



THE EUROPEAN BOXWOOD AND TOPIARY SOCIETY

MINUTES of the **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (UK)** The Royal Academy, London Saturday 7th May 2016

1. **Welcome**

Chairman, Mark Hopkins, welcomed everybody to the Royal Academy. There were 30 members in attendance, which was the required number for a quorum.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from David and Anna Joyce, Andrew Tolman, James Crebbin-Bailey, Simon and Belinda Leathes, Rosemary Alexander, Judith Miller, Susie Seville, Janet Fookes and Marian Boswall.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the nineteenth AGM were circulated at the meeting. They were proposed, seconded and approved by the members.

Proposed: Gill Marcus Seconded: Mary Hopkins All in favour.

4. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

5. **Chairman's Comments**

The Chairman, Mark Hopkins, commented that his 10-year stint in office had been 'enjoyable hard work' where he had striven to establish a family atmosphere in the Society. During his tenure, the structure of the organisation had changed significantly; each country now running an autonomous organisation under the EBTS 'umbrella'; the USA has formed its own small chapter; the Japanese Topiary Association had affiliated to EBTS. The Society is flourishing with the aid of volunteer members. There is a sound financial structure and a new events co-ordinator, Neil Cave, supported by his wife Di Cave. Our next and significantly pressing need was to attract young people, to enable the Society to move forward whilst retaining an active, friendly atmosphere.

6. **Election of UK Council**

The Chairman asked the meeting to re-elect the following Council members:

Officers of the Society

Chairman	Vacant
Treasurer	Stephen Fenny
Membership and Administrator	Lynda Hinton

Other Council members

Editor, Topiarius	Caroline Foley
Website Manager	Chris Poole
Advertising and Press Officer	Annette Balfour-Lynn
Other Council Members:	James Crebbin-Bailey, Bruce Ginsberg, Mark Hopkins Karen Jacques, Philip Stockitt

Graham Peiser had volunteered to rejoin the Council and his election was included in the en bloc vote.

Proposed: Elizabeth Selka Seconded: Helena Gerrish The Council was re-elected.

7. **Treasurer's Report**

Stephen Fenny began his report with an explanation of the three account titles shown on the Balance Sheet; Current No. 1 holds the money for the Topiary Training Module; Current No. 2 is used for day-to-day running e.g. events, housekeeping funds etc; Instant Access Account holds the reserve funds.

The accounts remain healthy despite showing a deficit for the year of £1,519 (explained below).

The Accumulated Fund is £23,800.

Income and Expenditure show a slight but not significant drop in subscriptions; a surplus of £2,400 for Events, an important source of income for the Society; a contribution raised by the Southside Concert which helped off-set the costs of the Topiary Training Module expenses of £3,100.

The deficit is due to EBTS EUROPE not having sufficient funds in the over-arching account to reimburse EBTS UK for the costs of the production and distribution of Topiarius No.19 (2015). The advertising fees were not collected by the end of the financial year 2015 and this was rectified in early 2016. There are now sufficient funds and the amount owing to EBTS UK will be paid imminently.

There were no questions.

The accounts had been approved by Council in March and submitted for Independent Examination. The Independent Examiner had duly approved the same and, therefore, the accounts were moved for acceptance by the meeting.

Proposed: Julian Treyer-Evans Seconded: Bruce Ginsberg All in favour.

The Chairman wished to thank the Independent Examiner, Simon Leathes, for his rigorous examination of the accounts of the Society, which gave confidence to both Council and the wider membership that funds were appropriately used.

He asked that Simon Leathes be appointed as the Independent Examiner for the 2016 accounts.

Proposed: Tom Bigge

Seconded: Rowena Ray

All in favour.

8. Membership Update

Lynda Hinton reported that the UK membership remains steady with a total of 231 persons in the Society.

One of our active members, Marion Bernstein, had died earlier this year and her positive presence at events will be missed.

- Paid up memberships 173 (165 in 2015; 183 in 2014)
- 7 of these are CORPORATE (5 in 2015; 4 in 2014)
- 58 are JOINT (48 in 2015; 51 in 2014)
- Current personnel in society = 231 (218 in 2015; 239 in 2014)
- 7 active resignations
- 11 non responders
- There have been 10 new memberships so far this year (2016) with 4 directly from the website

New members are always welcome and an extra copy of the new Topiarius is available for each attendee to use to entice new memberships.

9. EBTS Europe update

The Chairman gave a brief report stating that there are 800 members in total in the EBTS covering European countries, USA and Japan. Bill Seddon-Brown was standing down as European President and it was hoped that Veronique Goblet d'Alviella, a current Vice President of EBTS EUROPE, would assume this role.

10. Topiarius

Caroline Foley, Editor, gave a brief history of the magazine in this our 20th year. The first edition was produced in 1996 by Jenny Hendy who was then involved in Gardening Which; subsequently there were editions with Wendy Clemens and Bobby Meyer as editors; in 2004 Caroline Foley became Editor and in her time she has doubled the size of the magazine to 68 pages and made it fully bi-lingual. The magazine is produced in classic house style with Society news, historic articles and up-to-date scientific articles. The opinions are objective because of the wide readership. The ISSN gives the magazine gravitas and it is to be found in many important libraries.

There is great collaboration between Caroline, herself, Chris Monk, the designer and members of EBTS who provide articles freely and generously.

Mark Hopkins thanked Caroline Foley for her creativity and diligence. He thanked advertisers for their support.

11. Website

Chris Poole, the website manager, reported a change of internet provider (now 1&1) which gave him more flexibility. There had been two and a half thousand hits recently. The site is now fully mobile and tablet friendly. 23 items, some from past editions of Topiarius, had been added recently too. Prospective members could now join directly online and direct booking for the up-coming Bath event had been trialled. Next year EBTS UK would move to full online booking and possibly an online payment platform as well.

A privacy policy was in place. A newsletter reminder for events etc. was now in place and would shortly be implemented.

He continues to seek images of EBTS events accompanied by a few words, notification of articles appearing elsewhere, TV programmes etc. All are of interest to members.

The Chairman thanked Chris Poole for his massive efforts in moving us to this "new phase" of EBTS.

12. Events

Mark Hopkins thanked all members who had organised various garden visits. All visits had been successful so far in 2016. There were still five places for Bath Gardens in October. He specifically mentioned Bruce and Kaz Ginsberg's generous efforts in hosting the 20th Anniversary Celebration which was due to take place on October 1st; a huge undertaking.

Neil Cave gave a brief glimpse of events planned for 2017, including a two-day visit in East Anglia and an AGM at the newly refurbished Garden Museum, Lambeth. Various members offered suggestions for future events and venues. Finally, a huge debt of gratitude was due to Spencer Kahan for facilitating the use of the RA.

13. Topiary Training Module

Bruce Ginsberg reported that the Topiary Training Module steering group were struggling to find a way forward in marketing the module. Budget cuts had impacted on college funding and Jane Crebbin-Bailey, course facilitator, was finding it difficult to progress the uptake.

14. Comments and suggestions from the floor

Bruce Ginsberg paid tribute to Mark Hopkins, retiring Chairman; he noted his warmth, congeniality, dedication and hard work. There was consensus and applause from the meeting.

15. A.O.B. – no other matters were raised.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11:20.