

FRIENDS OF CRESCENT GARDEN

MINUTES OF THE 24th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held in St Mary's Parish Centre Alverstoke on Saturday 11th March 2017

Welcome from the Chairman

Good Afternoon and welcome to the 24th Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Crescent Garden. I am particularly pleased to welcome his Worshipful, the Mayor of Gosport, Councillor Lynn Hook, who I have known for quite a long time. I know Lynn was looking forward to her year as Mayor very much, I do hope that you have enjoyed every minute of it. Welcome also Councillor Alan Scard and his wife Judy. We have two other honoured guests Peter and Gilly Jaynes who have travelled from Northamptonshire to be with us today, who I am delighted to welcome to the AGM today. We are very pleased to see you.

2. Apologies

Cllr. Philip & Mrs Fiona Raffaelli, Caroline Smith (Parks & Garden Officer GBC). Jane Harris, Caroline Wright & Pam Dimmock.

3 **Acceptance of Minutes** of last AGM Meeting held on 27th February 2016.
Accepted. Proposer – Enid Billington, Seconder – Irene Buggle.

4. Chairmans Report – Pam Mawby

The Garden, in the very capable hands of Lesley Flett and Annie Sayle, continues to flourish. We have another Green, our 12th flying on our new, full sized flagpole. I think that it looks very impressive in its new position in the Garden. The Garden is dug, swept, weeded and planted throughout the year, sun, rain or shine with hardly a Wednesday missed, for this we must thank Annie, Lesley and all the volunteers for their hard work and dedication, we really do appreciate you.

This year we have been presented, by the National Garden Scheme, with a certificate and a very smart garden fork to thank Gosport Borough Council Gosport and us for twenty years support. As most of you we have an annual Plant Sale that provides money for a donation to the NGS. The Plant Sale is a wonderful event, with hundred of plants grown by the volunteers and Friends are for sale – and coffee and wonderful cakes. This year the Plant Sale is on Saturday 3rd June from 10am to 4pm.

We are also most grateful for the continued support Gosport Borough Council. We very much appreciate the monthly visits from Caroline Smith, the Parks and Landscape Contracts Officer, who is always most sympathetic to our needs and offers good advice.

I am sad to tell you that David Wardle died earlier this year. David was our Treasurer for many years and a huge supporter of the Garden, Sadly, another member of the committee Pat Jackson, also died recently. They will both be sadly missed.

On the 20th April last year we spent a fascinating evening in the company of Richard Martin. He gave a talk on “The Art of the Snapes in Gosport” It was a special evening because it was about old Gosport as depicted by Snape, with many places that we recognised – and some that had changed quite a lot!

This year we enjoyed a lovely Garden Party, reasonable weather!! Thank you to the Team of tent builders, gate monitors, raffle ladies, Pimms ladies, catering ladies, and of course the Gardeners who showed us all their slick organisational skills – it worked like clockwork as always.

Thank you Enid for the visit to Stansted Park Country Show last June, a very good day out, and not too far from home. The only complaint I have is that there are just too many plants to buy.

During the past few years we have moved forward quite significantly. We have a splendid new shed, new marquees, a trolley and new garden equipment, all provided by the generosity of the Friends. We also have updated the Newsletter, to a very smart biannual edition. Edited by Elaine Martin and David Merritt, with a technical assistance from Ben Martin, and delivered by Rita and her Team of Posties – fantastic!! Dan Martin is our Web Master who regularly updates our Website on our behalf. The Garden is now an Affiliated Member of the RHS, this gives us many benefits including advice from their experts.

This year we are introducing Membership cards, hoping that it will make it easier for you to identify our year-end, and also it will be an acknowledgement that we have received your subscriptions.

This is my fifth and final report as I think most of you know, I am standing down as your Chairman today. We are very lucky Elaine Martin has agreed to stand as a candidate to be my successor, which we will deal with in the election of Officers.

All that remains is for me to especially thank my committee for their unstinting support during the last five years.

5. Treasurer Report – Trish Kelly

May I present to you the financial statement for 2016.

We have had another great year. All our fund raising events have been extremely successful thanks to the hard work of the committee and gardening team – plus of course the good weather.

Special thanks to Richard and Elaine Martin for organising our illustrated talk.
Enid Billington for arranging our lovely outing.

To our wonderful gardening team for raising an amazing £1200 from their plant sale.
And to Gill Comrie for her continued help with selling the garden party tickets, a job she does with great success.

Thank you all for renewing your membership - without your support we could not exist.
Regrettably our membership number has slightly reduced this year, however new members will always be made welcome to our friendly group who appreciate the beauty and history of our lovely garden. Please spread the word. Newcomers will be made most welcome!

Our new shed purchased last year, has been a wonderful success. The gardening team are thrilled and have been busy purchasing replacement and new tools to make life easier for everyone. The garden continues to look beautiful, with new plants, loving care and a great deal of essential maintenance.

Admin costs of course continue to be monitored. We always try to spend wisely.

Summing Up

We have had a very rewarding and enjoyable year thanks to all our Friends of Crescent Garden and look forward to even better things in 2017.
Thank you all so much. Trish Kelly.

6. Head Gardeners' illustrated talk.

This year's talk is dedicated to Lin Hay, who is sadly missed.

Talk began with an introduction to Lesley Flett with the slides and Annie Sayle doing the talking. The Green Team were very pleased to have been awarded another Green Flag with the Judge awarding high marks and enjoying the visit. The old magnificent Tulip Tree was the first to be described, its flower is used as the emblem of FOCCG. Despite disease it comes into leaf earlier than the younger tulip and flowers first too.

