



# PlantNetwork

Connecting gardens, sharing skills

## Minutes of the twenty first Annual General Meeting

13.50 Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

(1) **Welcome**

Simon Toomer, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of PlantNetwork, welcomed all to the meeting.

(2) **Minutes of the Twentieth Annual General Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting held on 2.00 pm Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016 at The Eden Project were approved and signed as a correct record.

(3) **Report for the year to 31 March 2016, by Simon Toomer Chairman of the Board**

**Meetings:** the following conferences and training meetings had been held in the financial year April 2016 to March 2017 year, with presentations and reports posted on the website. 86 attendees to events.

**Training days:**

**May** Plant Records at The Eden Project

**July** Meadow restoration and management at Wakehurst Place

**December** Glasshouse Forum at Cambridge Botanic Garden

**Garden professional visits**

Bristol Botanic Garden

RHS Hyde Hall

Trentham Gardens

**Annual Conference 2016**

‘Skills and standards’ 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> October, Manchester Monastery

(4) **Membership**

2016– 17 membership year comprised 75 institutional members and over 100 personal members

Membership rates remain the same at £400 for a large organisation and £150 for a small organisation. Personal membership categories, including students, range from £15 to £40.

(5) **Communication**

The website, <http://www.plantnetwork.org>, and increasing use of social media continued to be a useful, open access resource. Christopher Weddell was thanked for supporting Pam Smith in managing the website.

The Enews sent out to our members by email continues to be well received and a preferred method of communication for the great majority of our membership.

(6) **Charitable purposes**

Members were reminded of the Charitable and public benefit purpose of PlantNetwork. Charges for meetings continue to be very competitive with comparable training days and we continue to respond to members’ needs and suggestions for future training events and website content.

(7) **Treasurer's report**

The Chairman presented a report based on information from Christopher Weddell, Hon. Treasurer. Subscriptions cover just over half of basic running costs; they are set at low rates, to encourage as many botanic and historic gardens as possible to become members, it was recognised from the outset that subscription income alone would not cover expenditure. Conference budgets include a contribution towards PlantNetwork overheads and administration. A sufficient amount had been set aside in reserves for PlantNetwork to run for at least a year should there be no further income.

- (8) **Accounts for the year to 31 March 2017** had not yet due to be submitted to our Examiners, Critchleys, at the time of the AGM. Records to date show income from subscription amounted to £16,134. In summary total income, including income from conferences and training days was £37,657 and total outgoings were £30,982 giving a net surplus of £6,676. An improvement on the previous year of a loss of £1,990. Total funds carried forward at year end amounted to £31,965. No grants were received during the 2016/17 financial year.

The Board has a *duty of care* and a *duty of prudence* in running PlantNetwork: policies on risk, financial reserves, and internet and email usage were reviewed regularly.

Critchleys, of Greyfriars Court, Paradise Square, Oxford, was appointed as Examiner for a further year.

(9) **Election of officers to the Board of Trustees**

The Board for 2015–2016 had been: Simon Toomer (Chairman), Faye Steer (Vice-Chair), Christopher Weddell (Hon. Treasurer), Matthew Jebb (Hon. President), Richard Barley, David Knott, Edwin Mole, Don Murray, Mark Patterson, Faye Steer, Simon Toomer, Tim Upson and Rupert Wilson

The diversity in experience of Trustees brought a range of skills and expertise to the Board. The Articles of Association of the Company require one-third of Board members to retire at each AGM; they may stand for re-election. Board members wishing to stand down and not seek re-election are David Knott, Dr Tim Upson and Eddie Mole. Faye Tuffrey stands down and wish to be re-elected to the Board.

Nominations have been received for new Board members

Chris Bisson, Policy Development Manager at the Eden Project, nominated by Rob Brett (RHS) and Tony Kendle (Eden Project founder) and

Stephen Herrington, Head Gardener at Nymans Garden, nominated by Simon Toomer (National Trust) and Katherine Mills, General Manager at Nymans, National Trust.

No other nominations were received.

- (10) Simon thanked Those Board members stepping down for all their support for PlantNetwork, totalling over 25 years of service between them. Simon also thanked members and the Board of Trustees for their support to PlantNetwork over the past year.

The meeting closed at 14.30pm.