



Friends of the
University of Bristol
Botanic Garden

The Association of the Friends of the University of Bristol Botanic Garden

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

The MBE for volunteer groups

Registered Charity Number 291159

Forty-sixth Annual General Meeting

Thursday 17 March 2022 at 7pm

(This meeting is taking place by Zoom)

AGENDA

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of AGM held by Zoom 30 March 2021
- 4 Annual reports
To receive reports from:
 - i. Chairman
 - ii. Membership Secretary
 - iii. Treasurer
- 5 Annual accounts: to approve the financial statements
- 6 Committee elections.
To re-elect the following:

Alice Maltby	Proposed: Sue Beech	Seconded: Jean Martin
Pat Davie	Proposed: Paul Wood	Seconded: Tony West
Paul Wood	Proposed: Pat Davie	Seconded: Alice Maltby

To elect the following:

Janet Hathway	Proposed: Sue Redfern	Seconded: Jean Martin
Rebecca Tregarthen	Proposed: Pat Davie	Seconded: Paul Mugford
- 7 Honorary Auditor: to approve the appointment of Edward Holcombe ACA
- 8 To approve increase in membership subscription rates with effect from 1 January 2023*
- 9 Any other business

* Friends' subscriptions have only changed twice in over 20 years with the single rate being increased from £15 to £20 in January 2001 and to £25 in 2015. Over the past two years there has not been the usual increase in membership or income which the festivals and other events provide.

With the rise in the charge for entry to the Garden and current inflationary pressures the Committee have had to consider an increase to our membership charges to ensure we can maintain the level of support to the Garden and for the trainees.

**We are therefore proposing the following rates for membership to take effect from 1 January 2023:
Single £30, Joint £45, Benefactor £150, Life £750.**

Association of Friends of the University of Bristol Botanic Garden
Minutes of the forty-fifth Annual General Meeting,
held by Zoom in view of the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions
on Tuesday 30 March 2021 at 7pm.

Introduction

The Chairman of the Friends, Pat Davie, welcomed approximately 34 Friends linked virtually through Zoom, thanks to technical support from Raymond Gallery. A booklet containing the Agenda, Chairman's report, Membership report, Trustees' report and Financial Statement had been circulated to Friends with the Spring 2021 Newsletter. There were no Minutes from the 2020 AGM to approve because this did not take place, with the prepared papers being made available through the website.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Robert and Caroline Muston.

Chairman's Report

Pat Davie presented her report. In January 2020 we were looking back at 2019, with record numbers of visitors and record numbers who had joined the Friends. None of us could have predicted the change a few weeks would make. Instead of all the events and visits we were planning everything was suddenly cancelled and the Botanic Garden closed to visitors. The Garden is not very large, which makes 'social distancing' difficult. With the usual facilities not being available for visitors and in order to protect the staff, volunteers and visitors, the Garden was not able to open again until September, and only with pre-booking and limited numbers. In January, when the nationwide lockdown was introduced again, it was not possible to open after the Christmas break. We are waiting for the situation to improve before re-opening can be timetabled. There will be no major events in 2021, because they need bookings several months in advance.

The Friends have continued their contribution to the general running of the Garden. We had already set aside funds to pay the salary of the trainee, Irene Cambi, until her two-year apprenticeship ended in January 2021. We had also agreed to fund a new two-year trainee to take her place, for which Steve Asman has recently started work. The accounts for the year to 31 December 2019 showed a comfortable surplus of £25,776. Since the majority of members renew their subscriptions in January, we were in a good position at the beginning of 2020. However, with the Garden closed and all events cancelled, we did not benefit from the usual influx of new members, nor from the income of the Jazz concert and open gardens. As the financial statement shows, we ended 2020 with a deficit of £2,416.

The Committee have discussed whether we should offer compensation for the fact that the Garden was only open for part of the year, which restricted members' ability to benefit from free entry. Although this is a major reason for people to join, membership is principally to support the continued development as well as for special projects in the Garden. Members have continued to receive many other benefits. Indeed, the regular enews was changed to weekly, and instead of the usual details of events and courses, the Curator, Nick Wray, spent many hours compiling articles about plants of interest. Since the Friends is entirely run by volunteers it was agreed that the administration of any form of refund or extension to the membership would be very difficult. Renewals and gift memberships have been remarkably good and we hope that everyone will be able to enjoy the garden from mid-Spring onwards.

