**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024 OF**

**BANSTEAD HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**

The 93rd Annual General Meeting was held on **Wednesday 13th November 2024** at 2.00pm at the Community Hall, Park Road, Banstead, SM7 3AJ. All members were invited and a list of attendees can be found in Appendix 2.

**Item 1**

**The President’s welcome**

The President, Allan Lover opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present. He requested a minute’s silence for those members of the Society who had died during the year: - Maureen Bye, John Goddard and Dorothy Hubbard.

He then opened the election for Chair of the Society. A nomination had been received from David Peterken for Gail Fraser. And this was seconded by Margaret Dietsch. No other nominations were received and all present were in favour of Gail Fraser, who continues as Chair.

Gail Fraser took the chair for the meeting and thanked the meeting for her re-election saying she would do her utmost to uphold the standards, aims and objectives of the Society.

**Item 2**

**Attendance and apologies**

The Chair, Gail Fraser read out apologies received from Jane Mawer, Ralph Maciejewski, Nina Fassnidge, Alison Hocker, George Tyler, John Mills, Robert Collier, Liz Collier, Deanna Singh, Mary Quick, Ann Toms, Denholm Earl and David Peterken.

**Item 3**

**Minutes**

The Minutes of the AGM 24.11.2023 had been circulated. There were no questions from the floor. The minutes were proposed by Jackie Russell and seconded by Ann Shore.

**Item 4**

**Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

**Item 5a**

**Chair’s vote of thanks**

The Chair, Gail Fraser made a vote of thanks to the Committee, individuals and organisations who had helped to make the past year a success. In particular she praised the Committee for their hard work in planning so many events especially the work behind the scenes and said she valued their effort and support over the past year. She also expressed her gratitude to all the volunteers who had helped in a myriad of ways at shows and other events. Finally she thanked the members for their support, contributions to shows and attendance at events, without whose help the Society would have been unable to be so successful.

**Item 5b**

**Assistant Secretary’s report**

The Chair introduced the Assistant Secretary Margaret Dietsch, who gave a report of the main activities and highlights of the past year.

She explained that membership had increased over the year alongside numbers of visitors to shows. The 2024 programme had been varied in terms of talks and events and the 2025 programme had already been completed. The Committee was pleased that this included a talk from Adam Frost of Gardeners’ World.

She went on to highlight some of the main events of the year including talks on “Getting our gardens ready for spring”, “The Gardens of Surrey”, “Violas and volcanoes” and finally “Plants have feelings too”. But the highlight of the year had been a talk by Charlie Dimmock on “Water in the garden and behind the scenes at the well-known BBC programme Garden Rescue” which had proved so popular that the hall had been filled to capacity.

Aside from the talks, there had been an Open Day with a mini flower show, which was well supported by many local organisations and a coach trip to Waterperry Gardens, which included a most enjoyable cream tea.

In addition BHS’s Vice President Diane Beck had championed the restoration of Banstead Wildlife Field, which the Society had been pleased to support.

Finally she thanked the Committee for their help and support and, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the members for their support.

There were no questions for the Assistant Secretary from the floor.

**Item 5c**

**Show Secretary’s report**

The Show Secretary, David Peterken was sadly unable to attend due to illness so the Assistant Show Secretary, Sally Keywood Gray read his report.

Despite increasingly diverse weather the number of entries to the shows had grown from 1397 to 1597, an increase of 12%. In April, Banstead Village had been covered by Narcissi for the funeral of our recognised Daffodil expert John Goddard. The Spring Flower Show had been the biggest show since 1994, the Early Summer Show the largest since 2001 and the Summer Show the biggest for ten years. The total number of exhibits over the three shows was the largest since the shows moved to the hall in 1974. (Prior to that the Society held eight shows between April and November, many of them in the Village Institute). The Show Secretary thanked and congratulated the twenty eight exhibitors (including two new ones) who had won between them fifty two Blue Ribbons and seventy two Certificates of Merit. He also thanked everyone involved in setting up the shows this year.

There were no questions for the Assistant Show Secretary from the floor.

**Item 6**

**Treasurer’s report**

The Treasurer, Robert Collierwas unable to attend. The report on the Society’s Accounts for 2023-24 was given on his behalf.

The accounts had been signed and approved by an external auditor Andrea Elliott. The accounts showed separately the donation for Banstead Wildlife Field to ensure this was not confused with the normal transactions of the society.

