Minutes of the Twenty Ninth Annual General meeting of Sussex Gardens Trust

held at Field Place Manor, Worthing BN13 1NP on Sunday 13th April 2025

1. Apologies: Alan Starr, Annie Bevan Lean, Irene Eltringham Willson, John Williams, Katherine Meakin, Virginia and John Hinze.
2. Chairman's Report: After a very eventful year, Penny Vasey noted that membership currently stands at 217 but that it remains difficult to recruit to Council and specific posts. Following Jenny Howard's resignation from the role of Treasurer, Katherin Meakin has agreed to move from the role of Membership Secretary to become Treasurer – consequently, Council is now seeking to recruit to the recently vacated post of Membership Secretary.
   Since Penny has been attending joint meetings with other County Garden Trusts, it has become apparent that recruitment is a general problem and is leading to the merger of some Trusts, such as Avon and Gloucestershire, with others being at risk of folding.
   SGT's activities in 2024 had been very successful thanks to the work of Jennie Starr and the Events Group, the Communications Group supported by Sally Ingram, the Research Group, headed up by Virginia Hinze and Barbara Simms and Jim Stockwell's work on Conservation.
   However, there is concern at the recent removal of The Gardens Trust as a statutory consultee regarding planning matters and there is the possibility that SGT's comments may be adversely affected in the future by the lack of weight from The Gardens Trust.
3. Minutes of the 28th SGT AGM: These were received, accepted and unanimously agreed with no matters arising.
4. To receive and consider the Report of the Trustees (Council of Management) "Highlights of our activities in 2024" and the attached Reference and Administration details. These documents were considered and agreed unanimously to be a correct reflection of a very successful and enjoyable year.
5. To receive and consider the Independently Examined Accounts and Balance sheet for 2024: The accounts were received and unanimously adopted. Jenny Howard was thanked for providing interim cover for the Treasurer post despite standing down from Council.
6. To elect Sue Faulkner as Honorary Independent Examiner: elected unanimously.
7. To reelect to Council Julie O'Hara and Penny Vasey. Proposed by Jim Stockwell and seconded by Colin Chinnery – unanimously agreed.
   Virginia Hinze and Jim Stockwell are both standing down from Council after many years of service - for which sincere gratitude was expressed. Council is, however, delighted to confirm that Jim has agreed to continue his conservation work on behalf of the Trust and Virginia has agreed to continue to manage the Trust's Small Grants Scheme.
8. AOB; the Sussex Gardens Trust is entering its 30th year and Jackie Dorkings was thanked for making the celebration cake/s which were ceremonially cut by founder member, Sally Walker.