

SYDENHAM GARDEN ("SG") MINUTES OF THE 2025 AGM HELD AT SYDENHAM GARDEN AT 17.45 ON 18th DECEMBER 2025

Present:

Members: Graeme Thomson*, Jon Sherman*, Anne Sykes*, Laura Reynolds*, Jullen Gordon*, Kehinde Adeogun*, Jim Sikorski, Sue Smith, Rob Smith, Barbara Kern (volunteer) Faith Smith (volunteer),

In attendance: Lowell Black (Interim Director), Ollie Moss (Head of Services), Deborah Lader (minutes)

Apologies: Steve Bullock*, Laura Saksena*, Arthur Ngoka*, Julia Brandreth*

*Trustee

1. Graeme Thomson (GT, Vice-Chair) introduced himself and explained he was Chairing today in Julia Brandreth's (Chair) unavoidable absence.
2. Lowell Black (LB) was introduced by GT and gave a presentation (attached) about Sydenham Garden and its objectives, services and a review of 2024/5.
3. LB then talked about the 2025/26 forward look.
4. LB also discussed the information leaflets which laid out on the tables at the meeting:
 - the fortnightly co-worker newsletter for SG
 - the document explaining SG's position on the Government's welfare reforms
 - the report on access to mental health users and navigating services including co-worker testimonials.
5. GT thanked LB on behalf of everyone for all her work over the year she has been here. Jim Sikorski praised the report for its richness and usefulness for helping get people's attention, particularly for funding applications. KA asked if SG was planning to shift towards advocacy/campaigning – LB said yes but as light touch as it needs to consider social issues while concentrating on service provision.
6. GT then asked JS to report on the 2024/5 Annual Report and current position of the organisation. He went through some headlines from the financial report included in the annual accounts –there was a modest surplus of around £5,000, which was a satisfactory outcome. Cash Reserves were approx. £254k. In addition, SG had received a special endowment grant from The Edward Gosling Foundation of £125,000 whereby a drawdown in any year can only be made to ensure that our Cash Reserves are in accordance with our policy of holding funds of not less than six months charitable expenditure: the endowment wasn't utilised in this financial year. He commented that as with all small charities funding is always uncertain as there is more demand and a tight funding environment. Significant funding sources were coming to an end in 2026 and new sources were being sought, though adjustments may be required.

7. The process of preparing the Annual Report was slower this year and there will be a few necessary small changes before filing accounts.
8. GT asked if there were any questions on these accounts or other matters; there were none. He thanked JS and LB for an excellent summary update and report.
9. GT began the business part of the Meeting by noting it was quorate, there being more than ten Members present and by proxy.
10. GT asked for any comments on the Minutes of the 2024 AGM, which had previously been posted on the SG website – none were raised. GT proposed, JS seconded and the Meeting approved these.
11. GT said that **Resolution 1** was "To receive the accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2025, including the Trustees' report on the Charity's activities since the previous AGM". The Resolution was put to the Meeting with GT proposing it and Laura Reynolds (LR) seconding it; the votes cast, together with Proxies received, carried it unanimously. GT gave thanks to JS and LB for all their work on the Report.
12. GT said that **Resolution 2** was "To re-elect Kehinde Adeogun (KA) as a Trustee". GT gave some background on KA and said she was a highly valued colleague with clear and independent thinking. KA also talked about her experience as a Trustee and how committed and engaged co-workers, staff and volunteers remain. The Resolution was put to the Meeting with GT proposing it and then LR seconding it; the votes cast, together with Proxies received, carried it unanimously.
13. GT said that **Resolution 3** was "To re-elect Laura Reynolds as a Trustee". GT praised LR for her invaluable work, positive approach and source of support to the Garden. LR expressed how much she enjoyed working with SG as a Trustee and carrying on the great work behind the scenes running the service. The Resolution was put to the Meeting with KA proposing it and JG seconding it; the votes cast, together with Proxies received, carried it unanimously.
14. GT said that **Resolution 4** was "To re-elect Anne Sykes (AS) as a Trustee". GT praised AS for her work with SG since 2018, and specifically to the Services sub-committee where she has used her experience as a doctor to give a calm overview and resolution of issues. AS echoed others in it being a privilege to be a Trustee. The Resolution was put to the Meeting with JS proposing it and KA seconding it; the votes cast, together with Proxies received, carried it unanimously.
15. GT said that **Resolution 5** was "To re-appoint Carley as Independent Examiner". The Resolution was put to the Meeting with JS proposing it and AS seconding it; the votes cast, together with Proxies received, carried it unanimously.
16. GT talked about ongoing funding challenges and said that the Board will soon be appointing two specialist fundraisers as Trustees. A third Trustee is to be appointed as an EDI specialist. He said SG would, as ever, adapt to the resources it has available.
17. GT asked if anyone had any questions or wanted to pass any comments: BK praised the work of SG. Faith also praised the calm sanctuary of SG. GT thanked everyone for coming to the AGM, helping to create the unique culture at SG and for all that everyone does - Trustees, Staff, Volunteers, Co-workers, Funders and Members.

There being no other business the Meeting closed at 18:45.

GT Vice-Chair

SG AGM minutes 2025