

Annual General Meeting of the Amisfield Preservation Trust

Wednesday 4th October 2023

7.00pm

Virtual Meeting on Zoom platform

Minutes

Attendees: Karin Sode, Chris Avery, Rosemary Greenhill, Chris Cormack, Ruth Alder, Steve Gowenlock, Erin Armstrong, Lesley Henry, Carolyn Fox, Caroline Bamford, Fiona O'May, Naomi Chandler,

Apologies: Jennifer Adams, Colin Campbell, Leslie Campbell

1. The minutes of the last AGM held on 28th September 2022

Accepted.

Proposed: Chris Cormack

Seconded: Ruth

2. Chair's Report

Achievements and Performance

Our objectives for the year, set out in our Annual Report to the year ended March 2022, were:

- Continued employment of a volunteer co-ordinator. The continuing employment of garden assistants subject to their specific funding arrangements.
- Continued development of the garden, including the development of the potager in the centre of the garden, planting up and creation of paths in the grass triangles, and improvement of the wildflower meadow.
- Improved signage and interpretation within the garden
- Continue working with local agencies – health, local government and national bodies, to encourage use of garden by individuals seeking opportunity for improving their health and wellbeing through volunteering in the garden
- Promoting use of the education building and garden by groups or individuals for workshops or educational demonstrations

During the year 22-23, we continued with a range of activities, following the reopening of the Garden after the pandemic lockdowns. Volunteers continue to express their appreciation for the time spent outside, and in a beautiful, tranquil environment, carrying out tasks in teams and feeling a great sense of achievement as a result of their work. We see people from different backgrounds and with varying abilities working side-by-side in the flower and

vegetable beds, the greenhouse, weeding, pruning and deadheading, and carrying out many other tasks.

The previous volunteer co-ordinator ended his employment in the garden in July 2022, and by the end of August, our current volunteer co-ordinator, Erin Armstrong, joined the team. Erin has been a fantastic addition to the team. She is a former school teacher who has taken various horticultural courses, and she brings a clear focus on education and engagement, providing a welcoming space for volunteers and visitors alike. In addition, we had a couple of garden assistants supporting in the garden at different times, both funded through East Lothian Works. The employment of a full time co-ordinator has a significant impact on the achievements within the garden.

The efforts of all the volunteers was noted as they have all contributed to the continued beauty of the garden and the various improvements during the year such as constructing the greenhouse, cold frames, wildlife pond, potager, signage, and implementing a “no dig” policy.

Overall, there has been focus on the environmental impact, health and wellbeing, education and training, and community enjoyment.

The Board have agreed a vision for the Garden which is included within the Annual Report. The objectives for 2023/24 are

- Funding
- Wellbeing
- Environmental
- Conservation of Historical Structures
- Education

(Photos in AGM presentation not included)
No questions were received.

5. Treasurer’s Report

Chris C summarised key points from the annual accounts. The Art Exhibition held in September 2022 had contributed to the £3k increase in unrestricted income. Unrestricted expenditure increased by £1.5k mainly due to the purchase of trees for a quadrant and materials for the new cold frames. Restricted funds had an excess of £4k mostly from the gap in salary from the previous volunteer co-ordinator leaving and Erin starting in the role. There was also an underspending on training which has now been resolved. The Board has designated £5k of funds to be prudently ring fenced towards the replacement of the ride on mower as and when required.

The good state of the finances was recognised as a great achievement by the Trust, and the accounts approved as follows:

Proposed: Steve
Seconded: Ruth

6. Directors due to retire:

Rosemary Greenhill, Chris Cormack, Chris Avery

7. Election of Directors

Rosemary Greenhill – existing director seeking re-election

Proposed: Chris C

Seconded: Ruth.

Chris Cormack – existing director seeking re-election

Proposed: Lesley

Seconded: Steve.

Chris Avery – existing director seeking re-election

Proposed: Chris C

Seconded: Rosemary

8. Any Other Business

Karin Sode has been the interim Chair since June and has unfortunately handed in her resignation due to a change in personal circumstances. Ruth thanked her on behalf of the Board and the volunteers for her help, effort, and pointing the Board in the right direction.

Naomi Chandler has experience in Marketing & Communication which are very useful skills as the Board would like to encourage more visitors and events. It was agreed that Naomi could attend our next Board meeting and may be co-opted in future.