



**Notice of the 2024 Annual General Meeting  
and Annual Report 2023-2023 of Avon Gardens Trust**

Notice is hereby given that an Annual General Meeting of Avon Gardens Trust will be held  
on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 2.30pm  
in the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution, Queen Square, Bath. BA1 2HN

**Agenda**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Chairs opening remarks
3. To approve the Minutes of the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 28th October 2023
4. Matters arising from those minutes
5. Presentation of accounts for 2023-2024
6. Re-Election of Trustees 2024-2025

Trustees 2023-2024 – Kay Ross, David Evans, Selena Gray, Gill Clarke, Anne Hills, June Shannon, Peter Shannon [June and Peter Shannon resigned in 2023]

To elect Colin Johnston as Treasurer and Trustee

To Elect Barbara Hardy as Editor and Trustee

To re-elect David Evans, Peter Hills and Kay Ross as Trustees

7. Any other Business
  - a. Position of Secretary.
  - b. Future events
  - c. Volunteers for Planning & Research

The meeting will be followed by a lecture at 3.00PM from **Dr. Laura Mayer** talking of '**Chinoiserie - Tea, Trade Routes and a Taste for the Exotic**' will commence following refreshments.

Resume-

Chinoiserie, an early European interest in the arts of the Far East, blossomed in Georgian Britain. It encompassed everything from furniture design and ceramics, to gardening and garden buildings. Soon, every landscape park in the country had a pagoda or tea-house; a Chinese bridge, barge or brightly painted 'umbrella' under which to take tea, that most fashionable of imported luxuries. This lecture examines the expanding trade routes of eighteenth-century Britain, as well as the craze for informal gardening 'without line or level', which had been gaining traction since William Temple's 1685 appraisal of East Asian garden asymmetry.

The AGM itself is free. Tickets for the lecture afterwards are £12.00 for members and £16.00 for Guests.

## Minutes of the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of Avon Gardens Trust

held on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at BRS LI, Bath.

The Chair, Kay Ross, opened the meeting by welcoming all members and their guests.

**1. To Approve Minutes** of the Annual General Meeting held on 29 October 2022.

Approval of the Minutes was proposed by Tim Mowl, seconded by C. Carr Briggs. The Minutes were duly Agreed and signed as a true record.

**2. Matters Arising:** There were no Matters Arising.

**3. Annual Reports for 2021-22:**

The Chair, Kay Ross, explained that as all Trust members had received the necessary paperwork, including the Trustees' Reports setting out their activities over the past year, by either email or post prior to the meeting, they would not be read out. These Reports are attached and form part of these Minutes.

**4. Presentation of Accounts**

The Treasurer, Selena Gray, presented the Accounts and reported the funds were in a healthy balance of £22,014. She stated grants totalling £3,079 were made in the year. The number of grants had increased and the Trust would continue its policy of encouraging smaller conservation, community and education grants.

Acceptance of the Accounts was proposed by Peter Hills, seconded by June Shannon and Agreed.

**5. Nominations and Election to Committee for 2022-2023**

The Committee for 2022-2023 were: Rosalind Delany, Gillian Clarke, Anne Hills, Peter Hills, Wendy Pollard, June Shannon, Peter Shannon and Wendy Tippet. Selena Gray joined the committee as Treasurer in the year.

Ros Delany, Wendy Tippet, Peter Hills and Wendy Pollard had resigned in the year.

Anne Hills offered herself for re-election and Selena Gray offered for election as Treasurer. Proposed by Kay Ross and seconded by Peter Hills they were duly elected.

The Trustees for 2023-24 are:

Gillian Clarke, Selena Gray, Anne Hills, Kay Ross, June Shannon, Peter Shannon.

**6. Change to Membership Fees**

The proposal to increase membership fees from £15 to £20 for single membership and from £20 to £30 for couples (in line with neighbouring Gardens Trusts) was proposed by Tim Mowl and seconded by Gillian Clarke and agreed.

**7. Any other Business**

The Chair asked for volunteers for the role of Secretary and Publicity (to present social media presence). There were no offers from the floor but we encourage members to think how they could help AGT in this work.

Signed .....

Date .....

