



**Scotland's Garden and Landscape Heritage
Virtual AGM 17th November 2021 at 11.00**

1. Welcome and Apologies

Chloe welcomed everyone to the second virtual AGM.

The AGM, facilitated by Zoom, was virtual because of ongoing Covid 19 restrictions.

Present:

Board members: Chair: Chloe Bennett; Bob Luther, treasurer and acting secretary; Christopher Dingwall, vice chair; Marilyn Brown; Judy Riley; Sarah Barron; Matt Benians; Hannah Tweedie; Sue Hewer; Marion Shawcross (minutes).

Members: Iain Jolliffe, Jean Harthill, Hilary Gunkel, Anne Hardcastle, Hilary Boshier, Kirsty Burrell, Alison Allighan, Colin Ellis, Shona Munro; Barbara Morris, David Simpson, Susan Bennett, Peter Burnam, John West, James Murray, Colin McLeod, Shiona Mackie, Victoria George

Apologies:

Members: Nick Bennett, Patricia Andrews, Anne King, Peter Fitch, Fiona McKelvie, Adam Gillingham, Peter Metcalf, Morna Knottenbelt, Annie Rhodes, Beth Duff, Carol Jefferson-Davies

2. Election of a Chair for the meeting

Christopher Dingwall proposed, and John West seconded, the appointment of Chloe Bennett as Chair for the meeting.

3. Reports and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020

The Trustees Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 December 2020 had been previously circulated to the members.

The Treasurer's report shows that the accounts are stable, in terms of income and expenditure. The balance for 2020 was £7,790 and for 2021, £7,109. The 2021 figure does not include £1100 owed by East Lothian Council, nor the amount we owe to the web developers.

The launch of the new website went very well, and the website is proving to be very beneficial. Membership has gone up by 50% since the launch. There was an influx of new members following the Newhailes Event, and a significant number of students have joined.

This year, as in 2020, activities were curtailed by the ongoing Covid pandemic. It is hoped that a fuller programme of activities will be possible in 2022.

The main activities this year were:

- The 2020 AGM was held by zoom on 18th September. Following completion of the business, there was a lively discussion about events, books and planning issues.
- The 2020 joint SGLH/AHSS meeting was held online on 4th November. Margaret Stewart 's film on Loudoun Castle and landscape design in Scotland c.1700 was shown, followed by a talk from Margaret on the making of the film.
- The 2021 joint SGLH/AHSS lecture was held in the Augustine United Church, 41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh, on Monday 15th November, two days before the AGM. It was a hybrid lecture with approximately 20/25 attendees and 60 online. Christopher Dingwall's subject was 'Roads, bridges, landscapes and new towns on the Highland Circuit 1720-1830: a partnership between landowners, architects and the government'.
- Items of news were added to the website throughout the year, and three editions of the e-newsletter were published on the website.
- Newhailes: A two-day workshop was held on 8th and 9th September, as part of East Lothian's archaeology fortnight. It included online talks, an exercise in the grounds of Newhailes House and a guided walk. It was hoped that the event would encourage participants to volunteer for the Glorious Gardens project in East Lothian.
- Glorious Gardens: Bob reviewed Glorious Gardens: GG I and GG II are now complete, and the focus is on Glorious Gardens East Lothian (GGEL). This year applications for funding were made to HES and HLF, but both were unsuccessful. Applications have been made to other organisations, including the North Berwick Trust, whose decision is awaited. SGLH Board has agreed to commit £2K to the project which will be matched by an anonymous donor. East Lothian Council has committed £21K for the provision of 'Significant Assessments' for those East Lothian sites that merit research and recording. Bea Dower is working on these Significant Assessments for a number of sites researched by SGLH's forerunner, Garden History Society in Scotland, between 2010 and 2012. The other aspect of GGEL is the making and testing of a digital toolkit for use throughout Scotland. Sue Hewer is working on the toolkit. Unfortunately, it has not proved possible to recruit a project leader to pilot its use in East Lothian. The project is going ahead with the help of volunteers.

Peter Burnham proposed, and John West seconded the adoption of the reports. They were adopted unanimously.

4. Election of Trustees

Chloe Bennett has indicated that she wishes to stand down as Chair. Attempts to identify possible candidates for the role, have not met with success. Bob reminded members that there is also a vacancy for the secretary. He appealed to the members to be alert to these vacancies and consider whether they could take on either role.

Three trustees, Judy Riley, Bob Luther and Christopher Dingwall stood for re-election. There were no other nominations and no objections. Colin Ellis proposed, and Marilyn Brown seconded these elections, and they were passed by acclamation. The other trustees are willing to continue.

5. Any other competent business

There being no other business, members were invited to stay online for informal discussion after the closure of the official meeting.

The formal meeting was closed at 11.30

Please see the next page for a summary of the informal discussion.

Points arising from the Informal Discussion

Matt asked for members' views on attending events in person next year.

- Anne Hardcastle reported that visits in England were successful where the facilities were well managed and Covid compliant. Public Transport was not so good. There was a significant difference in Covid compliance between the young and the old.
- John West said there is a growing resumption of normal activities, including meetings inside, with people taking personal responsibility.
- The recent SGLH hybrid meeting was successful and attracted a lot of people who wouldn't wish to travel to a meeting at night in winter. Maybe we should focus on zoom visits in winter and site visits in summer.
- Outdoor visits are very safe, except for the mode of travel to get there.
- Marilyn Brown mentioned the imminent open days at Holyrood Palace and Edinburgh Castle, which are ticketed.
- Sue Hewer described an event (a bun fight!) at Hospitalfield for trustees and friends with 40/50 attendees who wore masks until tea and buns time.

Re difficulty getting people to take on secretary and chair:

- John West knew of 2 organisations that had had to fold because of their inability to find office bearers.
- Following up on the message received from Carol Jefferson-Davies, Judy suggested that if we held Board meetings at 4, 5 or 6pm it would be better for working people. The response to this was very positive.
- Anne Hardcastle suggested that we publish the job specifications on the website.
- Marilyn suggested that we could, like the Antiquarian Society, offer reduced 'early career' membership to help the transition for free student membership to full rates.
- Victoria George suggested we target horticultural colleges where students study garden history. Victoria can provide a number of contacts.

Suggestions for future events

- We hold an event on C20 gardens - which in fact is under consideration.
- Perhaps we could run a joint event with the Institute of horticulturalists, such as a visit to Saughton Park. This renovated Victorian garden illustrates the basis of a Victorian Park. It started as a C16 house and garden, and in the late C19/early C20 was a psychiatric hospital, with links to Mavisbank. A rich history.

Local Authority Planning Issues

- Alison said that very few councils voluntarily contact SGLH over planning applications. Communication has diminished over recent years. S Lanarkshire had little contact with the Glorious Garden project, whilst Falkirk did show an interest. Contact between councils and SGLH mostly depends on the interests of the Planning Officer.