

Gardening with hardy perennials

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

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CHARITY INFORMATION

Trustees Sally Adams

> Colin Cutler To February 2020

Karen Gimson

Lynne Hackett From April 2020

Peter Howard

Alison Levey To March 2020

Tricia Newton From March 2020

Catherine Part

Anna Peacock

Diane Puncheon To June 2020 **Christine Price-Morris** To June 2020

Keith Scott From March 2020

To June 2020 **Lorraine Shepherd**

Chairman Jan Vaughan

Vice Chairman To August 2020 Linda Crowther

> From August 2020 Pamela Clark

Stuart Senior Hon. Treasurer

Hon. Secretary Helen Curtis From February 2020

Administrator Clare Powell

Charity Registration No. 208080

VAT Registration No. 472-9285-14

Registered Office 3 Basepoint Business Centre,

Crab Apple Way, EVESHAM, WR11 1GP

Haines Watts Worcester Limited, Independent 6 Abbey Lane Court, Abbey Lane,

Examiner

EVESHAM, WR11 4BY

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

The Trustees present their Annual Report and the Financial Statements of the Society for the year ended 31 December 2020 in compliance with current statutory requirements and the charity's governing documents.

Status

The Society is registered by the Charity Commission as a charity (number 208080) and operates under the provisions of a Constitution approved by AGM on 26/03/2011 and amended at AGMs on 30/03/2019 and 31/07/2020.

The objects for which the Society was established are to:

- advance the culture, study and improvement of hardy herbaceous plants;
- preserve the older, rarer and lesser-known hardy plants, cultivars and varieties from being forgotten and lost to cultivation;
- advance the knowledge of and foster public interest in hardy plants by the publication of information, by exhibitions or displays, by stimulating research and experiment and by awarding bursaries open to public competition;
- provide expositions of hardy plants at horticultural gardens and/or gardens open to the public, and to provide facilities for giving advice on the culture of hardy plants;
- organise visits to places of interest in connection with the study of hardy plants and to co-operate with other bodies having similar or sympathetic aims; and
- do such acts as shall further the active and corporate life of the Society and which may lawfully be done by a public body established only for purposes recognised by the laws of the United Kingdom as charitable.

Trustees

The Society is managed by a committee of Trustees comprising up to twelve members each elected for a period of four years, plus any co-opted members and, additionally, four officers who are elected annually.

Activities

Introduction

In the difficult circumstances of a global Covid-19 pandemic, 2020 was a challenging year for the Hardy Plant Society. Almost all meetings and other events were cancelled with the national AGM one of the first casualties. The notice of the AGM and statement of accounts was sent to all members in the July Newsletter along with a ballot paper to be completed electronically or posted. Meetings have been conducted online and thanks to the commitment of our Postholders, HPS members have received their Newsletters and Journals. A new HPS booklet, Border Phlox, was published and has sold well.

The Office was closed during periods of national lockdown with our Administrator working from home. The planned upgrade to cloud-based systems should facilitate this in future although some tasks will continue to require an office base.

Inevitably there were constraints on other aspects of the Society's work, with almost no bursary applications as studies have been disrupted and travel plans abandoned. The Conservation Scheme has not been able to expand as a Plant Exchange was not possible, although a virtual meeting of co-ordinators took place.

The Society continues to provide information to both members and the public through the website and local HPS Groups have used websites and social media to share their gardening year and many are now hosting online meetings. It is still too early to predict the overall effect on membership numbers, but the Society is well-placed to move ahead in the coming year.

The Office

Helen Curtis came to the role of Honorary Secretary in March 2020, just as the pandemic was affecting our lives. Helen was new to the trustees and had a steep learning curve to understand how the organisation worked and to build relationships with fellow trustees, post holders and groups. Her first task was to set up online meetings so that the work of the Trustees could continue. Meetings had always taken place in London; the new online meetings proved popular as they have saved much travel time and expense. Meetings continued during a difficult year.

It was necessary to ensure the Society fulfilled its obligations as an employer and as a charity. The Society had been without an Honorary Secretary for a while so undertaking pension reenrolment and updating our entry on the Charity Commissioner's register and filing annual returns was a priority.

Unfortunately, the office closed during the lockdown and it became clear that administration could continue, only if our systems were upgraded to allow remote working. We have implemented two integrated office systems: *Infoodle* to manage our members' records and *Xero* to manage accounts. Our Administrator can now continue to perform many tasks from home when the office is closed.