Thanks are due to members of the Committee and to the many volunteers whose roles required unexpected adaptations. We have all missed our interaction with the Garden staff who have worked tirelessly to try and keep everything going. Finally, we must thank our Curator, Nick Wray, who has

remained calm throughout, despite the pressure of health and safety requirements and the resultant paperwork, and particularly appreciate his time with the enews, Newsletter, phone calls and Zoom meetings.

Membership Secretary's Report

Sue Beech introduced her report. Jen Walker has joined the team and is now the primary contact for members who pay by direct debit, while Sue Redfern assists with her extensive knowledge and helps with data entry. All joint work is now done by Zoom. In November 2020, existing members were invited to renew, and the majority have done so. The current totals are 1385 households and 1940 members. This is a 30% drop from the peak at December 2019, being comparable with December 2017. Once the Garden reopens we can expect to gain new members, but will miss the special recruitment at big events. There is a 10% increase in Benefactor Members (now 42), including two that are gifts. Gift membership continues to grow: 59 gift packs were purchased in 2020, including 29 in December. The new membership subscription periods have been implemented, with membership now being for 12 months from the quarter of joining. The team thank all those involved for the skills and time they give so generously, and look forward to a return to near normality in the not-too-distant future.

Treasurer's Report

Paul Mugford presented the Trustees' Report and Financial Statement. In the Income headings of the accounts, the dip in membership subscriptions is partially an effect of the change to a cash book accounting system. There was no income from corporate members because he delayed issuing any request until January 2021, in the knowledge that these companies were facing unusual pressures. The income stream from the Jazz concert was missing. The income from plant sales of £625 was entirely thanks to all the plants that Chris Purvis had collected in anticipation of the Easter plant sale but sold from home. The large Gift Aid receipt in 2019 reflected payments for three earlier years; the Gift Aid for 2019 and 2020 has yet to be collected, with HMRC offering a better interest rate on unclaimed Gift Aid than is currently paid by savings accounts.

In the Expenditure headings, £1000 has been contributed towards an exhibition by Alex Hertzell, which was postponed from 2020 and will hopefully take place in summer 2022. The postage costs are substantial, but are needed for keeping in touch with Friends. The Net Assets show a large transfer to the Education and Training Fund restricted account, to ensure sufficient was set aside for the full period of the traineeship now taken up by Steve Asman.

In reply to a question from Chris Purvis, Pat Davie stated that 31 cookbooks have been sold, for which she has paid the postage (to be repaid). The money has gone to the University of Bristol online shop, and needs to be claimed.

The Financial Statement was approved unanimously.

Committee elections

Jean Martin (re-election); Paul Mugford (re-election); Tony West (re-election).
All proposed by Janet Hathway and seconded by Chris Purvis. All unanimous.

Honorary auditor

Reappointment of Chris Starr: Proposed by Jane Perkins, seconded by Liz Wintle. Unanimous.

Approval of the use of online technology for general meetings

In the Constitution for the Association of Friends, Section 8 describes the conduct of 'General Meetings', but makes no mention of online technology. As Chairman, Pat Davie asked for formal approval to be able to use online technology for future meetings, if the need arises.

Proposed: Sally Meadows; seconded, Paul Mugford. Approved unanimously.

Notice of review of membership subscription rates

Pat Davie explained that when the Garden is fully open again, Nick Wray is likely to review entrance charges, which may be slightly increased. In that case, it may be appropriate for the Friends' subscription to be reviewed. As a charitable organisation, any change in subscription rates requires approval at an AGM, for implementation in the following January. It is likely that the agenda for the March 2022 AGM will include such provision, for implementation in January 2023.

Any further business

There was no further business, so Pat Davie declared the meeting closed. It was followed by a brief update from Nick Wray as Curator.

AGM 2022

Report from the Chair

This time last year, as the Covid-19 vaccines became available, we were all hopeful of having our freedom again. Who could have predicted that we would be having a second year of restrictions? My comments about 2020 were to appreciate how the staff at the Botanic Garden had continued to keep the plants alive, despite everything, and to appreciate the Friends for maintaining their support. Now I can only repeat those comments.

