

Annual General Meeting of the Lincolnshire Gardens Trust

Saturday November 18th 2023 at 2pm

Methodist Church, Broad Street, Spalding, PE11 1TB

A G E N D A

1. Apologies
Elizabeth Bowskill, Grace Ellis, Heather Slater, Ian George, Rosemary Edwardson, Ken & Lesley Hollamby, Liz Drake, Margaret Hatfield, Karen Schuldt, Jane Coleman, Danny Rollit, Jude White, Julian & Julia Fane, Mary Rose Johnstone & Michael Casterton, Maureen Geddis, Christine Metcalf and Beth Dawson

2. Minutes and Report from 2022AGM Steffie Shields
Approved and signed

3. Chairman's Report Steffie Shields
I begin by welcoming you all and thanking all the Trustees for their teamwork this year and Annetta Turner, the most pro-active President I know, who often hosts our committee meetings. Although our membership is down and numbers here today are somewhat disappointing, perhaps due to travel problems with this southerly location, I can report that we have been delighted to welcome some new members this year.

2023 started with a flourish of publicity as Lincolnshire Life published all the superb winning LGT Annual Competition photographs in their January issue. Then marvellous news: together with three other local charities, LGT were honoured to be awarded a tree by the Lord Lieutenant to celebrate our late Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Lord Lieutenant attended and helped with the planting of the silver birch at the Queen Elizabeth Park, Diamond Jubilee Grove on Wednesday 22nd February at 11am. We have the Platinum Jubilee 'Tree of Trees' pot here today as both a memory of Her Late Majesty and a spur to keep going and, as with Strictly Come Dancing, 'Keep planting'! Today it shows off the star raffle prize – a hardy semi-evergreen shrub Sophora 'Sun King' – appropriate in this new Carolean age! (NB The royal pot is not included in the raffle.)

So we remain positive, especially because this year's events have been successful and very well attended. Elizabeth once again organised some popular venues and scrumptious teas! Who can forget the 2003 highlights courtesy of some generous garden owners? Our first visit to Mere House in April – an afternoon in spring gardens in dazzling sunshine? Skellingthorpe Hall in May was reported in Lincolnshire Life magazine, Auburn Hall in June and Fydell House in September, also balmy, special days enjoyed by members and guests. Only a drenching downpour at Harlaxton Manor, but we were excited to hear about Evansville University's 20 million dollar plans for the walled gardens and a new Visitor Centre. Huge congratulations to Elizabeth for being a finalist in the national Gardens Trust 'Volunteer of the Year' Award. I am sure everyone agrees that she deserves every accolade –

she has even organised us all today even though she cannot be with us, as she is performing in a Grantham Choral Society Concert.

Once again, Heather Slater has produced two vibrant and informative newsletters this year, Spring and Autumn, to keep members up to date. I remain hopeful that, despite rising costs, our newsletter and, as you will read, our excellent 2024 programme, including a visit to the Bardney Manor Walled Garden being restored, will continue to attract interest and much-needed support. She cannot be with us today, but she urges everyone to take copies to give to friends in the hope that we can continue to grow our membership. We are trying to be creative to avoid increasing postage costs.

Planning has been as busy as ever. Lucienne Bennett responds to weekly applications from the Gardens Trust conservation officers in record time. Since our AGM last November, we have received approximately 55 applications in total to date. Thankfully, most require no comment. We objected successfully to a hair salon development close to Marston Hall Park (Grade II) and a Belvoir Castle application for a tourism site, siting lodges, static caravans, and tents, was withdrawn after the GT/LGT jointly submitted a Holding Objection. Concerns were expressed both about possible site visibility within the Grade II* park and because a Heritage Statement and Visual Impact Assessment were not included with the documentation. A complicated site Rauceby Hospital (Grade II) continues to cause LGT grave concern, as expressed in a strong objection in a joint GT/LGT response to the latest proposal for residential development, regarding the level of harm to the symmetry of the original William Goldring design. You might remember LGT's objections in 2022 to an Elysium eye-catcher in South Ormsby Park (Grade II) proposed on the hill above the Hall and concerns re alteration designs for the stables. A recent consultation between architects, project manager and LGT has resulted in more aesthetically pleasing solutions.

