The Australasian Plant Society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
– Held at Lullingstone Castle on 8th March 2025

Committee Members Present:

Tom Hart Dyke - President
Gary Firth - Chairman
Judy Clark - Newsletter Editor
Jeremy Spon - Treasurer/Membership Secretary
Maria Firth - Events Coordinator
Jude Lawton - Conservation

Plus 10 other members.

1. Apologies for absence.
Apologies had been received from Janet Miller, Gill Groombridge, Paul Spracklin, Beth Smith, Liz Edwards, and Michael Sullivan.

2. Introductions.
Tom welcomed everyone, and Gary then asked them to briefly introduce themselves.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting.
These had been published in the May 2024 edition of Pentachondra, and were approved without corrections.

4. Matters Arising.
There were no matters arising not covered by agenda items.

5. Election of Officers.
All officers were willing to stand again (although Judy reiterated her request for help with Pentachondra) and there was unanimous agreement on their re-election.

6. Committee Reports.
Reports by all the officers had been circulated by email in advance of the meeting, and these reports are printed at the end of these minutes. Additional comments raised during the meeting are given below.

a) Treasurer's Report (Jeremy Spon)
Jeremy noted that, mainly due to plant sales, there was a surplus of around £2000 last year; membership has been maintained at around 212. The report and accounts were approved without amendment.

b) Newsletter Editor's Report (Judy Clark)
No additional comments.

c) Seed List Manager's Report (Janet Miller)
Gary suggested the drop in orders from the seed list might be due in part to it only being circulated by email. There were a few additions this year but the list was more or less the

same as last year so it might be a good idea to do a big seed order. There was discussion about possible alternative suppliers and the difficulties of importing seed from Australia. It was noted that there is not much feedback from members about seed viability, and more would be welcome.

d) Website Manager's Report (Ben Ram)
There was discussion about the need for another member to take on the running of the website. Currently it's necessary to go through Ben for any changes to the site, and he is finding it hard to carry out such changes in a timely manner. Gary will use his Chairman's Report in an attempt to find a volunteer to take over from Ben.

e) Social Media (Gill Groombridge)
No additional comments.

g) Events (Gary Firth)
The main activities last year had been attendance at plant fairs – Gary commented that more members both helping at and attending these would be appreciated. A number of garden visits and plant fair stands have been arranged for the coming year – full details would be sent out by email shortly. With 30 Plant Heritage collections in Sussex now Gary is very busy with his responsibilities as Collections Coordinator, and he would like someone else to take over the events across the country, especially as he and Maria are unable to go to events too far away.

h) Conservation (Jude Lawton)
The application for a dispersed National Collection of Tasmanian Endemics has been accepted by Plant Heritage. In the last Pentachondra members were asked if they had certain plants; responses had been limited, and we are considering including non-APS members of Plant Heritage in the scheme. The plants don't necessarily have to be growing in the ground, they could be in pots; due to availability problems some genera might have to be excluded. Judy will put an update in the next Pentachondra.

7. Venue and Timing of Future AGMs
There was some discussion about holding/sharing the AGM on Zoom in the future; there is a possibility that using the facilities at Hyde Hall would enable us to have a live meeting there and use Zoom at the same time.. As far as other venues were concerned, it was suggested that Cambridge could be a venue one year and Lullingstone the next; Tom commented that November is a good time for hosting the AGM at Lullingstone. It was suggested that sending more reminders about the AGM might boost attendance.

8. Any Other Business

<u>Horticultural student grants/bursaries</u>
Award of grants to horticultural students for research projects to promote work on Australasian plants has been discussed in the past and Gary read out his proposals which were agreed by the members present.

<u>Seed list</u>
At the last AGM it was agreed to increase the charge from £4 to £8. Jeremy said this has not happened yet because there has not been a major purchase or additions to the list; some of the seeds being sent out are quite old. Currently the seed list is sent out by email only; it would probably be a good idea to add reminders about the list in other news emails that are

sent out. Judy and Jeremy would look into updating the seed list on the website.

Hebe Society AGM
Steve Harding said it is the 40th anniversary of the Hebe Society and their AGM will be held at Edinburgh Botanic Garden on 2 August.
Ventnor Botanic Garden was recommended by Steve (and Jeremy) as a good place to see amazing plants.

Photography competition
Gary said that only six people had entered photographs (out of a membership of over 200). In future it might be better to do it online with a maximum of 3 photos per person, however there would need to be someone willing and able to put it on the website.

9. Conclusion

Thanks were given to Tom for arranging for the AGM to be held at Lullingstone and to Gary for all the work he is doing. Tom then conducted us on the traditional, highly entertaining tour of the World Garden.