Visitor numbers over the year were approximately half of those in 2019 as the Garden was not reopened after the winter lockdown until 12 April and then only during the week and pre-booked. It was not until 23 August that it was deemed safe to reopen the closed spaces of the glasshouses. The staff from Chandos Deli were able to serve limited refreshments from the Devers Room but visitors could only sit outside or under the gazebo.

Volunteer gardeners were welcomed back once the Garden reopened and with the inevitable lack of maintenance by the hard-pressed staff they quickly made inroads to restore everything to order. Many of the plants which are protected during the cold months remained out of sight and were not brought out for the summer displays.

For a second year it was not possible to hold either of the big Festivals – the Easter Sculpture and the Bee and Pollination in September - but we are all anticipating more success in 2022. There will be an additional attraction to the Garden opening later in the year: the generous gift of the RHS Chelsea-winning Guangzhou Garden will be rebuilt in the garden of the Holmes Cottage.

The exhibition originally planned for 2020 was at last able to open on 7 July all the way through the summer months to the end of September. The development of 'Displays Decoded' by artist Alex Hirtzel, with Dr Dave Lawson from UoB Biological Sciences, was supported by the Friends and they gave our Benefactor members special tours of this fascinating new approach to how pollinators are attracted to plants. This display was in the marquee on the West Terrace and proved a great success with visitors, especially the interactive displays with QR codes and virtual reality and UV torches bringing pictures to life and a number of aromas to identify. It was all great fun and Alex and Dave's enthusiasm made it an easy way to learn.

After a slight delay (due inevitably to social distancing rules) we were able to hold a jazz concert which took place on 14 August. It was the first time the Blue Notes and Hannah Wedlock had played together for 18 months but they were soon 'back in the swing'. All tickets were pre-sold and limited to 150 (not over 300 as on previous concerts) but it was a beautiful evening with the sunset lighting up the Holmes and the balloons from the fiesta flying overhead. Everyone enjoyed it and seemed very pleased to be able to socialise again, and with the raffle it enabled us to make a profit for the Friends. We are planning on holding this concert with increased numbers in July 2022.

Membership has been pleasingly steady with many new members. As you will see from the membership report, at the end of 2021 we had a total of 2,358, including 39 Benefactors and 38 Life members. Already the renewals are coming in and with the festivals back this year there will be the chance we will be back to 2019 levels and hopefully beyond. We would like to thank the Corporate members - Cleeve Nursery, Almondsbury Garden Centre, Rolls-Royce and World Odyssey - for their continued support in what has been a challenging time for all businesses.

The Friends' accounts as you will see show a deficit for a second year. In 2020 we sustained a loss of £2,417 but in 2021 this was only £41. However this is only because we had a substantial refund of £8,602 from HMRC for Gift Aid on the 2019 subscriptions, otherwise the picture would have looked a lot more dismal. My thanks to Paul Mugford and Sue Beech for all their hard work to obtain this very welcome refund.

As reported last year we have set aside the funds to cover the traineeship of **Steve Asman** until March 2023. Steve is finding there is so much to learn in the Garden and on the RHS course and came to the Benefactor's evenings to show his appreciation for the support he is receiving. Another trainee will be recruited to start in the autumn. There has been a promise of some funding towards the new recruit from the Stanley Smith Horticultural trust but the Friends have agreed to provide the balance.

Technology has no doubt helped and indeed developed during this time in ways we could not predict which will remain with us. We continue to hold our lectures on Zoom and in the spring newsletter I have asked our members for their opinion on whether this should continue with the uncertainty over the use of the University's theatres and the increasing parking problems in the centre of Bristol.

In 2019 I attended the inaugural meeting of a Forum made up of representatives of Friends' groups from botanic gardens around the UK. This was an initiative by the former Convenor (Chair) of the Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh and after a number of emails, phone calls and online discussions we all met at Durham. The formal launch of the Forum at Edinburgh in July 2020 during their 350th anniversary celebrations was, like everything else, cancelled. We have had a number of Zoom meetings and have now increased our numbers to some 20 members. The aim is to foster dialogue and exchange of ideas between the gardens. On behalf of the Forum in May 2021 Nick Wray and I did an online presentation to PlantNetwork members on the relationship between Friends' groups and botanic gardens including the effect of the Garden's move on Friends and visitors and how much volunteers helped. This has resulted in a number of approaches for advice as many gardens have only small Friends' groups and Bristol is considered a front runner in the use of volunteers.