HPS Journal

Souren Ala has enjoyed, in a masochistic way, editing *The Hardy Plant* in 2020. The depth and breadth of articles which contributors have sent him have been extremely welcome: an exciting challenge to put together, and to present in the best light he can.

But he does at times feel as though he is working in isolation; it would be wonderful to receive more feedback from the membership on what they think about the content and quality of the Journal. The tiny fraction who bothered to respond have largely approved, and he is grateful for that. The quality of photographs has come in for a bit of criticism, and he is trying to address this. But he is reliant upon the quality of images received.

Covid-19 has put paid to the very valuable KBBS reports, which have been an injection of youthful vitality for our readership – and by extension it is hoped – our membership. Let's hope the scheme can get going again ASAP.

Finally, a new publisher has been selected for the Journal this year (anyone who wishes more details on this, please contact Souren directly). The hope is that they will help maintain the high standards of our Journal.

Newsletter

The Society's three-times-a-year newsletter has, in these restricted times, become a major point of contact between the organisation and its members. The layout and design was refreshed (with new typography, increased sign-posting and more extensive use of photographs) from the June 2020 issue. In the almost total absence of its usual content of regional events and national information, the focus has switched to a more friendly tone, featuring what members are

actually doing rather than just being a simple notice board. It was agreed that this approach would increase the potential for it to be a more unifying force for the Society. The November issue, which was distributed with the Society's annual seed scheme list, increased in size to 40 pages instead of the normal 32 because of enhanced feedback from local groups and individual members.

Booklets

Sales of booklets have continued through our various lockdowns. Our latest publication, *Border Phlox*, was published in late June. It was not possible, of course, to launch it at an event but Gill Mullin wrote a nice review for the Autumn edition of the Journal and we managed to get a mention in the September edition of the RHS magazine, *The Garden*. The print run was for 550 copies and by Christmas we were at 342.

Of the other booklets, *Geraniums*, *Ferns*, *Chrysanthemums* and *Peonies* have all continued to sell well during this financial year and we had to have additional copies of *Peonies* printed. No new booklets have yet been commissioned but we will need to consider this in the coming months.

Cornucopia

Cornucopia has retained steady membership numbers, with a slight increase from 2019 to 977 subscribers. The price increase of 50p in Autumn 2020 means that the magazine will make a small profit for the next 5 years or so, providing postage costs remain much the same. There have been no problems with printing or distribution during 2020. Cornucopia was featured in the HPS Newsletter in November 2020, which editor Lynne Hackett hopes will result in increased subscription numbers.

Seed Distribution

2020 has been a very challenging year for the seed distribution scheme. The Covid-19 pandemic placed restrictions on most of the practices that underpin the scheme from donation to order dispatch.

Not surprisingly, fewer donations were received, 209 with 30 new donors, probably because of the uncertainty about whether or not the scheme would complete.

In practice, instead of the very social element of most of the work done by teams in village halls and group venues, alternatives meant individuals have been doing work on their own, in their own homes. More single boxes of seed were being couriered and posted to different volunteers before going on again to the next stage, consequently tracking was of major importance. In total thirty-five thousand packets of seed will be available to complete orders, distribute at events and donate to charities.

The successful completion of the scheme for this year is solely due to the commitment and enthusiasm of the teams of volunteers who have handled seed in Norfolk, Southern Counties, Lincolnshire and Shropshire.

From February onwards in 2020 over 40 charities received seeds with more applications being received when seed was no longer available.

Photo Library

Matthias Dejaegher took over, as the HPS photo librarian, from Brian Hackett in 2019.

In 2020, there was a steady stream of people requesting images for publications. The conclusion is that, despite all the restrictions, most publications went ahead as usual. The number of newly

submitted images for the library has been quite low this year. The photo competition on the other hand had about twice as many submissions as last year so was a great success.

Progress has been made this year in reviewing the copyright message and minimum requirements for when people submit new pictures for the library but this area is a legal minefield which makes it a slow process. Progress has also been made on making the process from new submissions to finally adding the pictures to the website much simpler. This process now also has security in mind by removing certain data that is often embedded in pictures.

