



**THE HEATHER SOCIETY**  
charity registered in England and Wales no. 261407

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Heather Society held at 2:00pm on Saturday,  
22nd September 2018, in the Hillside Centre, R.H.S. Wisley Garden, Surrey**

**Officers and Councillors Present**

Dave Brown  
David Edge (Chairman)  
Phil Joyner (Hon. Secretary)  
Barry Sellers

With 4 members of Council and 9 ordinary and honorary members being in attendance the meeting was deemed quorate. An Attendance Register was signed by those members present.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Society Officer Allison Fitz-Earle (Hon. Treasurer) and Councillor Susie Kay. Apologies were also received from members Daphne & Maurice Everett, Diane Jones, Lin Joyner, Alan Kay, Charles Nelson, John Plowman, David & Rita Plumridge and Jean & Mike Preston.

**2. Opening Statement by the Chairman**

The Chairman, David Edge, welcomed the members to the 55<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Heather Society. The text of the Chairman's opening statement is attached to these Minutes.

**3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, held at 8.15pm on Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at The Walnut Tree Hotel, North Petherton, Somerset, were circulated to the members present as well as having been previously published on the Society website. John Griffiths proposed that the Minutes be accepted as an accurate record of that meeting, seconded by Barry Sellers followed by agreement, with a show of hands, from the floor. No members were against. The Minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

**4. Presentation of the Annual Report and Accounts for 2017**

The Hon. Secretary stated that the draft 2017 Annual Report and Accounts, published on the website and mailed to those members without e-mail addresses, had now been examined by the Independent Financial Examiner, Jason Foxwell. Subsequently Jason Foxwell had e-mailed the Hon. Secretary to say that he was happy with the 2017 Annual Report and Accounts and no amendments were required. The Hon. Secretary said that he had now arranged to meet with Jason Foxwell the following Wednesday evening for the 2017 Annual Report and Accounts to be signed off.

The Hon. Secretary then invited questions and comments from the members present but none were forthcoming.

As the 2017 Annual Report and Accounts had now been approved by Council then no proposer and seconder were necessary.

**5. Proposed amendments to the 2017 revision of the rules**

No amendments to the 2017 revision of the rules had been proposed by Council.

## **6. Appointments by The Heather Society Council**

Council recommended the appointment of John Griffiths as President and Daphne Everett, Pamela Lee, Alice Knight, Kurt Kramer and *ex officio* President of NAHS, Ella May Wulff as Vice-Presidents.

As these appointments were a Council recommendation then no proposer and seconder were necessary.

## **7. Election of Officers**

The Hon. Secretary was in possession of the appropriate nomination papers duly completed and signed for the nomination of David Edge as Chairman, Allison Fitz-Earle as Hon. Treasurer and Phil Joyner as Hon. Secretary and so with no other nominations all three were duly elected to their respective positions.

With no other nominations a proposer and seconder were not necessary.

## **8. Elections of Members of Council**

Under rule 6(b) 2017 Susie Kay had completed her three-year term on Council.

The Hon. Secretary was in possession of the appropriate nomination paper duly completed and signed for the nomination of Susie Kay as a Councillor. No other nominations had been received by the Hon. Secretary for election to Council which now comprises 3 duly elected Officers and 4 Councillors (in compliance with Rule 6a).

With no other nominations a proposer and seconder were not necessary.

For clarity the Councillors are: Dave Brown, Richard Canovan, Susie Kay and Barry Sellers.

## **9. Appointment of the Independent Financial Examiner**

The Independent Financial Examiner for the 2017 Annual Report and Accounts, Jason Foxwell, had indicated his willingness to examine the 2018 Annual Report and Accounts during 2019. If subsequently Jason Foxwell is unable to examine the 2018 Annual Report and Accounts, then an alternative Independent Financial Examiner will be sought and co-opted by Council.

David Sprague proposed that Jason Foxwell be re-appointed Independent Financial Examiner, subject to the above comments, and Audrey Sprague seconded the proposal followed by agreement, with a show of hands, from the floor. No members were against.