Our Cedar of Lebanon again is a magnificent, mature evergreen tree with a magnificent form of tiered branches. We also have a Blue Cedar, February is the ideal month to admire it and the snowdrops. The Monkey Puzzle tree on the west lawn is quite striking and mostly come from Chile where they do not have monkeys. The tree produces a nut but not very often which is edible.

We have 2 Stone pines. You can tell they are pines by the long needles, highly valued for its edible seeds known as "pine nuts".

We are fortunate to have 3 very different Magnolias in Crescent Garden. Near the east gate is the Chinese Magnolias. Near the west gate is the Slender magnolia, it took 16 years to flower, produces beautiful pure white flowers in spring. Towards the centre of the garden you will find the Magnolia grandiflora with striking bold evergreen glossy leaves and unlike the other 2 forms comes from the USA.

Our mature Black Mulberry tree with a spreading habit produces, in the Autumn, tasty fruit that is rarely found in shops, makes good jam. Warning do not get the juice on your clothes.

Maidhair tree also known as *Ginkgo biloba* is found in numbers in China. It has medical uses and very pretty leaves which turn clear yellow in autumn.

There is more than one, very substantial Yew tree in the Garden. It is understood that there was a Yew tree before there was an Anglesey. Though the flowers are insignificant it is a prolific flowerer.

Common beech *Fagus sylvatica* is a large, vigorous deciduous tree with a broad, spreading crown. Leaves lovely fresh green, in spring, rich russet-brown in autumn. Our beech is now a very substantial spreading tree with masses of leaves to keep us busy in the autumn.

Pyrus salicifolia 'Pendula' Weeping Silver Pear. This young *Pyrus salicifolia* 'Pendula' is our latest addition – paid for by GBC to replace the plant that died. Weeping pear is an elegant small deciduous tree with slender weeping branches, narrow greyish leaves and creamy-white flowers followed by small, brownish fruits.

Strawberry tree *Arbutus unedo*

Walking through the Garden you may not notice this evergreen on the edge of the lawn near the younger tulip tree. It is well worth going and having a closer look to admire the attractive rough cinnamon/brown bark and sculptural branches. It carries bell shaped creamy white flowers which appear at the same time as the strawberry-like red fruits. Usually end of August/September.

The Head gardeners presentation above, has been condensed to one page from 3 pages. If you want to read the full details of the talk please contact Annie Sayle or David Merritt on 02392 582068 or email davidmerritt1@virginmedia.com.

“THANK YOU”

Before I finish Lesley and I would like to thank several people for their support to us as head gardeners.

• Firstly to Dave Stubington and Caroline Smith of GBC.

- o Darren and his work mate who cut the grass and remove rubbish sack.
- o Pam Mawby and the FOCG committee for their support/encouragement
- o Richard Mcanulty our excellent WRAGS trainee, and Steve & Irene Buggle for coming forward after last year's AGM to offer a partner garden.
- o And not forgetting the wonderful GREEN TEAM volunteers.
- o *Finally* Thank you to all of you who are Friends of Crescent Garden and continue to support our aim of nurturing this very special garden.

7. Election of Officers

Results of the Election was as follows:-

Position – Chairman - Proposer - Pamela Mawby – Seconded - David Merritt - Elected = Elaine Martin
Re – selected

David Merritt – Hon. Secretary Proposer – Elaine Martin Seconded – Ginny Whelan

Trish Kelly – Hon. Treasurer Proposer – Rita Rundle Seconded – Ginny Whelan

7a. Re – selected

Ginny Whelan – Membership Secretary

Rita Rundle – Committee Member *

Enid Billington – Committee Member *

Rosemary Harrison – Committee Member *

* denotes proposed by Lesley Flett

Stephanie Fisher – Committee Member *

& seconded by Cynthia Barrett

Jackie Askew – Committee Member *

Dr James Sykes – Committee Member *

Irene Buggle – Committee Member *

New Member

Sharon Miles – Proposer – Rosemary Harrison Seconded – Irene Buggle

8. Enid Billington – Visit Report

Enid gave details of the forthcoming spring visit to Great Dixier in May. Full details and application form will be found in the Newsletter due out mid April.

9. Rita Rundle – Request for Food for the Garden Party

Rita asked the Friends to help her, by providing some delightful food as they usually do. Last year the response was very very good and the food excellent. Rita then circulated a form for the Friends to sign with the type of food that they would be providing. Rita thanked the Friends for their support.

10. Invitation for the Mayor of Gosport Cllr. Mrs Lynn Hook

The Mayor started by thanking the Friends for inviting her to the AGM. The Mayor said she loved the Garden thought it very impressive and thanked the Gardeners for their hard work and for the Green Flag we had been awarded again. The Mayor picked out the old Tulip as special.

The Mayor ended by saying how pleased she was that because of Crescent Garden, Gosport Borough Council had been given an award, for supporting for 20 years the National Garden Scheme.

11. AOB

a. The Mayor presented Pam with a present from the friends.

b. Question from Mrs Judy Newell:- Judy said she was worried about the number of Bay Trees. Annie . agreed and said that there are plans by the Council to reduce them.

c. Elaine gave a brief closing speech and asked the Mayor to present Pam Mawby, with two Botanical Prints on behalf of the grateful Friends of Crescent Garden for her leadership and guidance over the past five years.