**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SCOTTISH ROCK GARDEN CLUB SATURDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2021, HELD VIRTUALLY ON ZOOM**

Owing to being unable to meet in person due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 AGM of SRGC was postponed until February 2021, and then held virtually on Zoom.

**1) Introduction and Housekeeping**
The Treasurer, Richard Green, welcomed us all to this unusual, delayed AGM, and thanked everyone for joining virtually and for submitting their ballot papers in advance by either post or email. He asked attendees to keep their microphones off, but their videos on unless they had a particularly bad connection. The President, Julia Corden, welcomed the 48 members present at the Annual General Meeting of the Scottish Rock Garden Club. She thanked them all for coming along to this very different and rather experimental online AGM.

**2) Apologies** had been received from Jean Wylie, Bette Ivey, and Chris Parsons.

**3) Minutes of the AGM held at Burnside Hall, Scone on 9th November 2019.**
The minutes were unanimously approved by postal vote.

**4) Matters arising** None.

**5) President’s review of the year**
Julia began her review of the year by recognising that it has been a very different and challenging time for everyone, and for the Club, with the cancelling of nearly all the SRGC shows, the Discussion Weekend, and all the other face to face SRGC activities where we all enjoy seeing one other, and said how lovely it was to be able to see everyone today. She discussed how heart-breaking it had been to have to cancel the international conference Alpines 2021 after five years’ preparation and collaboration with the AGS, NARGS, and the Czech conference group, but reflected that with hindsight it was the right decision to make. With the absence of physical meetings many of us turned to social media to share our gardens and Julia thanked Richard Green and the West of Scotland group for kickstarting the programme of Zoom talks, which were then added to by the Perth and South West Scotland groups. She thanked everyone involved in organising the fantastic Zoom talks, and celebrated how successful and accessible they were and how nice it was to see members joining from as far away as Australia. She mentioned how good it has also been to join in with other plant societies’ talks such as the Alpine Garden Society and the Hardy Plant Society, and with events like the wonderful troughs day in June and crevice day in January organised by NARGS. She thanked Maggi, Ian, and ZZ along with all the contributors to the IRG for doing such a fantastic job with keeping us up to date on what’s been happening. She also praised the forum and Ian’s Bulb Log which is excellent, and world-renowned. She also thanked Anton for all his hard work pulling together yet another brilliant journal, overcoming the challenges of having to change printers over Christmas with Margaret’s support, and producing an amazing, full issue.
She reflected on the seed team’s terrible position of having to make the very difficult decision to cancel the seed exchange, expressing understanding and support for this decision as well as thanking them for all their hard work running the replacement smaller version of the seed exchange this year.
She mentioned the new website which will hopefully be up and running later this summer, and asked members to keep an eye on Facebook and the forums to keep up to date with future virtual events. She thanked all the amazing volunteers who run the SRGC, saying that the Club is unique in that it is run completely by volunteers and so it really could not function without them. She asked members who felt they may be able to help in any way to please reach out to herself or Hannah Wilson, as they are always on the lookout for more volunteers to help. Finally, she wished all our members happy gardening for the rest of the year.

**6) Presentation of Honours and awards**
Since most of the shows were cancelled this year due to Covid-19 restrictions, none of the show related honours and awards were given. No member gained enough points at the Kendal Show to receive merit medals or bars, so these were also not awarded this year.

**Golden Jubilee Salver** for outstanding service to the Club: **Carolyn McNab** - Carolyn has been Treasurer and Convener of the SW Scotland group, Seed Distribution Manager for six years, a council member several times, and Secretary of the Club for three years.

**Crosland Award** for the best article in the The Rock Garden: **Michael Almond** for ‘Sardinia’ – Two expeditions documenting Sardinia’s diverse and often overlooked flora

**David Lane Award** for the best photograph in The Rock Garden: **Cyril Lafong** for a photo of Cypripedium “Ursel” in Shawn Hillis’ article on Cypripediums in issue 145 (page 78).

