

FRIENDS OF CRESCENT GARDEN

MINUTES OF THE FRIENDS 21st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN ST. MARY'S PARISH CENTRE ALVERSTOKE ON 1ST MARCH 2014

1. Welcome from the Chairman – Pam Mawby

Good afternoon and a warm welcome to the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Crescent Garden. I would like to especially welcome The Worshipful The Mayor, Cllr John Beavis and the Lady Mayoress Christine Beavis, Cllr Alan Scard and his wife Judy and Caroline Smith the Parks and Gardens Officer from Gosport Borough Council. We really appreciate you all being here today. We also greatly appreciate the wonderful support we have had from Gosport Borough Council throughout the year.

2. Apologies – David Merritt

Dr James Sykes & Mrs Liz Sykes, Julia Massey, Maureen Bell, Mr & Mrs Hornshaw, Mr Richard & Mrs Carol Wright, Allison Sykes, Jackie Askew, Dante & Richard Thorne, Deirdre & Ian Powe Frankie Casserley, Tony & Betty Whetstone, Cllr. Robert & Mrs Inge Forder, Sarah & David Palmer.

3. Acceptance of Minutes of 20th AGM Meeting: Matters arising

Proposer - Gordon Spink

Seconded – Chris Stevens

4. Chairman's Report

This year has certainly been very busy.

Our Curator, Gilly Jaynes, resigned in August and now lives in Northamptonshire where she and Peter have bought a house. The committee and I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication that Gilly contributed to the garden during her time as Curator.

We are very fortunate that Lesley Flett and Anne Sayle have stepped into Gilly's shoes and now run the garden, they are joint Head Gardeners. Lesley has been a volunteer for many years and has recently completed an RHS Stage 2 Qualification. Annie, who is also a volunteer in the RNH Haslar Memorial Garden, has been a volunteer for almost 2 years. She is currently studying for her RHS Stage 2 Qualification. They are jointly responsible for maintenance and planning - and much more I suspect!

To help them, they have a small team, David Palmer, Cynthia Barrett, Rosemary Harrison and Pam Dimmock who are responsible for tools and equipment.

Cynthia Barrett is the National Garden Scheme representative and Lin Hay attends the meetings with the Hampshire Garden Trust.

David Cooke has taken on the role of liaison between the Friends and the Borough Council - he will be reporting on his progress later in the meeting.

We are particularly grateful to the Volunteers this year as they have worked together, with Lesley and Annie, to maintain the garden through wind and rain! They have great plans and enthusiasm. We are hoping to purchase a new and larger shed and to buy a small stock of tools that are much needed. I would also like to thank my extremely supportive and hardworking committee - should I add long suffering! - especially our Secretary, David Merritt, who keeps us all organised and in order. Enid Billington has put together two wonderful visits. The first to Corsham Court and Laycock Village in May and a second to

Sudeley Castle and Gardens in October - both were excellent days out. Enid has the details of our next visit and will give them to you later in the meeting.

I would like to thank Elaine Martin for organising the Lecture on "The Delights of Georgian Bathing Houses and Plunge Pools" given by Vivien Rolf, a local person — it was a most interesting evening.

We are having another talk in September to be given by Roy Lancaster, the Gardener and Broadcaster. You may remember his many years on Gardeners Question Time on the Radio. His subject will be "Special Plants for Special Gardens", this promises to be good evening. We hope this will take place in August or the beginning of September. We will let you know.

The Committee and the Volunteers have both worked really hard to make the Plant Sale, the HODS Day (here I must mention the contribution made by the people who dress up in period costume and promenade through the garden on the HODS day - they look wonderful) and the Christmas Fair, such a success.

A Christmas tree was beautifully decorated on our behalf, by Sarah Cooke, Kate Barnard and Rosemary Harrison, for the Church Christmas Tree Festival in December.

Helen Feculak very kindly organised the Annual Chernobyl Children's Party on a beautiful sunny day in June. It was a really happy event, with so much organised for the children to do followed by a wonderful tea. Thank you very much Helen and all those who donated food and gifts.

The Garden Party in June to celebrate the 21st Anniversary of the Friends was a lovely evening, made a little more special by the addition of a small Brass Band and a Celebratory Cake. So much organisation and fine timing went into making it the success it was - thank you to all concerned.

I do hope you liked the new format Autumn Newsletter — we plan to use the same format for the Spring Issue. Collating the first issue was quite time consuming, but now we have the system cracked, the subsequent issues should be much easier. As well as my excellent Editorial Team I would like to thank the envelope Stuffers and the Posties who deliver the News Letter to you.

Crescent Garden now has a new Website - well nearly, we just have to register our Domain Name and we will be on-line. Our Email address is alverstokecrescentgarden.co.uk. Dan Martin, Elaine's son, has designed the site for us and will be our Website Manager. We are most grateful to him for helping us to get the site up and running.

