



Horticultural Trades Association Annual General Meeting 2022 Minutes
The Farmer's Club, London – 09 September 2022
Available to all HTA members via the AGM Webinar

Present:

Boyd Douglas- Davies (BDD)	HTA President
Alan Down (AD)	HTA Vice-President
James Barnes (JKB)	HTA Chairman
Alex Vick (AV)	HTA Finance Director

Apologies:

Andy Campbell	Andy Campbell Consulting
Adrian Maskell	Bransford Webbs

Meeting Opened at 10.30am

BDD began by reading out a statement: It is with huge sadness that we learnt yesterday evening of the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The HTA would like to pay tribute to Her Majesty for the immeasurable stability, dignity and prestige she has bestowed on this nation in so many ways and for so many years. For us in particular in the field of Horticulture. She was of course a hugely keen gardener and took special interest in the development of the gardens at Buckingham Palace, Balmoral and Sandringham. Her love of countryside unrivalled. Her attendance at Chelsea every year testament to that wider interest and support of the industry. The iconic planting of a tree so symbolic in so many of her duties and ceremonies. And just this year the huge take up of tree planting across the land to celebrate her platinum jubilee under the banner of the Queen's Canopy.

Many of our members have had or have the patronage of the Royal household through the Royal Warrant and will have had the pleasure and privilege that that honour bestows.

She will be hugely missed not just in our country but across the world.

Our thoughts and hearts are with all the Royal Family at this poignant time.

BDD welcomed all in the room and via webinar and described how members were notified of the AGM in advance of the meeting. BDD thanked all those on the HTA Board, Council, Committees and at Horticulture House for the support over the last three years.

The meeting was pronounced quorate and BDD outlined the procedures for voting on the resolutions either in the room or online, which require a simple majority in favour.

Resolution 1, to approve the Minutes of the 2021 Annual General Council Meeting held via webinar on Thursday 7 October 2021, was passed.

BDD then handed over to JKB for **Item 2**, the Chairman's update. JKB began by sharing insights into 2021 finances with net assets rising to £3.4m, a record high and that building financial security for the HTA has been a priority. JKB commented that we are living in extraordinary times post pandemic, such as the cost of doing business crisis we find ourselves in now. The HTA remains significant to the industry and seeks to reinforce member engagement and communication. For Policy, Border Control Posts, peat and labour remain high on the agenda and the team have

continued to build relationships with ministers and Defra. JKB suggested that changing the name “ornamental horticulture” to “environmental horticulture” may be the best way forward.

Moving towards what the HTA is doing for members in the future, JKB commented that there were three main strategies: 1. A concentration on data and research to aid members, 2. A restructuring of our customer relation management system, and 3. Increasing the skillset and capability of the HTA’s senior leadership team with fresh new faces. JKB finished by commenting that he is very hopeful the HTA will be well equipped for help members through the challenges to come.

JKB then handed over to AV for the Annual Accounts 2021. AV began with a background to the figures; the HTA is a not-for-profit association therefore income is reinvested to further benefit members. More than half the income is generated by the gifting scheme; a further quarter by membership subscriptions; and the rest made up of events, preferred partners etc. AV went on to say that HTA recognises income from the gifting scheme in two ways, from net commission at the point of sale, to breakage, which means the value of gifting products not sold before the expiry date. As JKB mentioned, the net assets have risen by 1.1m to 3.4m; the additional 1.1m has come from the continually expanding gifting scheme, and an increase in member subscriptions due to the member recruitment drive.

Moving onto costs, AV highlighted that three quarters of the association’s costs go on lobbying, research, development of the gifting scheme, communication, and events. Operationally, the HTA costs 3.9m to run, of which 0.8m of that is profit. AV asked if anyone had any questions either now or later via email, then passed back to BDD.

Resolution 3: To elect the Officers of the Association

1. The resolution to ratify the appointment of Alan Down as HTA President until the 2024 AGM was passed.
2. The resolution to ratify the appointment of Boyd Douglas-Davies from President to Immediate Past President was passed.
3. The resolution to ratify the appointment of Will Armitage as HTA Vice President was passed.
4. The resolution to ratify the re-appointment of Adam Taylor as Director was passed.
5. The resolution to ratify the re-appointment of James Barnes as HTA Chairman was passed.

Johnston Carmichael, a top 20 independent audit firm with extensive not-for-profit experience, were recommended for appointment in 2021 by the HTA’s Audit Committee. This resolution was passed, they were appointed as auditors in 2021 and HTA wished to retain their services for the remainder of 2022 and beyond into 2023. **Resolution 4**, the reappointment of Johnston Carmichael as Auditors was passed.

Resolution 5, to receive the HTA Benevolent Fund update, was read by AD. Andrew Richardson of Johnsons Whixley remains the Chair of the Benevolent Fund; Dougal Philip of New Hopetoun Gardens is the Vice Chair. Other Trustees are Adam Wigglesworth, Tim Woodland, Stan Green, and Caroline Owen.

Proposal to close the fund and transfer the proceeds to Perennial

The trustees of the Benevolent Fund have been reviewing the future strategy of the fund and have proposed and unanimously agreed that the existing funds are transferred to Perennial (The Gardeners Royal Benevolent Society) for them to use as their trustees deem fit to help horticulturists in need. This transfer is supported by the senior members of the HTA Board.

In summary, despite the huge efforts made by the HTA Executive team to promote the Benevolent Fund to HTA members there are very few valid applications, 2 in 2021 and none during 2022. The majority of applications made to the Benevolent Fund are not valid and the fund has been picked up by these applicants trawling through websites of grant giving organisations. The HTA team refer them to alternative bodies if they can.

When a valid application is received by HTA head office they will normally forward it to Perennial with the permission of the applicant and sometimes the recommendation of the chair of the Benevolent Fund, there are six past-president trustees of the fund. A transfer has been considered in the past but was not pursued because Perennial had quite a restrictive qualification for horticulturists which excluded non-horticulturist employees at garden centres. This has changed and Perennial can now help such applicants either themselves or passing them to the appropriate organisation and have the capacity and skills to really understand the applicants needs and will stay with them as a service user until they have their various problems sorted, as far as that is possible.

The process to transfer the funds will be undertaken in line with the charity commission and any legal requirements to implement this transfer.

Resolution 6, to ratify the annual subscription rates as per the document provided in the member portal on the website, was passed.

Resolution 7, to adopt the amended version of the HTA's Articles of Association, was passed. The four main changes were:

1. Gender inclusivity
2. Changes to job titles to reflect the current organisational structure
3. Updating the Articles to reflect the current membership structure
4. Additional of a new clause that gives the Board the ability to remove a member based on unacceptable behaviour

AD asked the room and the viewers online for **Item 8**, any other business. As there were none, AD declared the meeting closed at 11.14am.