Kay Ross. Chair

Agreed by the Trustees as a true record of proceedings

## REPORTS OF THE TRUSTEES 2023- 2024

### President's Report

I am now coming to the end of my second year as President and the Committee continues to thrive under the efficient chairing of Kay, who has shed some responsibility, but maintains her role as Newsletter editor. In this she is ably supported by Wendy Smale, but I find I must reiterate again that we try and find a member for this onerous task. As Kay has often mentioned, we need more volunteers, and I am delighted that Caro Carr Briggs was able to help with the grants programme this year. As for the editorship of the annual Journal, that has now been taken over formally by Barbara Hardy. She has appointed a new printer – Park Lane Press – and designer – Kick Design – both of Corsham, and the new revamped issue is now ready for distribution to members at the AGM. Barbara has agreed to join the Committee, as has David Evans, who is bringing his archaeology and planning expertise now that Anne Hills has had to step down from her planning role. Selena Gray, who has been such an asset to the Committee, is now leaving the area and we owe her a sincere debt of thanks and wish her well for the future. We are most fortunate in that Colin Johnston, former City Archivist in Bath, has offered to take over as Treasurer, and we welcome him to the Committee. The Trustees continue to do sterling work in all areas, and I am sure members are grateful, as am I, for their dedication.

I reported last year that Peter Hills was stepping back from the Events but, if anything, he is now more involved and has recently set up the new ticket purchasing system and continues to give invaluable help with general logistics. We arranged another fascinating series of lectures, which were generally well attended, and several garden visits.

Trish Gibson's biographical talk on Brenda Colvin at the 2023 AGM was a fascinating account of a little-known designer, but one who had a lasting influence on twentieth-century design; in January 2024, Dr Carole Fry delivered an absorbing talk on the dissemination of Palladianism in England and focused on the political influence on gardens in the first decades of the eighteenth century; Dr Helen Lawrence-Beaton gave a spirited talk in February on the Baroque architect Thomas Archer, who, she argued, had a significant career as a landscape designer; in March Dr Wendy Bishop introduced us to the Edwardian architect and garden designer, Harry Inigo Triggs, about whom we expect a monograph from Wendy soon; and in April Christopher Pound discussed the legacy of Bath's spa gardens. Our Chair, Kay Ross, will continue the Bath theme when she talks to us in 2025 on the city's lost gardens.

We are most grateful to Wendy Smale for opening her stunning garden at South Kelding, and we enjoyed an afternoon at Parsonage Farm in Publow. This year's garden highlight for me, and not because I was guiding, was our visit to Paul and Caroline Weiland's extraordinary eighteenth-century landscape at Belcombe Court, Bradford-on-Avon, contrived around a working cloth factory. Paul was on hand to convey his thoughts on the garden's restoration and to gently rib me! The tea on the terrace made a fitting end to a wonderful visit. This was followed by a tour of the garden featured in Robert Atkyns' 1712 history of Gloucestershire, illustrated by Jan Kip, at Bradley Court, near Wotton-under-Edge. Helen Gammack was a delightful guide to her house and garden, and we were privileged to take tea in the kitchen and to view Jonathan Myles-Lea's modern interpretation of the Kip engraving. The events calendar was rounded off with a visit to two private gardens in Wells – Stoberry Park and Milton Lodge. My thanks go to Kay and Pete Hills for organising such a varied range of visits. We are currently putting together next year's visits and welcome any suggestions from the membership.

As with my last 2023 report, I am delighted to say that the AGT goes from strength to strength, and I look forward to another successful year as we approach the AGM on 10 October. We will be welcoming back Dr Laura Mayer, who was such a popular speaker on Jane Austen and gardens at our 2022 AGM. This year she will be speaking with her customary wit about all aspects of eighteenth-century Chinoiserie, from garden buildings to drinking tea.

My *Unbuilt Bath – the city as it might have been* – was published in August 2023, and I have spent 2024 researching and writing a book on Regency Gardens, which will come out next summer. I envisage an AGT launch for it in an appropriate setting for pleasure and excess – the subtitle of the book – and perhaps we might all come in costume. I have binge watched *Bridgerton* so I should be well prepared. I am now working on a follow-up to my *Unbuilt Bath* book in Cambridge. While it concerns many unrealised architectural schemes for the colleges, there are also garden and landscape designs that were never planted, one by

Lutyens with a memorial pavilion at Trinity and another for an architectural garden at Newnham College to accord with Basil Champneys' domestic ranges. But perhaps the most extraordinary was a destructive plan, drawn up by Capability Brown in 1777, to demolish all the bridges over the Cam except one at St John's, which would have rebuilt, and the sweeping away of all the private fellows' gardens on the west side of the river to create an open, minimalist, idealised landscape focusing on the Gibbs Building at King's, which would have acted as a proto-country house. Needless to say, it did not find favour with the university authorities.