There will be links to other sites of interest, for example RHS, Hampshire Garden Trust and Gosport Borough Council.

If you would like a special preview Elaine has set up a demonstration for you and it is running through on her PC in the corner.

Despite all this HITEC wonder, thankfully, the garden still manages to remain as beautiful and tranquil as ever.

As you can see, it has been a busy year. Do take time to walk around the garden and appreciate its beauty. Tony Whetstone dropped off his apologies for the meeting this afternoon and said that he and Betty had spent a very pleasant hour in the Garden last week and he left feeling the world was a better place. That is very special.

5. Treasurer's Report

In the interregnum between Hon Treasurers, Ian Gallett as the auditor of the accounts over several years, was asked to present them to the meeting. Noting that he was the auditor rather than the Treasurer, he noted that the Friends had had a very successful year, reversing small losses in the previous one due mainly to the

cancellation of a major trip. The special Garden Party had been particularly successful in terms of income as well as enjoyment and he drew attention to the fact that subscriptions would be raised by £1 per head this coming year.'

6. Gardener's Report – Lesley Flett & Annie Sayle

Who we are

When Gilly Jaynes decided to move to Northamptonshire and announced she would have to leave her role as Curator, a void was left. Annie and I agreed to step into the shared role as Head Gardeners. However neither of us wanted to become a “curator”.

The Green Team believe the sharing out of duties has given the volunteers more involvement, and allowed them to take a greater role in the future of the garden. The end result is a committed, enthusiastic and (I hope) happy band of workers.

So this ‘year’ in the Crescent Garden

A long and cold spring in 2013, was followed by a long hot and dry summer. Autumn then arrived and took us into winter with a deluge of rain and gale force winds.

Before the worst of the weather we managed to plant various heritage tulips, narcissi and then last week some English bluebells in the green.

However, the Garden has experienced gale damage

A Euonymus, at the East Gate, split and lost 2 large limbs.

The Spanish chestnut lost a large branch on or about Christmas Eve. Subsequently the council have cut the whole tree down as it was badly damaged, had a huge fungal infection and was deemed unsafe.

Another small tree on Terrace Walk came down and went through the fence of one of our neighbours on Fort Road. This was quickly dealt with by the council, and the tree and 2 others in the same location, were removed.

A Rhamnus alaternus Variegata, a lovely variegated shrub, also came down. It was not happy with its position, had grown into a tall, thin tree and had a shallow root system. We want to replace it, but will change the location to the East gate, and plant two new shrubs to help screen the Brash from the path.

So here we are in 2014

- The ground is currently very wet underfoot and we have had varying sized lakes under the Beech tree. Caroline Smith from GBC is organising for that whole area to be aerated when possible. The ground is also very compacted there, but we have noted it and will work with GBC to improve things.
- With the ground so wet, the volunteers have been restricted to working from the paths. Terrace Walk and the hedge are now looking very good and ready for spring mulch and feed.
- Although we have had wind and rain, the temperatures have been very high for the time of year resulting in the early arrival of spring so there are some lovely plants for us all to enjoy.
- Flowering Lonicera fragrantissima at East Gate and Mimosa along Terrace Walk

- Snowdrops and crocuses
- Early signs of narcissi and tulips
- Yellow Wintersweet flowered and smelt SENSATIONAL
- We have Buds on the Camellia and Daphne adora in the Jubilee garden and White flowers on the Chaenomales and yellow blooms on the Kerria japonica

A variety of half hardy and hardy seeds have been purchased, to sow in March. Annie Sayle, who is also a volunteer at Haslar Memorial Garden, can use spare capacity in a poly tunnel or greenhouse to bring the seedlings on. Annie and I are very excited by this connection between these two historic gardens and hope the Green Flag judges will approve.

In conclusion

It has been a difficult year for the green team, on two counts...

The loss of the curator, Gilly Jaynes, and the Weather!!!

But...

The dedicated band of volunteer gardeners will work hard to maintain the standards set in the past. In the next 3 months, in partnership with the council, there will be more and more hard work to make sure that we will yet again be awarded a Green Flag.

We hope all Friends of the Garden are able to take the time to walk through the garden regularly and enjoy it's special atmosphere.

If anyone would like to join the Green Team, we are there every Wednesday morning. Come and join us. it's very rewarding, great fun and helps keep you fit!

7. Liaison with Gosport Borough Council – David Cooke

a. David Cooke was asked by the Chairman, Mrs Pam Mawby, to take on the role of liaison between Gosport Borough Council and the Friends of Crescent Garden. This has been progressed by an initial meeting between him, Pam and Caroline Smith from the Council which took place on 4 Dec 2013.

b. It was a most productive and positive meeting, with the Council being very supportive of the Friends. Caroline Smith has been particularly helpful, and I am delighted to be able to report the following:

The path wooden edging will be renewed by 5 April 2014, hopefully starting in the third week of March.

