

MINUTES OF THE 30TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**HELD AT TREBAH HOUSE, TREBAH GARDEN
ON
SATURDAY 9 OCTOBER 2021**

1. PRESENT

Council of Management

Robert Dudley-Cooke (Chairman), Carolyn Brodie, Sue Nathan, Harry Bradshaw, Charles Richardson, Gillian Pipkin, Ray Townsend

Apologies

Lucie Nottingham, Mike Harvey, Tim Hubbard, Peter Hodgson
Dr Susan Child, Elizabeth Greeves, Jean Baker, Brenda Button

In attendance

Nigel Burnett, Director

Members Present

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2. MINUTES OF THE 28th AGM HELD ON SATURDAY 17 OCTOBER 2020

All members had access to a copy of AGM Minutes 2020, it was moved that the Minutes be taken as read and approved.

Proposed and Seconded. Approved by Sue Nathan and Carolyn Brodie

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It is difficult to contemplate a more challenging financial year for the whole country and of course Trebah, than the financial year from February 2020 to 31 January 2021. This is of course the financial year under discussion at this years AGM and as I mention each year is by definition "historic". Copies of the accounts in question have been circulated to all our members.

Covid arrived against a background of many financial years of trading profit by the Trust and an ever-improving capital position. This was matched in addition, by the allocation of funds to improve our visitor amenities and put funding into our infrastructure. The Amphitheatre, improved access to the beach, solar panning immediately spring to mind and we have recently completed the ground source heating for our visitors' centre and prepared the foundations for our new walled garden. Trebah too, have received many awards over the years and have become a leading Southwest Garden recognised nationwide.

I remember well a management meeting in late 2019 when we were discussing the amount by which we should increase our reserve funds. We talked of what events

could possibly transpire to seriously damage our trading position. We concluded that the most likely doomsday event would be a fire in the Visitors' centre, but of course we would still have the garden. Conversely, serious damage to the garden would still leave us with the Visitors Centre. We concluded that nevertheless we would seek to double our reserve fund to ½ million as finances allowed as a prudent step to take for the future.

Little did we know or contemplate what was about to happen. Oh, for the gift of prescience to know in advance what it is to happen!!!

Trebah as most of our members know, is a very seasonal business in that we trade in a surplus for the six Spring and Summer months and at a loss for the winter months and we have always done so. In consequence the effect on our trading profit with cessation of our operations would be considerably greater during the lucrative summer months than for an equivalent period in winter.

We took a decision to close Trebah in March 2020 literally closing our gates on that date and furloughing most of our staff, leaving only a very small number to keep Trebah ticking over. It could hardly have been a worst time, the spring/summer months were just about to begin.

Trebah opened its doors again on the 4th July 2020 and a decision was taken to open for a 5 day week, with strict restrictions in place as to numbers of visitors to be admitted to the garden at any one time. We introduced, as did many, a booking system enabling us to control the flow of visitors. This prudent decision enabled us to cut our coat according to our cloth. In other words, match our staffing requirements and levels, to our reduced visitor numbers and therefore receipts.

By operating in this manner, the damage to the group's financial position over the period under discussion was far lower than would have been expected and we actually traded in surplus before depreciation. Put in very simple terms, by trading over a 5 day week only we were able to field one team, whereas over 7 days a second team would have been necessary. The savings are considerable in consequence.

I will read to you the auditors review immediately after my report which confirms that the Lockdown and our 5 day week have considerably limited our reduced financial situation to very manageable proportions. In addition, we were in receipt of a substantial legacy, no bank financing being required, a substantial achievement. The second lockdown came at the beginning of November 2020. This time in the quieter winter period.

Now of course it is not possible to have achieved these results without the full co-operation, goodwill, understanding and hard work of our Trebah staff, our Trebah family. Let us make no mistake this period has been an exceedingly difficult one, often requiring very difficult decisions to be made. The pressure on our management has been considerable not made any easier by the need to isolate. Notwithstanding Nigel Burnett and his team have proved more than up to the task with the support of the Trustees. Our enormous thanks to all our staff, and their contribution to overcoming the many and varied difficulties we have faced. Their cooperation has been respected and greatly appreciated thank you to all.

Trustees are charged with acting always in the best interests of the Trust and we the Trustees are very aware of our responsibilities in this and in other directions. I would ask therefore for understanding from our members if decisions made do not accord with individual members wishes or expectations. Accompanied by an acceptance that we the Trustees are genuinely seeking to act for the common good and are bidden to

act collectively once a decision has been made. We all have the interests of the Trust at heart and many of our trustees have given their time freely over many years to ensure the continuance of Trebah in perpetuity.

So where do we stand after the effect of COVID and the consequent limitations and restrictions applying to Trebah and indeed all our lives? Because the pandemic is still around us as we proceed through the current year, it is appropriate to talk of intentions rather than certainties as of course matters can change in rapid order.

We have been giving our educational and cultural responsibilities as a Trust detailed thought and seeking to provide a holistic approach to our activities outside the visit to the garden which is the primary reason our visitors come to Trebah. We are conscientious that more and more of our visitors come to us for what is described in current parlance as the experience. Currently the experience includes activities specifically for children, shop and plant sales, a private beach with improved access, the beach café, our main restaurant, visits to the amphitheatre and performances set in the garden. Considerably beyond a visit to the garden itself.

We are seeking also to cater to all ages, with particular thought for our more elderly or less mobile visitors we have planned the provision of a walled garden on a reasonably level part of the garden as the centre of our increased provision for all but particularly this group. A great deal of the preparation work had already been completed, before we had to halt operations, including the provision of ground source heating on the footprint of the new garden. This aspect is now fully operational. We are expecting to recommence work on the walled garden this coming March.

For all our visitors of whatever age, we are seeking to enlarge our performance capability, both theatrically and musically, hopefully resulting in a Trebah Festival of Music and Drama on an annual basis in the future.

With our young visitors in mind, we are seeking to set up a Forest School in Trebah which it is hoped will be supported by Schools in our area. This has a wealth of possibilities, providing a hands on approach for our young children and giving an education in the natural world around us, including, in our case, access to the gardens beach/seashore.

We at Trebah are naturally excited by the challenges ahead and the need to go forward in changed times, however mindful of the need to correct balance our primary objectives of maintaining the garden in perpetuity for future generations and providing incentives for new visitors and for our existing visitors to return and thus maintain our finances to enable it so to do.

This concludes my report save for a last thank you for our every increasing number of members for supporting the Trust.

4. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

James Hodgson of Hodgsons Accountants produced the audited accounts and the auditor's report for the financial year ended 31st January 2020 was read out.
Approved by Charles Richardson and Ray Townsend

5. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

It was recommended that Hodgsons be re- appointed. Proposed and seconded.
Approved by Harry Bradshaw and Julian Jenkin

6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

In accordance with the Articles of Association, Carolyn Brodie, Gillian Pipkin and Mike Harvey, offered themselves for re-election to the Council of Management. Proposed and Seconded. Approved by Charles Richardson and Harry Bradshaw