

SYDENHAM GARDEN (“SG”)
MINUTES OF 2020 AGM
HELD ONLINE AT NOON ON 7TH NOVEMBER 2020

Present:

Members: Julia Brandreth, Graeme Thomson, Steve Bullock, Kehinde Adeogun, Arthur Ngoka, Reg Wickings, Jon Sherman, Fran Bristow, Anne Sykes (proxy), Jullen Gordon, Andrew Orford, Gill Stephenson, Alona Sheridan, Jim Sikorski, Sarah Sikorski

In attendance: Coralie Hopwood, Barbara Kern, Beatrice Parrish, Steve Prowse, Rosie Hollands,

Apologies: Maria Devereaux, Kevin Houlton

1. Julia Brandreth (JB), Chair, welcomed all attendees and noted that sadly the AGM had to be held online owing to Covid-19 restrictions. She noted that the Meeting was quorate and said that the Notice of Meeting will be taken as read.
2. Graeme Thomson highlighted that all of the key items from the Minutes of the 2019 AGM, which had been posted on the SG website, had been updated and dealt with in the 2019-20 Annual Report, which is going to be discussed today.
3. JB noted that the year had been challenging but good progress had been made by the charity. Coralie Hopwood had joined as Director in mid November 2019, Jermaine Bennett had been promoted to Head of Services and delivery had moved online owing to Covid-19. This had been a year of everyone really pulling together magnificently and on behalf of the Trustees she thanked all staff, volunteers and co-workers for adapting so brilliantly.
4. Coralie Hopwood (CH) gave a short presentation. She reflected that in 2019/20 the prestigious Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service had been won, a great reflection on all involved, especially our wonderful volunteers. SG had joined two new service partnerships in which it had a central role. The staff team had been strengthened and the adaptation to Covid-19 in mid March onwards had been both exhausting but positively received by co-workers. Numerous grants had

been awarded and the support of many organisations had been instrumental in coping with the pandemic.

5. CH looked forward to 2021 and hoped that services might be able to return to some semblance of normality. However, at present, flexibility of delivery was key. The funding outlook was challenging and she expected re-evaluations by many of resources and priorities, but felt SG was well placed. The positive benefits of green space and the effect of the pandemic on mental health were noted as both confirmatory of the benefits of our services but the effects of Covid-19 was also likely to increase the need for them too. The possibilities of expanding income through different promotional streams including social enterprise, including the sale of flowers/produce, were being explored. She also believed that delivery through partnerships was likely to grow. She thanked everyone for such a great and positive approach to the restrictions and was very proud that we had been able to provide services throughout.
6. JB thanked CH for her presentation and asked if there were any questions on this, the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 or the report therein on the Charity's activities since the previous AGM. There were none.
7. JB proposed Resolution 1, to receive the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 and this was seconded by GT. On a show of hands and with Proxy votes this was carried unanimously.
8. GT proposed Resolution 2, to receive the Trustee's report on the Charity's activities since the previous AGM held in November 2019 and this was seconded by Jon Sherman (JSh). On a show of hands and with Proxy votes this was carried unanimously.
9. Resolution 3 was to accept the retirement of Jim Sikorski as a Trustee. GT proposed this and noted that Jim was the Founder of SG and had been the chief architect of its development over the years with the pivotal support of his wife and long term volunteer, Sarah. He invited Reg Wickings (RW) to reflect on Jim's contribution to SG.

10. RW said that Jim, the Founder, had stepped-down as Chair after 17 years in June 2019 as planned and was now leaving having now served his current term as a trustee. In recognition of his exceptional drive and dedication to SG he has been appointed as Honorary President. He noted that SG was founded by Jim in 2002 and arose from his work with a group of patients at Sydenham Green Group Practice. At that time, Jim, the mental health lead for Lewisham, had begun to think about the causes of mental ill-health and the limitations of a purely medical response. He began to ask his patients how they spent their days, and found that lack of meaningful interaction or activity was the common thread. Jim was one of the first GPs to prescribe the role of gardening in the treatment of mental health considering it an appropriate health intervention, backed by evidence of the benefit which can transform people's lives for the better. He was hopeful gardening therapy/treatment would be considered completely normal in the future. With these ideas in mind the development of SG has been largely masterminded and overseen by him, with the support of our wonderful staff, volunteers and co-workers through the years.
11. He further reflected that Jim is approachable and a good listener, resourceful, good-natured, warm hearted and compassionate. He has a keen sharp mind, a great sense of faith, commitment and conviction. He is widely regarded as visionary, dedicated and determined, with the courage to carry on during difficult times to give life to his vision of providing meaningful interaction and activity in the community, to those suffering or recovering from mental ill health.
12. RW noted three quotes from Jim: "Healthier minds make for happier and more stable communities, so "growing" communities make up part of the fabric of a healthy society. In short, growing changes things." "Growing your own food not only promotes health but can be part of recovering lives that have been damaged by illness or trauma." "We have been helping people on their recovery journey from mental and physical illness at SG: time and time we have been moved by the change that we have accompanied."

13. RW noted that Sarah was an unsung hero for her unstinting support. Jim had seen the Garden through good and tough times with determination and dedication. He will be greatly missed but leaves with enormous thanks from everyone and will always be welcome at SG.
14. Jim (JS) said he was very grateful for these kind words and whilst SG had been a big part of his life it was time to cut the umbilical chord and depart. He noted that the organization had an increasing depth, with plenty of skills and resources to serve the community. He noted that there is a special caring at SG where others in need are always at the heart of the organization and hoped it would always be that way.
15. GT proposed Resolution 3 to accept the retirement of Jim Sikorski and Steve Bullock (SB) seconded this. On a show of hands and with Proxy's this was carried unanimously.
16. Resolution 4 was to elect Kehinde Adeogun (KA) as a Trustee. KA had found out about SG last summer, attended the AGM and applied to be a Trustee. She is a lawyer, her expertise having already materially added to the skills of the Board. GT said he was very pleased to proposed the resolution and this was seconded by RW. On a show of hands and Proxy's this was carried unanimously.
17. Resolution 5 was to elect Jullen Gordon (JG) as a Trustee. JG has been a volunteer at SG for many years and has extensive experience of advocating for those in need. This was proposed by JS and seconded by Alona Sheridan. On a show of hands and Proxy's this was carried unanimously.
18. Resolution 6 was to re-elect Arthur Ngoka (AN) as a Trustee. AN is a former Treasurer. RW proposed this Resolution and JSh seconded it. On a show of hands and Proxy's this was carried unanimously.
19. Resolution 7 to re-elect Anne Sykes (AS) as a Trustee. AS is Chair of the Services Sub-Committee. SB proposed the Resolution and this was seconded by GT. On a show of hands and Proxy's this was carried unanimously.

20. Resolution 8 was to re-elect Graeme Thomson as a Trustee. Graeme is Vice Chair, Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee and Company Secretary. This was proposed by Alona Sheridan and seconded by JS. On a show of hands and Proxy's this was carried unanimously.
21. Resolution 9 was to reappoint The Carley Partnership as Independent Examiner. This was proposed by GT and seconded by AN. On a show of hands and Proxy's this was carried unanimously.
22. There being no other business or comments/questions JB thanked everyone for attending and wished them good health.
23. The Meeting ended at 12.27.

SG 2020 AGM mins