The gravel paths will be renewed shortly after the edges have been completed

The only competition that we will be entered for this year is the Green Flag Award.

A Tree Survey will be completed in the near future, and associated maintenance undertaken.

The Council will assist with provision of an additional tool shed at the West End of the garden, and Caroline is optimistic that the Council will be able to pay for and install the concrete base as their contribution.

c. Caroline has now made two visits to the Garden to be fully briefed by Lesley and Annie on work being undertaken, and plans for the future. She intends to continue to visit at approximately monthly intervals. She has also ensured that Dave Stubington has responded quickly to problems with trees caused by storm damage.

d. Caroline has offered further assistance during these visits, highlights being:

The railings will be re-painted in the near future

The benches will be re-painted in 2014/15

e. I am pleased to report that this is proving to be a very constructive relationship, and the Council is clearly both fully engaged with us and very keen to retain Crescent Garden as its Flagship open space in Gosport. We are most grateful to Caroline, The Mayor, and all of the relevant officials.

f. As part of this review of our liaison with the Council, on behalf of the Committee I have also been through all of the paperwork associated with the Garden (eg the Constitution of the Friends), the competitions (eg Green Flag) for which the garden has been entered in the past, and the organisations (eg National Gardens Scheme) to which the Friends belong. We now have a thorough understanding of all of these areas, and will be able to sift the facts from the mythology that inevitably emerges in any organisation that has been in existence for as long as the Friends have.

8 Election of Committee Members – Pam Mawby presided

Present post holders have agreed to remain in post if elected. Trish Kelly has agreed to be the Hon. Treasurer if selected. David Cooke is standing for selection to the Committee.

Results of the Election were as follows:-

Pam Mawby - Chairman.
David Merritt - Hon. Secretary.
Trish Kelly - Hon. Treasurer.
Ginny Whelan - Membership Secretary
David Cooke - Liaison Officer
Rita Rundle - Committee Member
Pam Dimmock - Committee Member
Enid Billington - Committee Member
Rosemary Harrison - Committee Member
Elaine Martin - Committee Member
Pam Jackson - Committee Member
One vacancy

9. Enid Billington – 2 Visits are planned.

First visit on 12th June is to Charleston House and then Monks House and their gardens. Used by the Bloomsbury set, and situated in the South Downs of East Sussex.

Second visit on 18th September will to Mapperton House and Garden, Beaminster, Dorset, the home of Lord and Lady Sandwich.

10. Rita Rundle- Request for Food for Garden Party.

Rita addressed the Friends by saying that as the Garden Party is approaching, I am asking again for volunteers to make food for the occasion. Please sign the lists being passed around if you think you can help. Signing your name does not commit you to anything. A month before the event one of the catering team will make contact to discuss with you whether you are still able to help and what you would to make. You can claim the cost of the food you make from the Treasurer if you wish.

11. AOB

None raised.

Pam Mawby announced that she was in possession of two old Crescent Garden posters which were rescued from a skip when the solicitor's office was being moved. They were rescued by Phillip Eley, a local historian, who then gave them to May Bumford. She then passed them on to me. The posters are about 1930

Pam Mawby also mentioned SAFAS visit to Windsor Castle.

12. Dates for Diaries – FOGC Plant Sale - Saturday 24th May, 10am - 4pm
22nd Garden Party - Saturday 21st June, 6pm-8pm
Gosport Heritage Open Days - 11th - 14th September 2014
(Friends of Crescent Garden involvement 13th September 2014)

13. Invitation to the Mayor to Speak

The Mayor Cllr John Beavis MBE said "I am delighted to hear from David Cooke's report that the strong link and liaison which exists between the friends of Crescents Garden and Gosport Borough Council continues to flourish. I should like to thank the friends of Crescent Garden for all their hard work that they put in throughout the year to 'keep the Green Flag flying'. The converted Green Flag award is very special, but also Gosport is one of only 21 Green Heritage Award plaques in the country, and we are all very proud of Crescent Garden and is a jewel in Gosport's Crown. As Mayor whenever I have a special guest to the Borough, I show them Crescent Garden, it is such lovely place to visit, they are always very impressed. I should also like to congratulate Pam Mawby, the committee and volunteers for all the work which was put "into making last year's 21st birthday party for the Garden so very special; the Pimms and Hors d'oeuvre were superb and the band just added that final touch to a wonderful occasion, well done to them all.

14. Guests -The Worshipful The Mayor and Mayoress of Gosport
Cllr. John Beavis MBE and Mrs Christine Beavis
Cllr. Alan and Mrs Judy Scard
Caroline Smith – GBC Parks and Garden Officer

15. Refreshments and Raffle

David Merritt

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