**President’s Award** for outstanding service to a local group: **Carol George** for long service to the Ayrshire Group.

**7) Consideration and adoption of accounts**
The Treasurer Richard Green presented the accounts for the year ending 30th June 2020. The Treasurer’s report was posted to the forum where it is available to anybody and the full accounts were available for inspection upon request. Questions were invited prior to the AGM, but none were submitted so Richard summarised activity of the last year. He explained that though the accounts show a net loss of about £32,000, £31,000 of this was due to unrealised loss in our investment portfolio due to the stock market crash at the beginning of the pandemic. He explained that the figures shown actually represent an improvement on the figures in April when our investments were reduced by 25% and that our investment portfolio which sat at c. £550k at the end of June has recovered and is currently sitting at c. £634k which is just a little more than at year end in 2019.
He mentioned that many charities have found themselves haemorrhaging money as a result of the pandemic due to a loss of income coupled with fixed high costs and are therefore in difficult situations now. Since we do not have fixed high costs, and do not rely primarily on income from the public we are generally speaking well cushioned from the financial effects of the pandemic.
He suspects that we may see a drop off in membership numbers, in line with the long-term trend, perhaps inflated by a loss of overseas members due to the seed exchange being cancelled, however several people had joined the Club since the pandemic began since they were enjoying the Zoom talks so much.
Richard explained that the accounts don’t actually have to be approved at the AGM, but only presented. We traditionally do ask them to be accepted so they were included on the postal vote form despite already being submitted to OSCR by the usual 31st December deadline.
Richard reminded members that it is not just him checking the accounts, but that they are also signed off by an independent examiner and he suggested the reappointment of Ewen Dyer of Martin Aitken & Co Ltd as Independent Examiner. The accounts and the re-appointment of the independent examiner were unanimously accepted by postal vote.

**8) Election and appointments:**
In accordance with rule 6.1 four members shall be elected to the council annually to serve for three years as Ordinary Members. Members standing down after 3 years are Sarah Carlton, Jeanie Jones, Peter Maguire and Peter Moore.

Julia Corden was confirmed as President for her final year. No President elect has been confirmed. Please consider this role. The existing office bearers were re-elected en-bloc, proposed by Peter Maguire, seconded by Mike Dale, and supported by the postal vote.

Connor Smith who was co-opted after the AGM last year was elected to serve a further two years. Proposed by Hannah Wilson, seconded by Richard Green.

Although nominations were not all received in time to be publicised on the forum, three new ordinary members were appointed. The constitution only requires new members to be voted in when there are more nominations than spaces. The new members are: Peter Semple: proposed by Sandy Leven, seconded by Julia Corden. Jamie Sinclair: proposed by Connor Smith, seconded by Hannah Wilson. Matthew Topsfield: proposed by Julia Corden, seconded by Hannah Wilson

In addition, Matthew Topsfield has filled the position of Minutes Secretary, proposed by Julia Corden, seconded by Hannah Wilson.

The following committee chairs were confirmed:
Chair of Shows Secretaries: David Millward
Chair of Group Convenors: Carole Bainbridge

**9) Date and place of AGM in 2021**
6th November 2021. Covid-19 permitting the AGM is to be held at Burnside Hall, Scone. Otherwise, it shall be held digitally, with a decision on format to be included in the July Dryas.

**10) Any other competent business**
OSCR have asked all charities to ensure they have provision within their constitution for online meetings. David Rankin has kindly offered to draft some suggested changes to allow us to work this into the constitution. If anybody else has any other suggestions, do please let him know. The AGM concluded with Julia thanking everybody for all their hard work keeping the Club running this year. She also thanked everyone for coming to this different format of AGM, adding that it was lovely to see everyone’s faces and she hoped to see some people in person this year if we’re allowed to, and reiterated that a decision on whether the Discussion Weekend will be going ahead this year will be included in the July mailing of Dryas.