

Notes from Gibberd Garden AGM 5th July 2025 111.00 am

Present:

Chair:	Mike Danvers	Trustee
Secretary:	David Farningham	Trustee
Treasurer:	Tony Evans	Trustee
Lin Hilton		
Pat Mountsteven		Trustee
Matthew Dicken		

Moira Jones, Sarah Jenkins, Tony Evans, Lesley Perry, Douglas Holt, Judy Chan, Howard Chan, Pat Larkin, Christina Feldman, Janice Fenny, Derek Fenny, Maurice Austin, Sally Clark, David Wright, Paula Howells, Elizabeth Waugh, Jacky Martindale, Thomas Newens, Georgie Boyd, Anne Davis, Ann Flint, Linda Mays.

Apologies: Sarah Carthew, Mac and Jane Quinton, Mag Barret, Jean Wright, Annette, Ellen Pewsey

Mike Danvers, Chair, welcomed everyone to this meeting. The 30th AGM of the Gibberd Garden Trust.

Minutes of the last meeting - The minutes of the last meeting were discussed. No matters arose and they were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Mike Danvers - Chairman's report - see report. The Michael Portillo BBC2 visit to the garden was a highlight this year, he was hosted by Cherith who did a great job of representing the garden. It has generated a lot of interest. Ann Flint has stood down and Anne Davies taken over as membership secretary. Ann remains interested and we are very grateful for her hard work over the years. The beer festival was very successful and we were given generous donations by the sponsors. Cheese and wine left over will be on offer Wednesday. All are welcome.

The Jazz festival was not so successful this year. We need to find a replacement to manage this next year if it is to continue. Georgie Boyd later volunteered to do this.

The garden is very busy in July this year. There is a photoshoot from Harrods this week.

We were shocked to learn our very loyal archivist David Devine very unexpectedly died on Monday.

Mike thanked everyone involved in helping the garden in so many ways.

Matthew Dicken and Sarah Carthew have volunteered to become trustees. We are very grateful for this and look forward to their contribution.

Resignations to note include Cherith Lowry and Ann Flint but both are still very involved as volunteers. We are very grateful for their commitment and service and pleased they are keeping involved. We also lost Derek Hamilton this year who made a very dynamic contribution during his time at the garden.

Moira Jones – archivist

David Devine worked in the archive for 15 years and knew so much about Harlow and the archive. He worked at the museum too. Moira had known him for 50 years and was very sad at his loss. She reported she and Pauline Hockley are arranging a meeting to celebrate memories of people who know Frederick Gibberd 41 years ago.

Tony Evans - Treasurer report

Tony thanked David Wright for inspecting the accounts. He did a thorough job which is much appreciated. The garden had a deficit of 20k last year but 4k of this was depreciation leaving a cash position of -16k. We will have funds in reserve for the winter months. Donations increased this year thanks to the Essex community fund donation.

Events were down compared with the high of last year but similar to earlier years.

Grants show as reduced in the accounts, but this is because the Mulberry Trust grant for this year was paid early, so appeared in last years' figures.

The income over expenditure position has improved this year.

The Report was approved by the meeting.

Election of Officers Chair, Secretary and Treasurer

Tony Evans led the election of Chair. Douglas Holt and Moira Jones nominated and seconded Mike. Apart from one dissension, all approved without reservation. Georgie Boyd raised questions about communications and volunteer support. Georgie proposed Maurice Austin as an alternative however he stated he was not prepared to stand.

David Farningham was nominated as secretary by Moira Jones and seconded by Douglas Holt. All were in favour.

Tony Evans was nominated as treasurer by Moira Jones and seconded by Douglas Holt. All were in favour.

Nominations for the committee

David Wright, Moira and all existing members of the monthly meeting were happy to continue in their roles and received unanimous support with no dissents.

It was agreed that going forwards the monthly meeting should be the 1st Wednesday of every month.

Any Other Business

The Jazz evening was discussed and it was agreed we should try to continue with it as despite poor attendance; the event has been very successful in the past. It was thought lack of publicity may have been a factor. It was also suggested it was not clear who is in charge since Pepeng Pirie retired from the role. Georgie Boyd volunteered to take the lead next year.

Ann Flint mentioned lack of volunteers is a major problem. We really need more so that we always have sufficient dedicated people, especially to assist with organising events. Ann is happy to canvas for more volunteers. Various WhatsApp groups could be a useful tool. Paula Howells agreed and noted that Rota central has a lot of empty slots which we have difficulty filling. Jennie Lushington confirmed the same and suggested retiring teachers might be a source of volunteers. Patricia Mountstevens suggested advertising through U3A - Ann confirmed this was already in hand.

Derek Fenny mentioned that volunteering is generally a problem in Harlow. The volunteer sector needs to find better ways to advertise the roles that are needed.

Georgie Boyd suggested that Duke of Edinburgh award participants might be a good source of temporary volunteers, but they would need supervision and possibly transport.

Nicola Burrell has done a project at Writtle college and suggested that might also be a good source of volunteers.

Judy Chan wondered if poor attendance at Jazz evening might be in part because of ticket availability.

Moir Jones commented that researchers come from all over the world so despite what we may think the garden is well known but possibly not so much locally.

Lin informed the meeting that she was hoping to get a blue plaque for Frederick Gibberd so that people more fully appreciate the importance of the garden.

Nicola Burrell -sculptor

Mike introduced Nicola Burrell whose sculpture has just been moved to the garden from Burnt Mill School. Nicola lived in Harlow but has now moved to Colchester. Nicola talked to the meeting about her work:

I am very pleased that the sculpture has been displayed in the garden. I was lucky to be asked by Burnt Mill in 2011 to celebrate their 50th Birthday. I tried to develop a sculpture with a new town feel. I like techniques using concrete and steel. The shape of the swimming pool building gave me inspiration for some of the forms of the sculpture. The lovely displays by Sarah Bracey were also reflected in my thoughts for the design. I started working in 2001 in Brays Grove and got to know many of the staff. I also worked on various commissions around Harlow. The Town Hall features in a sculpture at Church Langley. The town has been a great inspiration for much of my work. My mother used to work at the University of Essex which is also housed in a brutalist building so I have been brought up with this. When much of Colchester was demolished Gibberd designed the central precinct, and some wonderful concrete panels were installed. My own sculpture is made

of concrete which has additives to create colour, increase frost resistance and encourage lichen growth. I am very grateful that the garden has taken the sculpture. I loves the garden and think it is a great location for the sculpture. The sculpture grows out of the ground. It is 14 years old and remains in very good condition.

Mike gave a vote of thanks to Nicola for her presentation and the sculpture. People were invited to go and see the sculpture in situ.

Date for next years AGM - Saturday July at