## **10. Discussion on the future for The Heather Society**

The Chairman opened the discussion with a summary of what had been achieved regards a request from the floor of the 2017 AGM that the monies in the Society investments be put to good use. To that end several investments had now been liquidated with the aid of Richard Canovan and the monies placed in the Society's current account. Three investments remain to be liquidated. Discussions have been initiated with several organisations with a view to making donations for heather related projects. Organisations contacted so far have been the Welsh Botanic Gardens, Holehird Gardens, R.H.S. Wisley, Riverside Gardens in Perth and the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens. The approach to the Welsh Botanic Gardens, re the establishment of a Heather Collection in Wales, had proved to be fruitless, however discussion continues with the other mentioned organisations and further organisations will be considered and subsequently contacted.

Discussion then turned to the future of the Society. To retain the legacy of The Heather Society then another society will be created taking the form of an Unincorporated Association, this organisation will not be a charity and consequently not constrained by the requirements of the Charity Commission. To ease the administration of the new organisation then it will be primarily website based. However, to avoid the complications in creating a new website the new organisation needs to be able to use the current website (owned by Dave Brown) and continue to maintain the existing database of heather cultivar names, descriptions and images. To achieve this then a name for the new organisation, similar to The Heather Society, has to be chosen. Various names had already been discussed within Council and are listed in the Chairman's Opening Statement. Further names were suggested

from the floor of the AGM and all the names were placed before the floor of the AGM to gauge the level of acceptance. The suggested names are listed below with the level of acceptance indicated by a non-binding vote with a show of hands from the floor:

Heather Friends	0
Heather Society Friends	3
Heaths and Heathers Association	0
International Heather Society	4
The Heather Experience	0
The Heather Guild	0
The Heather Club	0
The New Heather Society	6
The Heather Society Club	0
A Heather Society	3
Heather Society Incorporated	1
Millennium Heather Society	1
New Heather Society	0
Heather Experience	0
Heather Guild	0
Heather Society (i.e. "The" is dropped)	9

Council will further consider the name of the new Society having now canvassed the opinion of the floor of the AGM.

Discussion followed on the funding of the new organisation. Dave Brown put forward two methods of funding either by formal membership, as is current, or by donation from visitors to the website. He further stated that formal membership would necessitate maintenance of a list of members and the requirement for a Membership Secretary, so this will need to be decided upon. Dave Brown said that there was plenty of interest in heather cultivation as indicated by the 800-900 hits per week on the website and approximately 150 likes of the images displayed on the Facebook page every month. However, the issue is how many of these apparently interested persons, who are accessing the website and the Facebook page, would want to become a member of an organisation or just prefer to make a donation to fund the continued existence of such an organisation.

John Griffiths suggested that the new organisation could take the form of a forum but Dave Brown replied that in that situation there would need to be a moderator which could be very time consuming for the chosen person. Aron Clay asked about the feasibility of introducing extended membership by paying an extra fee of top of the R.H.S membership fee but both the Chairman and Dave Brown said that this and variations of it had already been discussed in Council but was decided to be unworkable.

Dave Brown raised the issue of the longevity of a new organisation. He said that whilst those willing to be involved in the day to day administration were still in reasonable health then that was fine. However, without administrative interest from younger persons in the future then he warned that the new organisation could be short lived.

Finally, the floor of the AGM was informed by Council that once the name, method of funding and as yet undefined issues are decided upon then the intention is to formulate a set of rules for the new organisation and then open a bank account with funds kindly provided by members of Council who have already indicated their willingness to fund the startup. Audrey Sprague asked if an AGM would be necessary for the new organisation but was informed that the rules would define if that would be so.

## **11. Arrangements for the 2019 Annual General Meeting**

It is the intention of Council to hold the 2019 AGM on a weekend during September at R.H.S. Harlow Carr near Harrogate and arrange an interesting programme in association with

the AGM. As with the current AGM delegates will be asked to make their own travel and accommodation arrangements. More details will be announced in the next Newsletter.

**Meeting concluded @ 15:10**

Certified a true copy of the Heather Society AGM Minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2018.

Signed.....Chairman

Dated.....