Conservation

The national co-ordinator maintained contact with co-ordinators in HPS Local Groups through regular newsletters and e-mails. Growers reported a good year although many propagated fewer plants with restrictions due to the coronavirus affecting meetings and thus the opportunity to exchange plants. The annual Plant Exchange was cancelled although an online meeting provided the opportunity to discuss plants on the Scheme and other matters related to conservation. The new national co-ordinator is Sally Adams, who takes over the role from Jan Vaughan. Regular updates are provided to HPS members in the HPS Newsletter and the HPS website has information on all the plants and a regular news item for HPS members and the public.

Shows & Events

The Society started 2020 with a full programme of shows and events for the year, the cumulation of many hours of planning and work put in by members of its Groups. That they were inevitably cancelled because of the pandemic was hugely disappointing, not only because of so much effort going to waste, but because the HPS is a very sociable Society and its members love to meet up at shows and swop tips and plants with each other and the wider public. The big hole left by the absence of these opportunities underlined the community and social benefits that belonging to the Society brings. The Annual Lecture Day and AGM was rearranged from the spring to later in the year, but this, too, was unable to take place.

Website

2020 has been a challenging year when the HPS website proved its worth on account of the number of cancellations of events and meetings, made necessary due to Covid-19. On the positive side it has been a good demonstration of the advantages of digital over printed media to keep members and public with up-to-date information

Apart from cancellations we were able to carry messages on the banner about office closures and other changing situations. We look forward to a return to normality later in 2021.

Dropbox

All Trustees now have either 'full' or 'read only' access to the HPS Dropbox account, according to their preference. Some tidying of the folders has been carried out over the last year to reduce the amount of material in the shared Team folder and rationalise the headings. The most active areas are Finance and Seed Distribution.

An introductory email was developed earlier this year which explains the purpose and use of Dropbox by HPS and the options available to members. This seems to have been helpful to those who are new to Trustee or Postholder roles.

The retrospective addition of HPS documents is continuing, albeit slowly.

The Kenneth Black Bursary Scheme

The Bursary Scheme had a brisk start to 2020 with 20 applications being submitted before the first lockdown in March. Another six were received in the period August to December. Applications have switched from requesting financial help for travel to requesting support for online courses and computer software to support study from home.

Awards were made to 20 applicants totalling £8,960, well below the £22,000 budget.

Finance

Financial outcome 2020

The pandemic, not surprisingly, made a mockery of our carefully crafted 2020 budget and many areas of expenditure (for example, shows and bursaries) were significantly underspent. On a brighter note, the extensive use of Zoom meant that the travel costs associated with our normal round of Trustee, Postholder, Group Secretaries and Conservation meetings were dramatically reduced.

One area where the pandemic had an adverse impact on our costs was the 2020 seed distribution. To comply with lockdown and social distancing restrictions, additional costs for a village hall hire and some extra transport and courier costs were unavoidable.

The fall in subscription income, in 2020, by 5% (exactly in line with the fall in memberships) is a matter of concern. The impact of the pandemic on membership is unclear. Received wisdom suggests that people spent more time in their gardens during lockdown and enjoyed the physical and mental health benefits of so doing. The substantial increase in booklet sales would tend to support this and one might, therefore, have imagined an increase, rather than a decline, in membership. The lack of events, both Nationally and locally, may have been a contributing factor.

Like last year, we benefitted from a buoyant stock market. Our overall surplus was £34,155 of which £25,110 was due to the gain in the value of our investments. So, pandemic notwithstanding, the Society remains in sound financial shape and we look forward to spending our money on our charitable objects as soon as the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions allow.

Investment policy

The Society's approach to financial matters, and investments in particular, is one of extreme prudence given the current (and likely future) volatility of equity markets, the very low interest rates on deposit accounts and low returns on bonds. For this reason, the Society chooses to keep approximately half of its funds as cash (in current and deposit accounts). The remainder is in fixed interest bonds and equities. Looking ahead it is worth noting that two of the Society's historic bond providers, Cynergy Bank and Secure Trust Bank, no longer deal with charities.

Reserves policy

The cash flows of the Society are generally positive. Membership subscriptions are received at the beginning of the year and these, with the prior year Gift Aid payment already banked, cover the operating costs of the Society. Nonetheless, the Trustees have decided that it should set a level of reserves to cover unforeseeable expenditure such as might be incurred in the very unlikely event of the Society closing down or membership declining very rapidly, or an uninsured claim being made against the Society. A level of £50,000 has been set.

