

Friends of Mycenae Gardens AGM 2021

Friday 3 September 2021

Mycenae House

THESE ARE DRAFT MINUTES THAT WILL BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL AT THE NEXT AGM

Chair: Mark Barnes (MB)

Committee members present: MB, Colin Gillespie (CG), Jo Bodie (JB, by Zoom), Mark Johnson-Brown (MJB, representing Mycenae House), Simon Broxham (representing The Greenwich Steiner School)

16 members present in person, one by Zoom and two by proxy

Minutes of 2019 AGM

The minutes of the 2019 AGM were approved, with no questions.

Treasurer's report

CG reported that the finances were little changed from time of his report in 2019. £57.61 had been collected at ParksFest 2019, and £134 spent as the group's contribution to the carving of the Cherry Tree stump. The current balance is £547.11.

Chairman's report

MB's email of 27 August 2021 would stand as his report. For those who had not seen that or the two previous emails, MB summarised the three main points:

- There are real and sometimes tricky issues that need to be addressed, but also opportunities to improve the gardens.
- This work could be done by Mycenae House of the GSS, but a principal function of the Friends group is to bring those parties together with other users in the community and to find a balance between competing interests.
- Members of the group can bring their concerns and ideas forward in the group, but it is the committee that will address those concerns and take up those ideas. It is essential not only to have members sign up but that enough of them agree to serve on the committee.

The committee consists of the two nominees (of Mycenae House and the School) and 4-6 elected members. We previously had two parents of children at the school, who were a great source of ideas and energy, but both had left. At present we have only 3 elected

members, so are under-strength. All three remaining elected members (MB, CG, JB) are retiring but offering themselves for re-election if necessary to make up the numbers. The most important business of the meeting was to elect a committee so that the group could function, but also to bring in fresh ideas.

Elections to the committee

Fiona Machen and Vera Shuvaeva introduced themselves and were put forward for election. There were no other new candidates. MB thanked both of them for stepping up. They and the three existing members (MB, CG, JB) were elected unanimously.

Alteration of the constitution

MB read out the proposed alteration from the notice of the AGM. The proposed alteration was approved unanimously.

AOB

MJB asked whether it was possible to co-opt members to the committee. He had in mind someone who could bring balance and a different viewpoint. MB confirmed that it is possible to co-opt members to fill any vacancy, but even if there was no vacancy the committee could invite other people to come to committee meetings.

MJB raised the issue of ParksFest. This year the ParksFest had taken a modified form, and for next year he envisaged a season of events spread over the summer. This would need to be negotiated with the Parks Forum. Relations with the Parks Forum had faded over the pandemic and the group would have to re-establish those relations.

Ann Hill asked whether the RBG Tree Officer (Jo Driver) had raised any concerns in the course of her visit on 2 September. MB reported that she had agreed to push forward the removal of the bay tree at the southwest corner of the garden (by the stairs to the basement), and for the delivery and spreading of woodchip. She had noted fungus around the base of one of the planes, and some dieback, which suggested the tree needed pruning. In relation to erosion, she suggested trying to reduce footfall on the slopes by providing some attraction for the children, such as a carefully stabilised pile of tree trunks that the children could climb over. She offered to revert with ideas along those lines and with advice on the best way of labelling the trees.

MJB suggested that any such plan should be discussed as part of a wider discussion about the future of the gardens at a general meeting specially convened for the purpose, with a deliberate effort to bring all stakeholders to the meeting.

John Lee referred to the vandalism of the benches and the fences and barriers, and raised the issue of 24 hour access. MB replied that the installation of a gate had been discussed

with Mycenae House and RBG, but that would require someone to open it earlier than the arrival of Mycenae House Staff and to close it well after their departure. These hours outside the busiest parts of the day are often favoured by dog-walkers. In addition, a gate would not deter people determined to get in. MJB warned against too negative an approach to young people, and attributing all the vandalism to them. There would always be some level of anti-social behaviour and vandalism, but he had found that the behaviour of most young visitors to the garden improved if they were welcomed and treated with respect, as part of the community we serve. The worst incident of vandalism that he and his staff had seen was caused by adults.