

### MINUTES OF THE 32<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD AT TREBAH GARDEN

ON

SATURDAY 14 OCTOBER 2023

#### 1. PRESENT

##### Council of Management

Robert Dudley-Cooke (Chairman), Harry Bradshaw, Gillian Pipkin,  
Charles Richardson, Nina Khaira

##### Apologies

Ray Townsend, Mike Harvey, Sue Nathan, Tim Hubbard, Zoe Curnow, Peter Hodgson,  
Jean Baker, Caroline Carver, Sue Child, Davina and Henry Haydon, Brian and Lizzie  
Hoskins, Pat Kirkham, Elaine and Malcolm Leather, Kaye Price, Helen Taylor, Hattie  
Walker, Sylvia Weatherhead, Jackie Whibley, Mairi McClean, Clifford Brown, Elizabeth  
Gates, Jennifer Carr, Anne Kennedy

##### In attendance

Jon Cummins CEO & Gina Wilkes Head of Finance

##### Members Present

43

#### 2. MINUTES OF THE 31<sup>ST</sup> AGM HELD ON SATURDAY 15 OCTOBER 2022

All members had access to a copy of AGM Minutes 2022, it was moved that the  
Minutes be taken as read and approved.

Proposed Charles Richardson, seconded by David Kennedy, approved.

#### 3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The year 1 February 2022 to 31 January 2023, is a difficult year to incapsulate in a  
short phrase or sentence.

In many ways, we and society in general were still dealing with the effects of Covid  
restrictions and regulations, with life, only slowly, returning to some sort of normality.  
We at Trebah, for the financial year under review, were still on a five day week and the  
reduction in opening days had enabled us to steer safely through the Covid period,  
based on the premise and strategy that a five day week enabled us to manage with  
one set of staff working only, with the resultant saving in our overheads, to meet a  
diminished number of visitors and income. By very definition, therefore, we could not  
expect the financial year to 31 January 2023 to be other than a difficult one with  
reduced numbers through the gates. In general terms just under £84,000 visitors.  
The loss for the financial year (albeit now historic) was £37,000 and the auditors have  
outlined the causes in their report which I have already read to you.

As soon as the trading position began to become clear, we took urgent action with the  
management to identify causes and take steps to try and ensure the current year

(2023) once again returned to profitability and I will give some outline details of the very considerable change in our position later in this report.

It was of course our prime concern not to return to the precarity of the early years of the trust, after many years of stabilising and building the Trust's financial position.

Alongside the changes to our financial planning, the Trustees and Management took the view that we must nevertheless move forward and continue with the plans already in the pipeline, mainly concerning our major project, the Walled Garden, so that Trebah not only continued to be a major attraction but that we offered our visitors and members, not only the traditional offerings of quality and welcome, but also something new to look forward to.

Over last winter, and during the current year, the Trustees with Management have worked enthusiastically (I believe that is the correct word) on the production of a Strategic Plan to cover the next five years. This is a very detailed and substantial document. This plan sets out our aims and aspirations and the major projects we wish to undertake now and in the future. In other words, the direction the Trust should go over the coming years to ensure the steady growth of our financial position and of Trebah in general. I extend grateful thanks to all of our Trustees and in particular Members of the Management Committee for the committed and detailed work given to this Plan together with our management team. It is a fine demonstration of Trustees and the Management working together to benefit the Trebah Trust and in addition has brought people together.

Having survived the storm of economic change that was 2022, I am sure you will forgive and allow me to update our position in 2023 and give an indication of the changes that have come about. Having once again, given the green light for the walled garden, we were able to speed ahead and actually start building last autumn, which proceeded through the winter with completion in May 2023. The Walled garden, (The Court Garden as we have named it) has opened to great acclaim and it is fitting to give recognition to all who were involved with its design, construction, layout and planting.

I am sure the Walled Garden benefitted from the long period of gestation, some 10 years, and the gradual slotting into place of all necessary elements. Suffice to say the Trustees and Staff are very pleased with this new attraction which has also been very favourably commented upon by our visitors and the members.

