

# **FRIENDS OF CRESCENT GARDEN**

## **MINUTES OF THE 26th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

*Held in St Mary's Parish Centre, Alverstoke on Saturday 23rd February 2019*

### **1 Welcome from the Chairman**

The Chairman welcomed all those Friends present to the 26th Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Crescent Garden.

She also welcomed The Worshipful Mayor of Gosport, Councillor Diane Furlong and her consort Raymond, Councillor Alan Scard and his wife Judy, Councillor Phillip Raffaelli and Mr & Mrs Ian Gallett.

### **2. Apologies**

Carol Down, Margaret Hutton, Gilly and Peter Jaynes, Sharon Miles, Kathleen Puddicombe, Rita Rundle, James and Liz Sykes, Brenda Thompson, Richard and Dante Thorne and Caroline Wright.

### **3. Acceptance of Minutes** of last AGM held on 24th February 2018.

With the amendment of Pat Jackson to Pam Jackson, the Minutes were accepted.

Proposed by Esme Harrison and seconded by David Merrett.

### **4. Chairman's Report** – Elaine Martin

She commented that another very successful year has passed by all too quickly.

The Garden was awarded another Green Flag award – our 14th and the organisers of the Green Flag nominated us for one of the best ten gardens in the country. We didn't win top prize unfortunately as we were up against large parkland gardens with huge followings. But we were delighted to just to be nominated!!

We also won a gold award in the South and South Eastern in Bloom competition for small community parks – a great honour for us.

Our Plant Sale and Garden Party held last June were great successes – helped by the wonderful weather and the very hard work of the Committee and Green Team.

Rita Rundle and Sarah Palmer nurtured most of the plants for the Plant Sale – in their back gardens ably helped by contributions of plants and cakes from the rest of us. We were so busy all day it such a popular event.

The garden Party was great fun held on a lovely sunny evening with the garden looking its Summer best. I think that we had nearly 230 people enjoying Pimms and delicious canapés. Thanks again to our loyal team.

We opened the garden for Gosport Heritage Day last September = Rita and Annie did two tours of the garden while we served teas and coffees.

It's been Irene, Stef, Sharon and Gina's first year as shared Head gardeners and it has worked really well. The garden looks wonderful and they have done a lot of new planting – replacing old plants and bringing fresh ideas to the garden including quite a lot of conservation work – trying to encourage insects and birds so that there is a balance with healthy plants and nature.

We have also installed more electricity and added to the irrigation in the garden to make it all easier for the team to manage.

I do hope that they have enjoyed their first year as much as we have enjoyed them.

They are doing a great job!

We have spent more money on the garden this year as we have kept our WRAGs student Richard McAnulty on to help us oldies with the heavier work that needs doing now that the garden is a mature 27 years old. We were hoping that the council would help us finance his small wage a bit as they did when Richard was a trainee. Still hoping.

This year we have also had to deal with data processing – our policy is on the website if anybody would like to have a boring read.

Lots of things planned for this year.

Richard Martin started us off with another talk at the end of January. ‘Alverstoke past and Present’ A sell out once again.

Thank you Richard I know how much work and planning goes into it.

Enid has an exciting outing planned for May which she will tell us about later.

And of course, our usual Plant Sale and Garden Party in May and June.

Our membership secretary Ginny who is away today = told me that last year a few people who already had standing orders for re-joining sent us cheques for the renewal of their memberships as well. Very nice for us, but please check you don't pay us twice.

Finally – thank you to Gosport council for their continued help. Caroline Smith meets the team the first Wednesday of every month and listens to our problems patiently – she is always very supportive and full of good advice.

AND - thank you to all of you for taking the time to join us today and supporting our amazing Crescent Garden.

## **5. Treasurer's Report – Trish Kelly**

The Treasurer presented the financial statement for 2018 and said that FoCG had enjoyed another great year and that all the fundraising events had been very successful, thanks to the hard work of the committee and gardening team – plus of course the good weather!

She thanked everyone for renewing their membership and said that without their support FoCG would not exist. New members would always be made most welcome to the friendly group, so encouraged those present to spread the word.

The Friends have a marvellous gardening team who work so hard. In order to make life easier for the Head Gardeners, our No 2 account ‘Garden’ has been passed on by by Lesley and Annie to our new Head Gardening Team. These monies are used to assist with garden maintenance and replacement of plants. She said it had been a most rewarding and enjoyable year, thanks to the Friends and looked forward to 2018, promising to continue to control expenditure, as has always been done.

She thanked Ian Gallett for auditing the accounts and Elaine and the Committee for their help and support during the year.

## 6. Head Gardeners' Report – Lesley Flett & Annie Sayle

As you know, last year Annie and Lesley took the decision to retire after 5 years. Amongst the Green team there were no takers individually, so a proposal to run the Green Team by four separate individuals was suggested, resulting in Gina, Stef, Irene and Sharon taking over the responsibility — as you can imagine it felt like big boots for us to fill!!!

We were concerned that with four of us it may be confusing to the green team to know whom to ask for a job each week and so we, as head gardeners, decide what jobs need doing each week/season prior to Wednesday morning. Sharon then controls the “to do” list so that each volunteer knows whom to ask each week, this seems to work well.

One of the lovely aspects of Crescent Gardens is the range of different and unusual plants there are tucked away in the various borders and areas of the gardens, thoughtfully planted by Green Team members over the last 27 years.

From time to time areas in the garden need replanting and rejuvenating.

At the end of March 2018, we planted a number of shrubs at the far West end of Terrace walk. Shrubs included: *Griseolina littoralis*, *Garryia elliptica*, *Viburnum tinus*, *Viburnum opulus* and *Acuba japonica*.

