline also represented us at the EGM in July when the National council was abolished. This was reported in our last Newsletter. I have since, as mentioned in my report, attended a meeting for Chairmen and it is hoped that these meetings will be held twice a year.

7. Treasurer's Statement of Accounts:

Penny Berry had distributed copies of the accounts together with her explanatory notes. There were no questions.

Acceptance of the accounts: **proposed by Don Everitt and seconded by Barbara Barnwell.**

8. Collection Co-ordinator's Report:

Jennie Baker sent a report. Cannington College is in the process of putting together a Phlomis collection- they have a missing plant list and would be grateful to hear from anyone who can help. The Agapanthus Collection took a hit last Winter and Jonny Hartnell has withdrawn it- he is however thinking of an alternative. The crocus and Biarum collections have also gone due to the ill health of the collection holder. Jennie will check where the collection is now.

The Somerset cider apple collection at Hadspen is going great guns and she will be visiting with Lucy Pitman from central Office on her next visit.

Greencombe's collections have had visits from experts to help clarify identification. Jennie has recently visited Bristol Zoo and the dispersed collection of Calendula is under control and has been registered. They are also considering another collection; Neomaricas- the South American Walking Iris. They would be grateful for needed contributions. Jane and Toni had a visit from the Tender Plant Committee of the RHS and that went well.

9.Election of Officers:

Mrs Sheila Chambers, Mrs Penny Berry, Mrs Margaret Adams and Mrs Ann Celer.

Proposed: Mrs Pam Burrough seconded by Mrs Barbara Barnwell.

10. Election of Committee:

Mr Don Everitt, Mrs Pauline Clapp, Mrs Barbara Barnwell, Mr Ken Armstrong. (Ms Jennie Baker had agreed to continue as Collections Coordinator but will not be on the committee.)

Proposed en bloc: Frederica Coker, seconded: Margaret Lister .

There were no questions. The meeting closed at 12.30pm

Signed Date