The Friends' Association continues to rely on the many volunteers who give their time and energy and have kept everything going during the pandemic, with the unflinching support of the Curator, Nick Wray, and the Garden team. I would like to thank some of the volunteers on behalf of us all and with a full garden year to look forward to we hope you will all continue to help:

Tony West has continued to act as Vice-chair as well as keeping in touch with the Sculpture artists.

Sue Beech, Sue Redfern and Jen Walker: The very efficient membership team who have also dealt with the distribution of the newsletters as we have not been able to meet the usual 'stuffers' at the Garden.

Paul Mugford as Treasurer has kept a steady hand on the accounts and kept us advised of how we were managing with the decrease in income.

Paul Wood has kept minutes of our Zoom calls and also looks after our Benefactor and Life members.

Alice Maltby who despite the lack of Festivals has continued to keep the media world informed.

Jean Martin: My co-editor of the newsletter which has continued with articles of interest instead of the usual events.

We are pleased to welcome two new recruits to the Committee: **Janet Hathway** who has been a guide for many years and also **Rebecca Tregarthen** who has been a visitor to the Garden for some time, both of who now wish to help on the management side of the Friends.

Jane Perkins who cannot wait until she can organise the guides for a full programme of tours.

Sally Meadows who has organised a full programme of lectures.

Raymond Gallery who has dealt with all the technical side of our Zoom lectures.

Heather Dunford and Roderick Macleod who have sent out the regular enews.

Mike Austin who has kept the membership team supplied with envelopes for newsletters and seed lists and delivered the 1000s of letters to OnePost.

Chris Purvis who has continued to raise money by selling plants at the NGS open day and is looking forward to our main event at the Easter Sculpture Festival.

Roger Mellors who as well as his regular volunteering in the Garden has continued to give talks about the Garden to local groups and managing the jazz concert (with a little help from me).

Ann Brake continues to be one of the main school guides and also does talks to local groups. These talks often result in a tour or visit to the Garden as well as a welcome donation.

And our thanks to two volunteers who will no longer be helping:

John Stirrup, who has recently moved to Lincolnshire to be closer to his family, has been a Garden volunteer and has kept the website up to date for the last few years.

I would like particularly to thank **Geoffrey Blake**. During many years on the Committee he also started the rota when Welcome volunteers were introduced for the Lodge, organised the 40th Friends' Anniversary concert, produced the newsletter and worked on the website. For many years he provided much of our printing including our membership cards but he has now reluctantly given this all up and retired to a smaller property.

Finally we were sad to learn of the death in December of our longstanding auditor, **Chris Starr**, who has acted for the Friends since 1984.

The President of the Friends, **Jekka McVicar**, like many in the horticulture industry, has had a hard couple of years for her nursery but has continued to be very supportive of the Friends including contributions to the newsletter. We very much appreciate her time.

The **Admin team** has been amazing during the ups and downs of the last two years, with Corinne, Helen and Judy working from home much of the time maintaining the Garden's smooth running whilst keeping up with all the queries, especially from the RHS course students who are now back with in-person teaching and have taken their exams under difficult conditions. We are sorry to say goodbye to Judy Cordell who is leaving for family reasons and has been a joy to work with and hopefully is going to be able to give time as a volunteer.

The **Garden team** – Froggie, Andy, Penny, Vicky and Susan - has been very pleased to have the volunteers back to help with the maintenance and other tasks. Although a lot of work it will be good to have the full displays in the summer of plants which in 2021 stayed in their winter quarters.

The Botanic Garden team is led by the **Curator**, Nick Wray, who with added responsibilities for the safety of his staff and visitors, has continued with good humour to be positive that things will improve and he has kept the Friends informed with his fortnightly enews articles as well as in the newsletter.