One of the challenges of gardening in Crescent Garden as I am sure you all know is that the plants have to have been introduced into Britain before 1850 or be varieties of British native wild flowers bred before 1850.

One of the shrubs delivered by Lees Nurseries – *Ribes speciosum* commonly known as Fuschia-flowered gooseberry or Fuschia-flowered currant) - however, posed problems as we had ordered *Ribes sanguineum* (the usual flowering currant) but *R. speciosum* was delivered in its place. We didn't know if it was in date! However, after a little research we found it was in date, having been introduced into Britain in 1828 by Mr Collie - a naturalist and surgeon - on the aptly named, Ship HMS Blossom. The Fuschia-flowered currant is a native of California. It was planted at the right hand side as you enter via the West end gate. The plant, in the Birmingham Botanic Garden, was their plant of the month for April and looked really stunning. We have great hopes for ours! Look out for it as it flowers from March to June

Photo of *Ribes speciosum*



Last Spring the bed around the Monkey Puzzle tree was made considerably bigger as the branches had spread beyond the original bed and posed a danger to the public walking into the spikey branches. We planted the bed with *Euphorbia myrsites* and *Parahebe perfoliata* (Digger's Speedwell), the latter was introduced from Australia in 1834. The colour of the foliage is a silvery blue green having similar hues and shaped leaves to *E. myrsites* and the Monkey Puzzle. It also has beautiful blue flowers in April and May. To create interest in January and February the bed has also been planted with snowdrops in the green in Feb 2019.

Photo of *Parahebe* Garden Photo

Along terrace walk we are still battling with the bare patches where the ivy seems to be struggling to form clumps and have been looking for other plants to fill in the bare areas. In one site where the soil is acid due to pine needles we planted three *Mitchella repens* (Partridge Berry), mat forming plants, which seem to be doing well but are still

very tiny. This plant originates from North America and was introduced into the UK in 1781. It has small white or pink flowers in June and July, and scarlet edible berries in Autumn.

Photo *Mitchella repens*



We also created a small circular bed around the base of the weeping pear to protect it from lawnmowers and animals. This bed has been planted with *Nepeta mussinii* and heritage scented Pelargoniums.

In Autumn 2018, our green team rose expert, Sarah Palmer did a lot of research on the roses in CG with the aim of identifying replacements and new in date roses to plant. On the day of the Green Team Christmas Party the roses arrived and members of the Green Team planted the roses in their chosen positions before sitting down to a lovely Christmas Lunch at Rita and Bill Rundle's home.

Through Sarah's guidance three Rosa 'Fabvier' roses were ordered to replace the ones covered by the box balls either side of the fountain.

Photo of Rosa Fabvier



Three *Rose du Roi* were planted to make a beautiful welcome to the gardens from the gate to the right of the fountain. This rose was bred in 1819 and has magenta crimson double flowers.

Photo of Rose du Roi



One *Rosa 'Stanwell Perpetual'* was planted to complete the replacement of roses in the bed by the railings in front of the fountain. This rose is a pale pink repeat flowering rose bred before 1834.

Photo Rosa Stanwell Perpetual



Three beautiful single flowered *Rosa 'Pimpinellifolia'* roses were planted at positions along terrace walk where the removal of Bay trees have increased the light. They are all doing well I am glad to report and little buds are appearing. It is also known as the Burnet rose.

Photo of *Rosa pimpinellifolia*



In the last few weeks we have planted 1000 snowdrops and 1000 bluebells in the green in various borders and beds at the West end of Crescent garden. Next year we plan to do the same planting snowdrops and bluebells at the East end of the garden and hopefully turning the brash end of the garden into a bluebell wood in the Spring.

We are indebted to the Green Team for all their hard work during the year allowing us to keep the Garden looking as beautiful as it always does.

## **Election of Officers**

The results of the election were as follows:

**Re-elected: Chairman, Elaine Martin**, proposed Irene Buggle, seconded Lesley Flett

**Secretary, Gina Rowe**, proposed Lesley Flett, seconded Ian Gallett

**Treasurer, Trish Kelly**, proposed Enid Billington, seconded Pam Dimmock

### **Re-elected**

**Ginny Whelan** – Membership Secretary\*

**Rita Rundle** - Committee Member\*

**Enid Billington** – Committee Member\*

\* denotes proposed by Roger Mawby

**Rosemary Harrison** – Committee Member\*

seconded by Ian Gallett

**Jackie Askew** – Committee Member\*

**Nominations Trevor Barker** proposed Irene Buggle, seconded Annie Sayle

**Maureen Bell** proposed Ian Gallett, seconded Lesley Flett

**Ginny Day** proposed Enid Billington, seconded Maureen Bell

## **8. Visit Report - Enid Billington**

The next visit will be to the Buddhist Temple on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May leaving the Parish Centre at 0700 and arriving at approximately 1130. The Temple was built between 1993 and 1995 at a cost of £12 million. It was erected by 1000 volunteers. It will be necessary to take off shoes to see it and the lunch will be vegetarian. The gardens are spectacular and a good day should be enjoyed by all. It will cost £a head.

## **10. Invitation to the Mayor to Speak – Diane Furlong**

The Mayor spoke of the Garden as very special and a great community project bringing people together. She said she remembered horses being kept there and was pleased it is now a thriving Garden. She commented particularly on how much she enjoyed the fuchsia. She thanked Elaine for the fabulous job that everyone did and mentioned that Trish Kelly was a good friend of hers.

## **11. AOB**

Concern was expressed as to the poor growth under the cedar and beech trees leading to muddy patches when it rains. Steff agreed to talk to Caroline Smith the Gosport Council Parks and Gardens Officer to try and correct this problem.