

SYDENHAM GARDEN (“SG”)
MINUTES OF THE 2021 AGM
HELD ONLINE AT 11.00 ON 13th NOVEMBER 2021

Present:

Members: Julia Brandreth*, Graeme Thomson*, Steve Bullock*, Kehinde Adeogun*, Reg Wickings*, Jon Sherman*, Fran Bristow*, Anne Sykes*, Gill Stephenson, Alona Sheridan, Jim Sikorski, Sarah Sikorski, Stephanie Hayman, Vyonne Getgood, John Getgood

In attendance: Jermaine Bennett, Verity Wong, Lauren Goddard, Steve Prowse, Rosie Hollands, Elizabeth Dalton, Sue Smith

*Trustee

1. Julia Brandreth (JB), Chair, welcomed all attendees and noted that sadly the AGM had to be held online owing to Covid-19 restrictions at our premises. She noted that the Meeting was quorate, there being more than ten Members present by proxy or online.
2. JB asked Trustees, Staff, Volunteers, Co-workers and other guests or Members in turn to wave hello.
3. Graeme Thomson (GT), Vice Chair, highlighted key items from the Minutes of the 2020 AGM, which had previously been posted on the SG website. In particular he noted:
 - That it had also been held online owing to Covid-19.
 - The appointment of Coralie Hopwood (CH) as Director in November 2019 and Jermaine Bennett as Head of Services had been noted.
 - A presentation by CH included mention of the prestigious Queen’s Award for Voluntary Services and thanks to all involved, how service delivery had moved online and been well received by co-workers, that the staff team had been strengthened and had adapted well to a very stressful period and that funding might be an issue (GT noted this has proven not to be the case and we are in a solid financial condition).
 - GT noted that all resolutions had been passed unanimously.
 - He also noted that RW had given a short speech about our founder, Jim Sikorski, having retired and the

accomplishments in his time. Jim had noted his thanks and gave his best wishes for the future of SG

4. JB noted that the year since the last AGM had been challenging but good progress had been made by the charity. This had again been a year of everyone really pulling together magnificently and on behalf of the Trustees she thanked all staff, volunteers and co-workers for continuing to adapt so well to the limitations imposed by Covid-19.
5. JB turned to the Notice of Meeting which had been on the website for some weeks and said this should be taken as read, but that each Resolution would be read out in full.
6. JB said that Resolution 1 was “To receive the accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2021, including the Trustees’ report on the Charity’s activities since the previous AGM”. She noted that these had been on the website since the Independent Examiner had concluded their work (without requiring any changes to the Annual Report) and had been approved by Trustees. She noted that a considerable amount of detailed work had gone into the Report and gave special thanks to Sue Moye, Jermaine Bennett and GT. She asked if there were any questions on these accounts or other matters; there were none.

The Resolution was put to the Meeting with JB proposing it and GT seconding it; the votes cast, together with Proxies received, carried it unanimously.

7. GT said that Resolution 2 was “To re-elect Julia Brandreth as a Trustee”. He noted that JB had been a Trustee since April 2019 and Chair since June 2019 and thanked her on behalf of SG for her work for the Charity.

The Resolution was put to the Meeting with GT proposing it and FB seconding it; the votes cast, together with Proxies received, carried it unanimously.

8. JB said that Resolution 3 was “To re-elect Fran Bristow as a Trustee”.

The Resolution was put to the Meeting with JB proposing it and KA seconding it; the votes cast, together with Proxies received, carried it unanimously.

9. JB said that Resolution 4 was “To re-elect Jon Sherman as a Trustee”.

The Resolution was put to the Meeting with KA proposing it and GT seconding it; the votes cast, together with Proxies received, carried it unanimously.

10. GT said that he reluctantly proposed Resolution 5 which was “To accept the retirement of Reg Wickings (RW) as a Trustee after the maximum nine years as a Trustee”.

GT said that Reg has been an integral part of the development of the Garden in that period. As a long-standing volunteer in Arts & Craft he has not only displayed his graphic design flair and arts skills but has also inspired many scores of co-workers to take joy from their works and to improve their abilities.

He said that RW was, he was reliably informed, the most strident Trustee who defended Arts & Crafts when, without funding other than for materials, there was a move to focus solely on gardening. Typically he said he was sure that Reg would be too modest to claim any credit!

He continued saying that he has always admired RW’s sage-like qualities, his calm quiet assuredness, gentle demeanour and smart insights into many topics. GT said he was sure he spoke for everyone in saying he has enjoyed his lovely sense of humour, further noting that that RW is someone we all look up to and always feel better after a chat with him.

GT said that almost uniquely have never heard a bad word said about Reg. He has often been the face of many Sydenham Garden photos and publications proudly displaying his unique fulsome beard.

GT concluded by saying thank you to Reg for everything he has done for him and indeed for all at SG. He said RW will be greatly missed and asked him not to be a stranger as the

Garden will always remain his second-home and his contributions will always be welcomed.

The Resolution was put to the Meeting with JB seconding it; the votes cast, together with Proxies received, carried it unanimously.

11. JB said that Resolution 6 was “To re-appoint Carley Partnership as Independent Examiner”.

The Resolution was put to the Meeting with JS proposing it and RW seconding it; the votes cast, together with Proxies received, carried it unanimously.

12. JB noted that two staff members, Verity Wong (VW) and Lauren Goddard (LG) had kindly agreed to speak on their experiences in delivering services online.

13. Lauren said that throughout the online delivery periods they had encouraged co-workers to get out and hopefully inspired them into nature. The ground rules had been intended to promote positives and had been derived from polling of co-workers. They had covered elements as diverse as plant drawing (with amazing results), soil ecology (where types had been tested and examined) and cordage making (including twisting techniques). She noted that photos were uploaded to a restricted padlet page for all to enjoy. LG said that there had been a consistent group dynamic and the benefits for some conditions were especially valuable for further online groups.

14. Verity’s Arts & Crafts courses had been online for six months. Activity packs had been prepared and posted to co-workers weekly. These were as diverse as weaving and watercolours. Many of the items produced had been exhibited in an art trail at Wynell Road, which had helped to make participants connect with the Garden. In her reflections on the online delivery there were many positives that co-workers had spoken of such as structure to their week, being part of a group, new activities outweighing some challenges such as lower numbers and harder to hold/start conversations. She noted that she and LG will now combine

courses together. One co-worker had said “This is the most relaxed I have felt all week”.

15. All present at the AGM expressed their thanks to Lauren and Verity through clapping!

16. JB also thanked them for taking the time and for their hard work to deliver their personal views. She asked if anyone had any questions or wanted to pass any comments: there were none.

17. In closing JB said a big thanks to all staff and volunteers for their dedicated work on behalf of our co-workers. Looking forward she said SG will seek to implement the key strands of its plans, was in a healthy condition, intends to more fully reflect the communities we serve and go from strength-to-strength. Finally, she hoped that we would all be able to meet fully together for fairs, events and indeed next year’s AGM.

18. There being no other business the Meeting closed at 11.29.

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J Brandreth, Chair