My thanks to Frazer Chapman for working on the Governance document. Approval from the Charity Commission still needs to be finalised. Trustees have been supporting the John Dawber Garden in Lincoln with a small LGT grant, £300, to help towards an exciting and heartening restoration, entirely by volunteers. News, only last Thursday, from Lyn Ritson, Chair of the Dawber Community Garden Trust: not only have they been busy planting spring bulbs but, thanks to LGT's Trustees' suggestion, she has applied to the National Gardens Trust for their new community grant scheme and has received a further £1000 towards the restoration of the box hedging in the rose garden, badly affected by blight. Frazer has also visited Grimsby to advise about creating a community garden project under the Creative Start umbrella and whether LGT would be able to support. We have also expressed interest in supporting Heritage Lincolnshire, who are working with South Holland District Council and local people, to create a heritage strategy for Spalding as part of Spalding Reconnected, a project celebrating and promoting the heritage of Spalding town centre and riverside, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. We would like them to investigate the possibility of bringing back a neglected area right beside Herring Lane car park, once part of the former

garden of Spalding's old Manor House, and made into a small community garden.

Former trustee Margaret Hatfield has represented LGT on the Friends of Lincoln Arboretum for over 20 years, but now needs to find a successor. Is there any LGT member in the Lincoln area who would volunteer a couple of hours every few months to attend the Friends of Lincoln Arboretum committee meeting? Grace Ellis has decided to step down from the LGT committee to focus more on her volunteering with the SLHA. Since coming to live in Lincoln, Grace has certainly helped to spread the word about the work of LGT and raised the profile. We have a small garden gift token by way of appreciation and thanks for invaluable energy and support to Trustees.

Thanks to advice from Emma Schofield, Tattershall Primary School were encouraged to apply for an LGT Small Grant for a 'Wellbeing Garden' in the grounds. Sadly this is the only application since lockdown. It is increasingly difficult to engage with schools about their grounds because they themselves are re-organising and changing focus since Covid. Emma too has decided after 23 years involvement with LGT that she too must step down. Where does time go? It has been suggested that as the best token of our gratitude for her outstanding work with schools, her huge contribution to the Small Grants Scheme and loyal support for the committee over many years, Emma should be given a Life Membership to LGT.

The time has come for me to step down as Chairman at the AGM. It has been a real privilege, but it is time for new leadership and fresh ideas. I am certainly past my sell by date ! But I am not going anywhere. I need extra time to concentrate more actively on getting the LGT gazetteer research published. Sue Barlow and Audrey Barclay have been incredible in helping with this mammoth task and have finished their work on North Kesteven. I have *almost* finished South Kesteven. We have made forays into quite a few sites in the other four Districts but need to make more headway. If you enjoy detective/ research work online do let me know. Thank you all for coming. Now let's get on with business so we can announce the winners of the LGT Photography Competition!

4. Treasurer's Report Frazer Chapman
The accounts having been presented to members prior to the meeting, Frazer Chapman summarised the details. The importance of recruiting more members was pointed out. Mentioned were the two grants given out.
5. Adoption of Accounts
Proposed by Lucienne Bennett
Seconded by Mike Shields Accepted by majority
6. Auditors
Auditors James & Co Accountants Ltd - agreed stay the same

7. Election of Chairman Frazer Chapman
Proposed by Steffie Shields
Seconded by Annetta Turner Accepted by majority
8. Election of Vice Chairman Steffie Shields
Proposed by Emma Schofield
Seconded by Anthony Collard Accepted by majority
9. Election of Committee by 3 year rotation: Elizabeth Bowskill
Proposed by Emma Schofield
Seconded by Steffie Shields Accepted by majority
10. Presentation of the LGT Photographic Competition prizes
Steffie Shields, Annetta Turner, Caroline Bingham
11. GUEST SPEAKER: Michael Gilbert (Spalding Gentlemen's Society):
The medieval Fenland landscape and how it evolved

Afternoon Tea