

PLANT HERITAGE
SOMERSET GROUP- 17 NATIONAL COLLECTIONS
(Registered Charity Nr: 1059504)
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in Edington Village Hall on Saturday 07
December 2019 at 12 noon

Committee Members Present:

Mrs Sheila Chambers - President
Mrs Margaret Adams - Chairman
Mrs Penny Berry - Treasurer
Mrs Barbara Barnwell - Newsletter Editor/Membership Secretary
Mr Don Everitt

20 Members were present in total

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Ken and Sylvia Armstrong, Pauline Clapp, Glenda Martin, Odette Badman, Mary MacFarlane, Rosemary Cooke, Jane Lindsay and Toni O'Connor

2. **Minutes of the AGM held on 08 December 2018**

The minutes of the AGM held on 08 December 2018 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:**

This is the third year that I have delivered this address and I am glad to say that the news of Plant Heritage in general and Somerset in particular is a lot better than this time last year as Margaret and Penny will tell you.

Our Plant Sales went better this year partly due to the generosity of members who donated plants for free and I am sure this is to be encouraged. Please keep propagating- just one or two plants per member would make a difference.

We tried a new Plant Fair at Edington in September and this sparked some local interest and went quite well so we are going to repeat that next year.

Congratulations to our National Collection Holders who work so hard exhibiting at National Shows, of which there seem more each year, so spreading the word about Plant Heritage and winning a number of awards themselves.

We have had such a varied and interesting year thanks to Pauline who, in spite of difficulties at home, planned the talks and visits.

These included topiary and stumperies with such a list of plants that I am still looking up! In S. Wales in June we saw so many unusual and beautiful gardens;

those amazing grottoes at Dewstow will long live in my memory! Next year promises a very relevant organic and climate theme in the programme.

Recently we lost a very long standing and until recently active member in Yvonne Radford whose funeral some of us attended last week. Yvonne was a great exponent of the Plant Exchange which she ran in Somerset for a number of years. I still have a couple of lovely late flowering chrysanthemums which she propagated through the Exchange - Mrs Jessie Cooper and Nantyderry Sunshine. I know that when we receive those great long lists from the Plant Exchange after Christmas they are a bit off putting, but I would encourage everyone to have a go and choose one that you could then propagate and offer the following year. Choose a genus that you recognise such as a Campanula, Rose or Iris and take a chance! You will be surprised and may find the plant of your dreams!

Some of you may have seen the series of articles at the back of The Garden (RHS) magazine by our own member and Trustee Sally Nex on "Challenging plastic" use in the garden. They have been very interesting and challenging and Sally has won a journalist's award for these.

So now onward and upwards as they say and I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a great new gardening year!

5. Chairman's Report:

A warm welcome to you all in this busy run up to Christmas!

I hope you agree that we have had another interesting year of meetings, visits and sales. Pauline has continued to plan our programme despite family difficulties and her trip to South Wales was a real success!

We are struggling to increase our funds but hope that with 2 Plant Fairs at the Smallways Leisure Centre next year, people will get to know and follow us. If there is a member who is good with technology, I think we would benefit from an active social media page to advertise our events. In any case, we would be grateful to those of you who do use Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, to advertise our meetings and events.

I recently attended a meeting for "Chairs" in London which was very informative. There were 16 attendees from groups, including Dumfries and Galloway and Guernsey; as well as Trustees. Plant Heritage's finances are very much under control. Last year's deficit of £67K has been turned around to approximately a £66K net profit, which is amazing! This figure may change as the accounts have yet to be audited.

Money has been spent on a new National website and I urge you all to have a look around it. Any suggestions from members on improvements, will be welcomed by Gill Groombridge. There will be money allocated for more work on the site next year. Cecilia Bufton, our Chair and all the Trustees, are keen to attract Corporate sponsors, grants, donations and new members. As I'm sure you will agree, a stable financial report and a good website are essential for this. Please consider selecting Plant Heritage as your chosen charity via easyfundraising.org.uk or smile.amazon.co.uk; when shopping online.

From 2021, a "Conference Day" will replace the "Members Weekend": the venue is yet to be decided. Nearer to home, the next Collection Co-ordinators conference is being planned to be

held at Bristol Zoo in November 2020. Please remember that we now have a one member one vote system, to give you the opportunity to vote for Trustees and raise issues for the AGM agenda.

There are now many members who care for a plant under our Plant Guardianship scheme. There are approximately 1380 plants in the scheme, 50% of which came from the Plant Exchange programme. Please do consider helping in this way if you cannot have a full collection. You may be interested in the Threatened Plant of the Year Competition 2020 which has just been announced. There will be details in the next Members e-newsletter. The Seed shop run by Gill Groombridge at shows, raised £8,700 and she is now in need of seed donations.

We have had some excellent news coverage this year with articles in 20 magazines; the Garden News “Be a Plant Hero” series of 30 articles about collection holders: an article by Val Bourne in Saga Magazine; good mentions from Alan Titchmarsh in the Gardener’s World magazine, etc.

I would like to thank all the committee for their hard work and also our other numerous helpers at plant sales, not forgetting Fiona and her colleagues for organising the refreshments at our meetings. I endorse all that Sheila has said about Ann Celer- we are sad to lose her after so many years on the committee.

I’d like to finish by wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I do hope you can stay for our “bring and share lunch”.

6. 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.**

7. Collection Co-ordinator’s Report:

Jennie Baker reported. She recently attended the Regional Co-ordinator’s meeting at Stourhead. It started with a quick round up from each group, highlighting any changes, losses or additions of collections. Bob Parker’s Bromeliads have been re-sited at Bristol Zoo. She visited the annual Calendula helpers thank you party with Gill Groombridge from Central Office. It is a dispersed collection.

Our Somerset Passionflower collection holders have both attended their society’s meeting in Madeira, thus maintaining worldwide contacts.

The Somerset Cider Apple collection at The Newt is progressing and the site is open to visitors.

Cannington College is about to have a garden reorganisation and want to rehouse the Deschampsia collection. Jennie only heard about this recently, but Jamie Capern, who used to work for Jane Lindsay is happy to find out more about it and with Jennie, is visiting Cannington College on Wednesday. Cannington are gathering Phlomis but haven’t confirmed the actual collection details yet.

Rob Evans' Gladioli nanus paperwork will hopefully be ready soon to go through Central Office.

There are this year, courses that have been funded by a grant and are free for members to attend if space allows.

At Hampton Court, the Threatened Plant of the year will be announced and suggestions are sought for this. It must be threatened in cultivation and not found in the RHS Plantfinder. Jennie has had a couple of requests to find plants originally from Somerset. Sue Applegate is helping with one group, peonies bred by Kelways. If you have any, please let her know.

8.Election of Officers:

Mrs Sheila Chambers, Mrs Penny Berry and Mrs Margaret Adams

Proposed: Mrs Ann Celer and 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: Rosie Lishman, seconded: Alan Spencer .

11. Questions were invited at the end of the meeting:

a) Rosie Lishman reminded us that Lloyd Kenyon who managed our National Plant Exchange had died this year and he will be greatly missed. He has left a legacy to PH. Lucy Pitman has taken over the Plant Exchange.

b) Barbara Barnwell suggested that now that things are in order at Central Office we should consider joining the National Charity. We will discuss this at committee meetings and perhaps put it to members at the next AGM.

c) Elizabeth Honnor encouraged members to go to the courses on offer.

The meeting closed at 12.30pm

Signed Date