Although there are still challenges and uncertainties we are all now optimistic for the return of life without restrictions and with the ability for impromptu visits to each other and places. It is 140 years since Adolph Leipner founded the first Botanic Garden at the University of Bristol. Let us celebrate with an exciting and successful Garden year.

Pat Davie

February 2021

Membership report

Membership totals for year ending 31 December 2021 (numbers in brackets are for year to 31.12.2020):

2358 (2035) members in 1589 (1398) households

The membership totals are close to those of 2018 but represent a 14% (30%) drop since the beginning of the pandemic.

There is a 10% increase in Benefactor members bringing the total to 42 (two Gift Benefactor memberships, two increasing from ordinary membership and one new). Donations received from members included with renewal subscriptions amounted to £1208. The number of gift memberships has decreased.

The Membership team continue to meet the challenges of pandemic restrictions and I am pleased to say Zoom is often a preferred way of working on membership business. This will continue alongside face-to-face meetings when restrictions allow.

As always, we try to respond to the expectations of the members and adapt our working practices when we see demand. We now accept payments for renewals by bank transfer as well as for new membership payments, if requested.

We have noted that the requests for seeds from the *Index Seminum* is about 12% of the distribution of the list. In our attempt to minimise the cost of printing and postage we are working with the Garden office to determine those who wish to receive this annual seed list and how they would like to receive it, with the option of a digital copy. This is an ongoing exercise, and we would ask for tolerance if we do not get it right the first time.

Geoffrey Blake, who so efficiently printed all of the Friend's mailing letters, constitutions, gift cards and membership cards, has now retired. We would like to thank him for his reliable and efficient work. The membership secretary is now printing all the documents except the membership cards. This is a temporary arrangement, until the committee considers the management of the printing.

The membership team have maintained the distribution of the Newsletters adhering to the pandemic restrictions in place on issue dates. This has been possible because of the team's flexibility, and with the help of Pat Davie, assembling the mailings. We also are grateful for the support of Mike Austin, who prepares the envelopes for posting and delivers and collects the required items to me and to One Post.

Sue Beech

On behalf of the membership team: Sue Beech, Sue Redfern and Jen Walker

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Association of Friends of the University of Bristol Botanic Garden

Hollybush Lane, Stoke Bishop, Bristol BS9 1JB

Charity No. 291159

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31st December 2021

Constitution

The objects of the Association are to advance public education in, and to promote research into, Botany and its related subjects and to publish useful results of such research. In pursuance of these objectives the Association supports the work and further development of the University of Bristol Botanic Garden.

The garden is unique in the West Country and the plant collections have been chosen to provide teaching and research resources for the University. Its mission to educate, communicate and conserve has also established a valuable amenity for local schools and a cultural attraction for the public.

Committee

Management of the Association is vested in a Committee (the Trustees) and its powers and duties are set out in the Constitution, including the procedures for appointment, nomination and election. Regular meetings of the Committee provide opportunity to apply risk management criteria in the assessment of the viability of potential fund-raising initiatives, whilst being dutifully aware of its charitable objectives.

The following members served the Committee during the year:

Patricia Davie	Chair	Paul Wood	Secretary
Paul Mugford	Treasurer	Jean Martin	
Susan Beech	Membership	Susan Redfern	
Tony West	Vice Chair	Alice Maltby	Marketing and Publicity

Nicholas Wray, Curator of the Garden, and other volunteers as appropriate may attend Committee meetings in an *ex officio* capacity.

Important aspects of the Committee's role are to encourage new members of the Association and to stimulate interest in the Garden through a variety of events and activities. Income generated by such initiatives, and from members' subscriptions and donations, after meeting expenses, is used to support the maintenance and development of the Garden. The Committee acknowledges the support of those members who have become involved directly in Friends activities and 'hands-on' work in the Garden.

Accounting system

Our accounting system is a simple cash book approach that is acceptable to the Charities Commission and reflects the straightforward financial activity of the Association. The cash book approach simply means that we record income and expenditure when it happens whilst taking care to note any significant items due (not paid or received) for the current year.