Cash balances had decreased by £272; that is from £9,639 at the start of the year to £9,367. “Events income” and “events payments” were higher in 2023-24 as a result of the Charlie Dimmock talk which had incurred a speaker’s fee and charges for entrance tickets.

The raffle contributed £892 and teas contributed £1,330, both showing an increase compared with the previous year. Outings, the prize draw, the stall and selling plants contributed £1,403. Without these income streams, cash balances would have been reduced by £3,600.

The biggest expense had been hall hire which had increased. Because of the size of the shows, set up takes place the day before which adds to the expense. Hall costs rise by inflation annually so there will also be an increase in 2025.

This is the second year cash reserves have been used up; £1,162 in the prior year and £272 in the current year. Anticipating the loss, the committee had increased subscriptions by £1 for 2024/2025. And there may be a similar increase in 2025/2026. There have also been modest increases to entrance fees.

The Society likes to retain cash reserves at circa 1 years’ worth of costs to deal with unforeseen circumstances or underwrite events to ensure Trustees are not personally liable for unexpected losses and to replace equipment used for the shows.

The accounts were adopted and there were no questions from the floor. The full accounts for the year can be found in Appendix 1.

**Item 7**

**Elections in accordance with Rule 5**

**Item 7a**

**Election of Officers of the Society**

(i).**The President**

The President, Allan Lover had decided to stand down. He proposed David Peterken for the role of President and this was seconded by the Committee. There were no other nominations.

The President, Allan Lover spoke in support of David Peterken explaining that he had been involved with the Society for many years having started showing in 1982. David had been awarded many cups and had served the Society in the capacities of Assistant Show Captain and Show Captain under whose leadership the shows had gone from strength to strength.

All present were in favour of David Peterken who was duly voted in as President.

Acceptance was given on David Peterken’s behalf. David thanked everyone for voting him in and said it was a great honour. He pledged to continue organising the shows as long as members of the Society wished to exhibit. His election meant that he would be standing down as Vice Chair.

(ii) **The Life Vice Presidents**

The names of the existing Life Vice Presidents were read out and special mention was given to Maureen Bye and John Goddard, both of whom sadly died during the year.

(iii) **Election of Officers of the Society**

The names of the Officers willing to offer themselves for re-election were read out:

Chairman: Gail Fraser

Vice Chairman: vacant

Secretary: vacant

Assistant Secretary: Margaret Dietsch

Show Secretary David Peterken

Show Captain: David Peterken

Assistant Show Secretary: Sally Keywood Gray

Treasurer: Robert Collier

Assistant Treasurer: vacant

Membership Secretary: Jackie Russell

Publicity Officer: Gail Fraser

Bulletin Editor: Ann Shore

Website Editor: Barbara Salmon

The Officers were proposed en bloc by Peggy Reid and seconded by Claire Abbott. All present were in favour.

As David Peterken was now President there was a vacancy for Vice Chair. A nomination had been received for Jackie Russell from Gail Fraser and it had been seconded by David Peterken.

There were no other nominations. All present were in favour.

There was a vacancy for Secretary. A nomination had been received for Margaret Dietsch from Gail Fraser and it had been seconded by Sally Keywood Gray.

There were no other nominations. All present were in favour.

The Chair invited nominations for an Assistant Secretary/Minute taker and Assistant Treasurer. There were no nominations.

**Item 7b.**

**Election of Committee members**

Existing Committee Members Jane Mawer and Richard Reid had indicated their willingness to stand. There were no other nominations. All present were in favour.

**Item 7c**

**Election of an Independent Examiner**

There was a vacancy for an Independent Examiner. A nomination had been received for A.J. Elliot from Robert Collier and had been seconded by Richard Reid.

There were no other nominations. All present were in favour.

**Item 8**

**AOB**

There was no other business.

**Item 9**

**Presentation of awards**

Allan Lover and Sally Keywood Gray presented the awards on behalf David Peterken.

Gail Fraser presented the outgoing President with a gift on behalf of everyone thanking him for his service, support and guidance over many years and expressing her wish that he would continue a close association with the Society.

**Item 10**

**Date of next AGM**

Wednesday 3rd December 2025 at 3:00 pm

**Item 11**

**Close of meeting**

The Chair, Gail Fraser thanked everyone for coming and formally closed the meeting at 3.10pm.