Future Plans

The Society's priorities for the year ahead are, subject to the constraints imposed by the pandemic, to:

- maintain membership numbers by continuing to offer members a high quality and valuefor-money range of products and services and to encourage and support local groups in their programme of shows and events for the benefit of local members;
- seek ways of encouraging potential applicants for bursaries and similar grants.

Trustees' Responsibilities

Under charity law the Trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each year which show a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities FRS102 SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity. The Trustees are also required to act in accordance with the Constitution of the Society and to take such steps as are reasonable to safeguard the assets of the Society and to prevent and to detect fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

Jan Vaughan, Chairman

Date: 18 May 2021

Statement of Financial Activities

				2020	2019
	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
		£	£	£	£
INCOME					
Income from generated funds:					
- Voluntary income	2	95,389	-	95,389	100,156
 Activities for generating funds 	3	4,870	-	4,870	7,900
Income from charitable activities	4	8,331	-	8,331	12,095
Investment income		4,264	2,500	6,764	4,949
TOTAL		112,854	2,500	115,354	125,100
EXPENDITURE					
Costs of generating voluntary income	5	47,981	_	47,981	45,965
Charitable activities	6	46,036	_	46,036	52,982
Governance costs	7	2,239	_	2,239	7,264
Other resources expended	8	787	_	787	256
Bursaries etc.	9	0	9,266	9,266	22,639
TOTAL		97,043	9,266	106,309	129,106
		27,61.0	2,200		,
Net Gain on investment		15,830	9,280	25,110	22,842
Net Income for the year		31,641	2,515	34,155	18,836
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		31,641	2,515	34,155	18,836
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Funds B/F at 1 January 2020		326,036	191,147	517,183	498,347
TOTAL FUNDS C/F at 31 December	•	2	400	FF4 222	F4= 400
2020		357,677	193,662	551,338	517,183

Balance Sheet

			2020			2019	
	Note						
Fixed assets	11			348			464
Current assets							
Bank balances	12	274,029			243,921		
Investments at cost	13	284,773			299,663		
Debtors &							
prepayments	14	6,948			11,887		
Stock (booklets)		5,329			4,584	_	
			571,079			560,055	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year							
	15		(20,089)			(43,336)	-
Net current assets				550,990			516,719
Total assets less current liabilities 551,338 517,					517,183		

Financed by:	
General fund	16

Bursary fund

357,677	326,036
193,662	191,147
551.338	517.183

The accounts were approved by the Trustees on 18 May 2021.

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Jan Vaughan Chairman Stuart Senior Treasurer

The notes on pages 11 to 15 form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Accounts

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Basis of preparation:

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) FRS102.

There have been no changes to the funds held as a result of this change in accounting standards.

The accounts have been prepared on an accruals basis as they have been in previous years.

1.2 Incoming resources

Subscriptions are accounted for net of VAT and are accounted for in the year to which they relate.

Donations are accounted for gross when received.

Investment income is based on the interest receivable for the year.

Sundry sales are accounted for net of VAT and are recognised when they are invoiced.

Advertising income is accounted for net of VAT and is recognised when invoiced.

1.3 Resources expended

Costs are allocated between costs of generating funds and charitable expenditure according to the nature of the cost.

1.4 Fixed Assets and depreciation

Fixed assets for charity use are capitalised at cost, they are stated in the accounts at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is calculated to write off the cost of the fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on an individual basis.

Office equipment: 25% Reducing balance Computer equipment: 3 years straight line

1.5 Investments

Investments are included in the accounts at their market value.

1.6 Stock

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

		2020	2019
		£	£
		Unrestricted	Unrestricted
		Funds	Funds
2	Voluntary income		
	Subscriptions	83,436	88,098
	Donations	968	801
	Gift Aid	10,985	11,257
		95,389	100,156
3	Activities for generating funds		
	Advertising	598	4,356
	Booklets	4,272	3,544
		4,870	7,900
4	Incoming resources from charitable activities		
	Seed distribution	5,201	6,093
	Cornucopia	3,078	3,044
	Enamel badges	52	107
	AGM/ALD	0	2,851
		8,331	12,095
5	Costs of generating voluntary income		
	Administration services	19,969	20,481
	Legal & professional	3,004	3,790
	Office rent, heat & light	7,320	6,433
	Printing, postage & telephone	4,827	5,518
	Meetings	138	103
	Insurance	3,495	3,358
	Publicity	2,105	785
	Equipment rental/leasing	0	148
	Depreciation of equipment	116	155
	Bank charges	781	1,267
	New systems project	2,564	0
	Software & IT support	3,662	3,927
		47,981	45,965

The average number of employees during the year was 1.

