



Draft MINUTES 21st Annual General Meeting

Held on Wednesday 18th March 2026 at 1.30pm
at Ness Botanic Gardens
Neston Road, Little Neston, CH64 4AY

The papers for this meeting had been circulated to Members by email or post, as required. These papers comprised the 21st AGM Notice & Agenda, the Minutes of the 20th AGM and the Directors' & Trustees' Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31st January 2026.

Cheshire Gardens Trust 21st AGM MEETING

1.0 Welcome and Introduction

On behalf of the Council of Management, Martin Slack welcomed all members, guests and our Guest Speaker, Advolly Richmond.

2.0 Attendance and Apologies

2.1 46 members and 22 guests were in attendance.

2.2 Apologies had been received later from two members

3.0 Minutes of the 20th AGM held at Theatre Porto in Whitby Park, Ellesmere Port

3.1 The Minutes had been circulated by email or by post by 16th February 2026.

No amendments to the minutes were required.

The Minutes were duly proposed as an accurate record of the meeting by Beric Bartlett and accepted by the meeting.

4.0 Matters Arising No matters were raised.

5.0 Annual Report & Financial Statement 2025/26

5.1 Financial Statement

Martin Slack pointed out CGT's substantial donation to the Gardens Trust to assist them in defending their important role during the Government's proposed reforms to the statutory planning consultee system. This had reduced the surplus funds being held.

5.2 Looking Forward – Change to the Structure of Cheshire Gardens Trust

CGT was originally set up as an incorporated charity and a company limited by guarantee which also permits paid employees and the purchase of property.

Martin Slack explained the change coming into effect which requires Charities Limited by Guarantee to submit much more detailed accounts to Companies House and can be off-putting for members of CoM. Consequently, he was investigating the option for CGT to

become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation which would not require reporting to Companies House and be simpler to run, with no discernible changes to our operation. However this would require a change to our standing orders, a new name and bank account.

As a result this may be the last AGM under the name of Cheshire Gardens Trust it would require members to renew their membership standing orders.

Members would be updated on this potential restructure.

6.0 Elections to the Council of Management

6.1 The current CoM consists of four members; Sue Bartlett, Jackie Cawte, Alison Moore and Martin Slack. This is the minimum requirement, the maximum being seven members. There were no volunteers offering themselves for election to the CoM and the existing members were willing to remain in office for a further year. They were reappointed unanimously and thanked by the meeting.

6.2 The meeting was informed that members were very welcome to attend Council of Management meetings to discover how the meetings work and to raise any topics should they have particular interests or concerns. Barbara Moth stressed the importance of new members freshening discussions and helping to influence the running of the Trust.

7.0 Any Other Business

7.1 Retirement of Newsletter Editor – Sue Eldridge

Sue Eldridge was presented with a garden book and garden token in gratitude for her nine years' service as Newsletter Editor. Sue volunteered on the retirement of the previous editor, refreshed its layout and completed thirty-six editions, plus an additional four editions to help keep members in touch during covid times. As Barbara Moth pointed out, this was a most valuable contribution to the Trust and deserves a huge thank you.

We are most grateful to Alison Moore, who had volunteered to take over the editorship.

7.2 Collection for the Gardens Trust

Ross Wilson, gardener at Hare Hill National Trust Garden, would be running the London Marathon in aid of the Gardens Trust and attendees contributed in his support.

8.0 Closing thanks

8.1 No further business was raised so Martin Slack concluded the meeting at 1.50pm with thanks to all members and their guests and to the volunteer members of our Groups for their attendance and contributions.

8.2 He then introduced our special guest speaker, Advolly Richmond, to present her illustrated talk "A Short History of Flowers: The stories that make our Gardens" which was followed by a book signing and refreshments in the Hulme Conservatory.