Income

During the year membership subscriptions were flat at £41,422 (£41,555) with a small, but very welcome, increase in our Benefactor member subscriptions £5,250 (£4,875). Once again Covid restrictions prevented most events from going ahead so the opportunity to promote memberships at the events was lost. We were delighted to be able to hold a somewhat reduced Jazz event that generated £1,888. We are also very grateful to Chris Purvis who continued with plant sales from home and contributed an amazing £1,165.

Legacies and Donations have increased to £2,620 (£1,392) and work done around Gift Aid generated £8,602. With no events this year other income remains reduced.

The Education and Training Fund - set up in 2014 to enable the Garden to employ trainee horticulturalists - continues to benefit from subscriptions from our Benefactor and Corporate members along with Life Memberships.

Subscription Income accounts for 89% of the Associations total income (93%)

Use of Funds

The excess of Income, after expenses, continues to support the work of the Garden and during 2021 this included regular maintenance and development amounting to £36,780 (£36,380) and Trainee support at £14,100. We purchased a laptop (£500) for use by the membership team.

Our most significant recurring operating cost, apart from the above, remains stationery, printing and postage, mainly for the newsletter and seedlist - which was maintained throughout - at £10,273 (£11,010). We continue to explore the use of email to help reduce costs.

The accounts include a provision of £7,050 for Trainee costs due for 2021 but not yet paid.

Reserves

Having set aside the Cecily Jones Trust Fund of £62,565 (we are custodians of the capital and can only use the interest) and transferred funds into the Education and Training Fund (ETF) which now stands at £42,488 (£44,284) we currently hold £41,388 in the general fund. The ETF underpins our undertaking to support further Trainee costs.

Investments

The NS&I Investment Account is the home of the Cecily Jones Trust Fund. All remaining funds are held with either Lloyds Bank or Barclays Bank.

Insurance - The Association's activities are covered by a Public / Employers' Liability Insurance Policy under the Affiliated Societies Insurance Scheme operated by the Royal Horticultural Society.

Auditor - Independent examiner to be appointed following the sad death of Chris Starr a long term friend and supporter of the Garden.

By order of the Trustees

February 2022.

**The Association of Friends of the University of Bristol Botanic Garden
Registered Charity No 291159**

Income and Expenditure account for the year ended 31 December 2021

	2021		2020
	£		£
INCOME		INCOME	
Membership Subscriptions	41,422		41,555
Benefactor Membership	5,250		4,875
New Life Membership			625
Corporate Membership	1,150		
Legacies			
Donations	2,620		1,392
Social Events - Jazz concert	2,550		
Open Gardens			464
Plant sales	1,165		625
Gift Aid (2019)	8,602		
Interest on bank deposits etc.	521		532
Lectures	50		140
Book sales			
Sundry receipts / petty cash			
	<u>63,330</u>		<u>50,208</u>
EXPENDITURE		EXPENDITURE	
Garden support and development	36,780		36,380
Education & Training Support			(3,000)
Garden Support		Garden Furniture	
Garden Support - Trainee (includes a £7,050 provision)	14,100		6,224
Garden Support - Alex Hertzal project			1,000
Social Events -Jazz Concert	662		
Lectures	200		186
Bank charges	462		390
Entertaining	40		
Insurance & affiliation	110		110
Stationery & Printing	5,699		6,716
Postage	4,574		4,394
Service charges	22		
Sundry (Software)	192		97
Petty Cash			100
Miscellaneous	530		27
	<u>63,371</u>		<u>52,624</u>
Surplus/(-) for the Year	<u>(41)</u>	Surplus/(-) for the Year	<u>(2,416)</u>
BALANCE SHEET as at 31st December		BALANCE SHEET as at 31st December	
Net Assets		Net Assets	
Barclays Bank C/A	37,386		25,646
Lloyds Bank C/A	4,002		14,124
Petty cash	265		128
Restricted: Barclays Bank (Education and Training Fund)	42,488		44,284
Restricted: NS&I Investment (Cecily Jones Trust)	62,565		62,565
	<u>146,706</u>		<u>146,746</u>
Profit & Loss Account			
Brought forward	146,746		149,162
Net profit /(loss)	(41)		(2,416)
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>146,705</u>		<u>146,746</u>

Approved on behalf of the Committee
P Mugford (Honorary Treasurer) February 2022

Independent Examiner: Ed Holcombe ACA