There are no employees who received total employee benefits of more than £60,000.

		2020	2019
6	Charitable activities		
	Journal costs	18,333	20,141
	Newsletter costs	12,906	10,913
	Cornucopia costs	2,608	3,043
	Booklet costs	544	2,556
	Seed distribution expenses	7,113	5,272
	Historic seed expenses adjustment	2,675	133
	AGM/ALD expenses	665	3,096
	Conservation	50	1,895
	Group support	50	2,844
	Shows & Events	72	1,879
	Banners	108	228
	Website	912	982
		46,036	52,982
_			
7	Governance costs	4.464	6 400
	Trustees meetings	1,464	6,489
	Independent examination	775	775
		2,239	7,264
8	Other resources expended - unrestricted		
	Sundry expenses	787	256
		787	256
9	Other resources expended - designated		
	Bursaries awarded	8,960	22,318
	Photo competition prizes	306	321
		9,266	22,639

10 Trustees

None of the Trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration during the year but 12 of them were reimbursed a total of £1,205 for travelling expenses (2019 £5,465).

11 Tangible fixed assets

11	Taligible liked assets		_		
		Office	Computers		Total
		Equipment			
	Cost b/f	7,122	11,964		19,086
	Additions	0	0		0
	Cost c/f	7,122	11,964		19,086
	Cost c/1	7,122	11,504		19,000
	Depreciation b/f	6,658	11,964		18,622
	Charge for the year	116	0		116
	Depreciation c/f	6,774	11,964		18,738
	•				
	Net book value 31.12.20	348	0		348
	Net book value 31.12.19	464	0		464
13	Investments				
				2020	2019
	Cynergy Bank	3 yr 1.65% bo	nd matured	0	75,000
	Skipton Building Society	1 yr 0.55% bo	nd	69,978	68,233
	St James Place	Equities		85,347	70.194
	Secure Trust	5 yr 3.02% bo	nd matured	0	15,000
	CCLA COIF Charities Global Equity	Income Fund		129,448	48,394
				284,773	276,821
	Investment income during the year	ar was made up	of:		
	Interest (unrestricted, general)			4,264	
	Interest (unrestricted, designated)		2,500	
			_	6,764	
14	Debtors			2020	2019
	Prepayments and accrued income	9		5,940	11,052
	Other debtors			1,008	835
			-	6,948	11,887

15	Creditors	2020	2019
	VAT	(1,249)	874
	Trade creditors	(52)	3,119
	Other creditors	2,189	1,496
	Subscriptions & seed in advance	19,201	37,847
		20,089	43,336

16	Reserves	01.01.20 B/F	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Gains & Losses	31.12.20 C/F
	Fund Movements					
	Unrestricted general	326,036	112,854	97,043	15,830	357,677
	Unrestricted designated	191,147	2,500	9,266	9,280	193,662
		517,183	115,354	106,309	25,110	551,338

The unrestricted designated fund relates to the Society's Bursary and Project Support Fund. This fund arose as a generous legacy from the estate of Mr Kenneth Black who was a gardener with Enfield Council in North London.

The trustees decided that this fund should not be used for the administration of the Society but that it should be invested and the interest used to support special projects. There are two types of Bursary: one for college or university students and one for people in horticultural employment.

Funding may be awarded to projects of any sort which fit within the charitable objects of the Society and may be made to individuals or groups. More information is available on the Society's web site http://www.hardy-plant.org.uk/ and applications are made via the Bursary co-ordinator.

Reserves are represented by:	Unrestricted General	Unrestricted Designated	Total
Fixed assets	348	-	348
Current assets	377,418	193,662	571,079
Current liabilities	(20,089)	<u> </u>	(20,089)
	357,677	193,662	551,338

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Hardy Plant Society

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2020 which are set out on pages 9 to 15.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- 1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

James Howard FCCA ACA

Haines Watts Worcester Limited 6 Abbey Lane Court, Abbey Lane EVESHAM, WR11 4BY

Date: 20 May 2021