

**MINUTE OF AGM OF FRIENDS OF GEILSTON
HELD AT CARDROSS GOLF CLUB
ON TUESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2018**

Present

Eight members of the Committee and 80 attendees, the great majority being Friends of Geilston, and Jackie Baillie MSP

Apologies

Received from 38 FoG members, councillors and Maurice Corry MSP.

1.0 Welcome

1.1 Allison Hillis Chairperson welcomed everyone and thanked those present for their support over the past year.

2.0 Minute of Inaugural Meeting

2.1 The minute was approved by Nigel Allan and seconded by Janet Peattie. There were no matters arising.

3.0 Chairperson's Report

3.1 Thanks are due to the committee for their work and support over the year, showing perseverance and determination. Also thanks to the Cardross Golf Club for hosting us tonight and for meetings.

3.2 Geilston Garden has been nominated as one of the top hundred gardens in the UK in Gardeners' News magazine, so congratulations are due to Alison Farrell and her team.

3.3 A cheque for £200 was presented from Friends of Geilston to the garden and this will be used for mounting the historic carronades by the house.

3.4 Membership currently stands at 537, with approximately 310 active members. The membership is geographically widespread, focusing on our area but covering Scotland, into the UK and Europe.

3.5 Events in 2018:

Garden History Day in May, attended by 80 people from a wide range of horticultural interests.

Wildlife Day in September, a family event with over 200 visitors, supported by RSPB, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Moth and Butterfly Society and the local beekeepers.

An application by the NTS to Historic Environment Scotland to have Geilston included in the inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes has not been successful.

Geilston calendars, with a photographic competition, with 116 entries, judged by Lesley Roberts and on sale today at £5.00.

Further initiatives include Jackie Baillie and Maurice Corry raising Geilston in the Scottish Parliament and a petition has also been lodged which should be possible to sign online shortly.

Currently, FoG is becoming a charity and will be registered with OSCR.

3.6 The report was proposed by Fiona Lockhart and seconded by Chris Packard.

4.0 Treasurer's Report

- 4.1** The year end is 31 October 2018. Income is mainly from subscriptions, donations, profit from events and from calendar sales. Expenditure includes legal advice for drafting the constitution, insurance, hosting the website, expenses for events and calendars. Overall there is a surplus of £1,486.92.
- 4.2** Subscriptions are payable now for 2019 at £5.00 per person. Overall, FoG is in a healthy position starting the new financial year.
- 4.3** The acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Jim Gibb and seconded by Jo Scott.

5.0 Election of Committee

- 5.1** Over 2018, the following committee members have resigned: S MacDonald, D Price, M Davis. Under the terms of the constitution, 3 committee members are standing down but are willing to be re-elected:
- Fiona Lockhart, proposed by John Hanks, seconded by Veronica Davis
Ken Readman, proposed by Bill Davis, seconded by Janet Peattie
Jim Gibb, proposed by Maura Clark, seconded by Stella Kinloch
- 4 new members have agreed to join the committee:
- Alana Ingram, proposed by Jo Scott, seconded by Mike Thornley
Jacqueline Evans, proposed by Bill Davis, seconded by Ann Morrison
John Evans, proposed by Gwen Irving, seconded by Mary Tacchi
Chris Moore, proposed by Julia Gurney, seconded by Fiona Lockhart.

6.0 Current Position with the NTS

- 6.1** Mike Thornley, Vice Chairperson, reminded those present that the NTS had agreed to set up a working party to consider the future of Geilston in September 2017. October 2017 was the beginning of a 6 months period of monthly meetings. It was an extremely difficult process as FoG put up all suggestions including 2 reports and all were knocked back by the NTS who made no suggestions of their own. FoG then listed 11 options for discussion, with their preference being for NTS investment in house and garden with FoG supporting community initiatives on a small scale initially. The NTS preferred disposal completely to a community enterprise, or alternatively enabling development of housing to fund their solution, but no details given.
- 6.2** FoG concluded that there was not sufficient support for the proposal to be community led. NTS's disappointment created a very difficult meeting. Following a letter from Allison Hillis the NTS revised its position and proposed that it fund an economic assessment, considering all the options and who would be best funding these. The NTS invited FoG to comment on the brief, be involved in the consultant selection and participate in the study. It has taken most of the summer to create the brief, consider consultants and criteria for appointing them, with 2 interviews due to be held next week and 1 later. The work is due to be completed by spring.
- 6.3** There is still lots of uncertainty, although NTS area manager Richard Williams has been supportive and sees the study outcomes as informing any decision by the NTS Trustees to reverse their decision to close the garden. FoG are

concerned that our ideas will be found to be not viable and the assessment could make us a party to the closure of the garden.

At root is finding a solution for the house, providing income for the garden, and tapping in to new funding as well the NTS to accepting its responsibilities.

6.4 Questions raised:

Q: When did Trustees vote to close Geilston?

A: 2016 when there was not public announcement: FoG only found this out in 2018

Q: On what basis did they vote to close it?

A: Detail not known; but new management, review of NTS gardens where Geilston was low-ranked and Geilston was alienable, with no restrictions.

Q: Will the NTS move the money back to Geilston?

A: NTS will not even discuss this.

Q: Money from other properties has also been moved to NTS General Income Fund.

Q: What are the consultants' track records?

A: Some stronger than others. The study result is not likely to be perfect but may be sufficient to convince the NTS that Geilston should remain open.

7.0 Presentation by Chris Packard, First Chairperson of the Friends of Hermitage Park

Chris gave a short presentation on the early days of the restoration of Hermitage Park, from the burn-bashing volunteer sessions to initial discussions with the Council and HLF for funding and working in partnership with Argyll and Bute Council. After a number of years, £3M has been raised and the park is due to become fully operational in spring 2019.

8.0 The meeting was closed with thanks to all for their attendance and refreshments were served.

Sue Thornley Minutes Secretary
27 November 2018