

## **Minutes of the Special General Meeting of the Friends of Grappenhall Heys Walled Garden held at the Independent Methodist Church, Grappenhall, on Wednesday 30 Jan 2019**

**Present:** Members from 24 households, including the following committee members: Geoff Weston (Chairman), Kath Brown (Secretary), Ian Fountain, Nina Kingston, Jane Coumbarides and Erin Dawber.

### **1. Welcome**

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed members.

### **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from: Margaret Rowlands, Marjorie Sharp, Bill Leah, Pam Hastle, Pam Cross, Roy Bennicke, Dan & Kate Fox, Peter & Evelyn Merrick, Jacqui Davies, Lynda & Harry Ralphson, Margaret Davies, Cliff Taylor

### **3. Discussion on the note from the Chairman**

The Chairman stated that the meeting had been called because the trustees of the charity, who are also executive committee members, are no longer prepared to work with the Parish Council (PC), for the reasons set out in the note that accompanied the notice of the Special General Meeting. He confirmed that, as far as we know, there are no fire safety management issues, and no threat to the future of the garden. There is a staff structure in place to run the garden as a civic amenity and we understand that its finances are secure. Therefore, some of the reasons why the charity was originally set up no longer apply. Unless volunteers step forward this evening to take on the roles of Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, we have no option but to wind up the charity. The assets of the charity will then need to be given either to the PC (for use only for the garden), or to another charity with similar objects.

The Chairman opened the meeting to the floor.

One person queried the background to the difficulties with the PC and Apé Bars. The Chairman gave a 'potted history' in response to this.

A number of people expressed their disappointment with the PC's behaviour, suggesting it hadn't listened to the community, and appeared to be turning the garden into a commercial operation rather than a community facility. Sadness was expressed that the goodwill built up over many years had evaporated. One person commented that our funds had been built up from donations made, or events held, to support the garden, and there was therefore a moral obligation to give the money to the garden. In response to a query on how we could guarantee the money would be ring-fenced to the garden, if given to the PC, the Chairman suggested that it might be feasible to donate it to the existing endowment fund, which is used to finance the garden.

### **4&5 Winding up the charity and distribution of residual assets**

There being no volunteers to replace the Committee members, Kath Carey proposed that the charity be wound up, seconded by John McQuillian. The proposal was passed, with 14 votes in favour, nil against, and 10 abstentions.

No further proposals for charities who might be worthy recipients of our assets had been made, so a ballot was held between those put forward in the notice of this meeting. There were 13.5 votes in favour of transfer to GHWG (via the PC), 6 in favour of Walton Lea Partnership and 2.5 in favour of Cheshire Gardens Trust. Two households didn't vote. Funds will, therefore, be transferred to the PC for use for GHWG purposes only. There was a suggestion that a solicitor should be employed to produce a 'conveyance letter', but there was little support for this. Members agreed that the Trustees should use their best judgement as to how the transfer will be made.

### **6. Any other business**

As an indication of what volunteers had achieved at and for the garden, Ian Fountain gave a brief résumé of his and his late wife Elizabeth's experience at the garden as volunteers over a 14 year

period. He then gave his very great thanks to all the past and present volunteers for everything they had accomplished in their total support of the garden.

Kath Carey offered thanks to Geoff Weston for his efforts in support of the Friends since May.

Both contributions received warm applause.

## **7. Close**

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting, inviting everyone to stay for tea and biscuits.