

FRIENDS OF EASTCOTE HOUSE GARDENS

MAG Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held at 11am on Monday 17th June 2019 in the Stables.

PRESENT

Steve Place, Sue Place, Mary Sewell, Catherine Dann, Audrey Newell, Linda Wells, Liz Gambier, Susan Toms, Margaret Ray, Sue Smales, Tony Swan, Malcolm Penny, Chris Groom, Keith Barnard, Gerry Edwards, Joan Butfield, Lesley Crowcroft.

APOLOGIES

Andy Weller, Christine Wallace, Cllr. Becky Haggart, Cllr. Ian Edwards, Michael Paddy, David Payne, Anne Payne, Alison Holtorp

MINUTES OF THE AGM OF 9TH JULY 2018 AND ANY MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising. Minutes agreed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

KB handed out copies of the audited accounts for the financial year ending 30 April 2019 and explained various aspects of them.

As there was a healthy balance he then asked that another £2,500 be transferred to our reserve account making a total of a little over £5,000. This gives us a good buffer should we suffer a downturn in fund raising activities. The meeting agreed that a further £2,500 be transferred to our reserve account.

There were no questions on the audited accounts and the Chairman expressed his thanks on behalf of the FEHG to our auditor S Dunn who has agreed to audit the accounts next year.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A year ago I promised a blend of continuity and change. Well, there has been plenty of both.

We continued to maintain the gardens and meadow to London in Bloom gold standard and retained green flags for both due to the hard work, dedication and increasing skills of our volunteers.

We added some new features - summer border, shade garden and alpine mound.

A range of fund raising activities including the picnic, open house, tree dressing, plant and book sales generated ample income which enabled us to buy all the plants needed to populate these new features and top up planting schemes elsewhere.

As we have just heard we are in a sound financial position with sufficient funds to be able to buy plants, materials and tools and most importantly refreshments for the gardeners. Our fund raising has allowed us to increase the amount in our contingency fund.

More gardeners than ever before volunteered to adopt an area within the gardens to look after so enabling us to share the workload more evenly, resulting in greater ownership of the gardens.

Membership of the Friends group has risen steadily and now attendances of 20-25 gardeners on a work session are more common.

In addition to our own gardeners, we received valuable help from two very good groups of corporate volunteers who helped us to cut the remaining grass in the meadow and plant the next section of the Pamela Gardens boundary hedge.

In Long Meadow two sections of chipped stone path, funded by the Council's Chrysalis programme, were installed in the muddiest parts to avoid visitors having to wade through lots of wet sloppy mud in the winter. The adjacent vegetation has recovered well as it is no longer severely trampled by visitors trying to avoid the mud.

As the backwater matures the number of species of dragon and damselflies using it is steadily increasing. Last summer there were exceptionally high numbers of some species of butterflies in the grassland. All the detail about these insects is recorded in the various reports on the wildlife records page of the website.

The trees in the old orchard were expertly pruned to manage their shape and size by the Council's contractors.

The tree dressing and picnic were well organised by new event leaders and their teams - another element of sharing the workload. The forthcoming open house event is also being organised by new event leaders.

The Eastcote Remembers events and exhibitions to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War were well organised and raised valuable funds for the Eastcote branch of the Royal British Legion.

The dovecote was opened to the public on a number of occasions with the help of a small group of volunteers to act as guides so visitors could learn about the dovecote and its history.

All these activities benefitted from the valued contributions made by and support given by our site manager and other Council staff.

Due to improved and more professional presentation, a successful and productive series of book and plant sales led to an increase in takings.

Our website has been updated with the introduction of an information leaflets page so all our leaflets are in one location for visitors to easily find and download. Several new leaflets were added to our collection while others were updated.

We entered various exhibits at the three Eastcote Horticultural Society shows and achieved great success with many awards including the RHS Banksian medal for the highest points in horticultural classes and the Bertram park rose bowl for the highest points in rose classes.

There are some changes to the composition of the Committee.

So, all in all, a very busy year of great achievement.

PROPOSED NEW COMMITTEE

The following Committee Members for the next year were approved by the meeting.

President – David Payne

Vice President – Catherine Dann

Chairman – Steve Place*

Deputy Chair – Sue Place*

Treasurer – Keith Barnard

Secretary – Joan Butfield

Head Gardener – Lesley Crowcroft

Web Master – Trevor Dixon

Craft Group – Sue Smales

Chris Groom

Susan Toms (RN&ELHS)

Gerry Edwards (EPE),

Christine and Paul Lake

Malcolm Penny

Tony Swan

*Steve & Sue Place also hold the Countryside Conservation post

LBH appointments to the MAG – Councillors Becky Haggar, Nick Denys, Ian Edwards,
Green Spaces Officer Nick Porter

The AGM closed at 11.12am.