We have also given great attention to all our activities to find where we could do better, and of course this is an ongoing and continuous process. It is always a question of finding a balance between pursuing the Trusts aim of 'securing the garden at Trebah in perpetuity' and providing financial ability so to do, without impinging on the very thing we as Trustees are charged to do, secure the garden as a garden, for now and the future. We have set in motion, the preparation of a very detailed garden plan for which the garden committee are responsible to highlight the Trust's responsibilities in this direction. Not only are we concerned to ensure the garden remains a special place, but also a place of outstanding beauty to which we can add sympathetically developments in keeping with the garden's general ambience.

Over recent years, we have made changes such as the access to the beach, the new Azalea bank, the Amphitheatre, the Water Garden and the new Walled Garden. Judging by the healthy growth in membership, I believe it is correct to say we are on the right track. We have also manifestly demonstrated our 'green credentials' with our solar panels and ground source heating from below the new Walled Garden. Whilst this is strictly for next year report, I am able to indicate that the Trust trading position

has returned to a healthy trading surplus in line with our pre-Covid expectations watched very carefully by our Senior Management and the Trustees.

Invariably after a long period of continuity, the law of averages demands that many changes will come together and so it has been both in the membership of the Council of Management and in the Senior Management staff. Nigel Burnett, our CEO for 18 years retired in June and his second-in-command left Trebah a few months earlier.

Our sincere and grateful thanks go to Nigel for all he achieved during his time at Trebah, and we wish him a long and happy retirement.

During the last year, we had recruited Jon Cummins from the National Trust, to our management team and he has expertly stepped into the shoes of the CEO and we the Management Committee have greatly enjoyed working with him in this new capacity.

On the Trustees front, Carolyn Brodie, daughter of Major and Mrs Hibbert, and a member of the Council of Management since its inception, passed away after a period of illness. Carolyn was devoted to Trebah and its well-being. Similar to an English Queen who in her former times said that after her death, they would find Calais engraved on her heart, I am sure that Carolyn would have said that Trebah would be engraved on hers. Gillian Pipkin, who again has served since the inception of the Trust, has asked to be allowed to retire and our grateful thanks go to her as a long serving family member. In addition, Sue Nathan of Bonython and Lucie Nottingham, both very much concerned with garden matters over the years, felt that they were deserving of a rest to which we reluctantly agreed, but with our most grateful thanks for their commitment energies and experience. On the plus side, we have recruited two new lady members, Zoe Curnow, the CEO of the Minack Theatre, with whom we enjoyed a happy relationship, and Nina Khaira who serves on various Royal Cornwall Trust NHS Committees and John Lanyon the Head Gardener of Glendurgan, Trelevisick and Trelice has also joined our Garden Committee.

It is my pleasurable duty each year as the Chairman to take this public arena as an occasion to say thank you, and a very heartfelt thank you to all the Trebah staff, for navigating through a very difficult period. You, the Staff, are deeply appreciated although we may forget to tell you this on sufficient occasions. My fellow trustees are deserving of praise too. Difficult times, demand even more attention and commitment from the Trustees who act in a voluntary capacity. Thank you to you all for advice and expertise and the time spent on Trebah matters. A very special thank you to the fellow members of the Management Committee who go considerably beyond the call of duty.

Finally, may I reassure our membership that The TREBAH Team, the Management and Trustees are ever watchful and vigilant and determined that Trebah remains a garden of renown at a time when changes for good or bad come thick and fast.

Thank you.

#### **4. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS**

Hodgsons Accountants produced the audited accounts and the auditor's report for the financial year ended 31st January 2022 was read out by Robert Dudley Cooke  
Approved by Julian Jenkins & David Kennedy

## **5. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS**

Hodgsons Accountants will be stepping down and therefore not re- appointed. A tender process is being undertaken to appoint a new firm of auditors.

## **6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

In accordance with the Articles of Association, the Re-election of officers by rotation Robert Dudley Cooke and Charles Richardson, proposed by Gill Pipkin and seconded by Lucie Nottingham

The appointments of Nina Khaira and Zoe Curnow as Trebah Trustees were proposed by Gill Pipkin and seconded by David Kennedy, approved.

The appointment of Gina Wilkes as Company Secretary was proposed by Harry Bradshaw and seconded by Claire Richardson