Prof. Tim Mowl, President

## CHAIRS REPORT

I am so very pleased to report that we have had another very successful year, with fascinating talks and well attended visits to some wonderful gardens. The Committee has been working hard for you and we have got several changes to tell you about. Despite managing to keep the Committee and Trustee numbers to the number required by our constitution, we do need more help. So the main theme for this AGM will be finding more volunteers!

We have been fantastically lucky in having Selena Gray as our Treasurer for the last few years and are very sad to be saying goodbye to her. She is off to Northumberland with her husband to be nearer her son and his family. I have no doubt our loss will be Northumberland Gardens Trust's gain in the near future. When Alan Kempton, our previous long standing Treasurer, stepped down, having graciously stayed on after I became Chair in order to maintain our accounts, we were thrilled that Selena agreed to become take his place. We are eternally grateful for her stewardship, as well as her co-handling of the grants for schools and communities. Her legacy remains in the wonderful banners that she initiated and which her sister Melissa designed. I shall personally miss her friendship, having also had the pleasure in co-founding the Friends of William Champion's Garden in Warmley with her, where she also carried out the role of Treasurer, as well as advisor on heritage planting and fellow digger and weeder at working parties whilst applying for a number of very successful grant applications and initiating a terrific website – and more beautiful banners. We wish her and Guy the very best in their new home – and garden!

The good news is that we have been extraordinarily lucky finding a new Treasurer so quickly! Another hard working Friend of William Champion's Garden and long standing member of AGT is also making his debut as our new Treasurer. Colin Johnston will be well known to the many of us who have in the past had the pleasure of carrying out research in the Bath archives. His wealth of knowledge will be a huge asset to the Trust and I, along with the rest of the Committee, are truly delighted to welcome him as both a Committee member and Trustee.

I am also delighted to welcome Barbara Hardy as our new editor and fellow Trustee. I think you will agree when you read your latest copy of the Journal that she has done a wonderful job, ably assisted by our President Tim Mowl. Last, but definitely not least, we are delighted to have the experience of David Evans as researcher, updating our Parks and Gardens records and adding them the Know Your Place website, as well as stepping up to deal with the planning applications for all four of our Local Authorities alongside Frances Russell, to whom we are equally grateful. They are doing a terrific job with a swathe of applications for the Planning & Conservation sub-committee, headed up until recently by Anne Hills, who has done the most wonderful job for several years before stepping down to concentrate on her MA.

Despite all this, we do still desperately need more volunteers. Many of us are doubling, and tripling up on roles, not least the admirable Pete Hills who is the glue that keeps us together. He maintains the website, setting up all our new online forms, is our membership secretary and organises many of the talks and garden visits. He keeps us all in touch, and without him, this AGM would definitely not have been so well organised.

We desperately need a Secretary – someone to help organise us and take some of the load off Pete. We also very much need a Marketing and Publicity person to promote the Trust and really get us far better known across Bath, Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North and East Somerset. We would love to get out there more next year - have stalls at garden events, give talks to garden groups and be far more involved in promoting all our wonderful Avon historic gardens and landscapes.

We also really need members with local knowledge for responding to planning applications – for example someone who is familiar with Bath, Bristol, North Somerset or North-East Somerset. The applications are spread across the LA's so it should be doable for one person to look at each area's applications, with back up from our sub-committee.

Another of our remits is to offer grants to more Primary and SEN schools, and Community gardens, and in order to be able to fulfil this we really do need some more volunteers to help visit the gardens, assess applications and promote our grants scheme to a wider audience. Some of our schools have a high level of children who have free school meals and they need all the help they can get with creating garden spaces for their children to enjoy. We were ably helped with the grants programme this year by member Caro Carr Briggs and would be delighted if other members would like to take on the role. Perhaps you have a child or grandchild at a school that would benefit from help with their existing garden or in creating one.

Finally, we need members to get more involved in researching their local gardens and landscapes, letting us know about them, helping update our Gazetteer. We would love to hold more workshops like the very successful one we ran with Wiltshire, Somerset and Gloucestershire Gardens Trusts. Sadly, whilst on this occasion AGT Committee members outnumbered volunteer members from Avon, I'm sure there are many of you who have researched gardens and landscapes and we would love to tap into that knowledge. Without your help, our resources are far more restricted in carrying out research, being informed about planning applications, helping conserve landscapes at risk and helping those owners who need information and help in conserving or restoring their own gardens. If several members chose just one garden each to research and update we could achieve a great deal. Above all, it would be so good to be able to form an alliance with other Gardens Trusts and have more joint events. If you have any ideas please let us know.

We were offered a wonderful opportunity last year, and again this year, to take part in some of Avon's NGS open garden days and have a stall promoting the Trust. Gill Clarke and I spent a wonderful day at Hanham Court but unfortunately we had to turn down three other gardens who asked us to participate because there simply weren't enough of us. We would very much like to have a stall at some of Avon's heritage and garden events, and with a few more volunteers this should be far more achievable. I personally really enjoy talking to enthusiastic members of the public and showing them some of the wonderful gardens and landscapes in our territory. One idea for next year is a summer party for members - we really want to start getting members together with Friends groups, garden owners etc. to chat and exchange ideas - and combine with a garden too.

You all have a questionnaire to fill in so that we can make sure we are ticking your boxes, fulfilling our remit and providing you the members with what you would like to see and hear and giving you the opportunity to say what you think we should be doing (or what we shouldn't!). We hope you enjoy our series of talks, starting with a very welcome return visit from Laura Mayer at this year's AGM, always a treat. We look forward to some wonderful garden visits next year and we always welcome new ideas for garden visits and new speakers, as well as articles and news for our newsletters. Your Journal is on its way to you and I do hope you enjoy this year's choice of fascinating articles as much as I have.

Kay Ross, Chair - [chair@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:chair@avongardenstrust.org.uk)

## **GRANTS SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT**

Grants Expenditure has decreased this last year in the main due to fewer applications from schools and communities. We have not had the capacity to 'go out' and develop contacts as we would like.

In the future, we hope to liaise with Friends Groups in the Avon area to develop awareness of Avon Gardens Trust and also be able to assist in funding of local community based projects.

As always, we would encourage members to make suggestions or become involved with the work of the Grants committee. We work with primary schools, SEND establishments, communities, parks and garden Friends Groups within the old Avon area.

Please contact us if you would like any information on how you can help.

## **MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT**

By the end of the membership year in July 2024, we had increased by a net one person. The bulk of the joiners both last year and this are based in the Bath part of Avon with our successful series of lectures in Bath, as well as some historic gardens visits arranged by our President Timothy Mowl being linked to much of the increase.

Following renewals in July 2024, the Trust's current membership is 92 people made up of:

- 17 Joint Members (2 adults at the same address so 34 people)
- 52 Single Members
- 5 Honorary Life Members
- 1 President

To compare, last year the position was 91 people made up of:

- 18 Joint Members (2 adults at the same address so 36 people)
- 50 Single Members
- 4 Honorary Life Members

The Trustees were pleased to appoint Wendy Pollard as an Honorary Member. Wendy is now less mobile and unable to participate in our activities, but over the years has been an extremely active Trustee

At renewal this year we lost 15 members for varying reasons.

As last year, the aging of our membership remains a cause of concern, we are not attracting younger members. This is noticeable in the numbers regularly attending garden visits and a lack of new faces showing interest in organising events and Trust management.

Peter Hills, Membership Secretary - [membership@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:membership@avongardenstrust.org.uk)

## **RESEARCH AND RECORDING REPORT**

The Avon on-line Directory now comprises all the information from the 1987 Gazetteer in its entirety. Additional information has come from various sources and has been added, for example on Sulis Manor and Claverton Manor (Banes), Battlefields (South Gloucestershire) and Abbots Pool (North Somerset). Additional sources include the Local Planning authorities and Historic England (for registered properties). There are always opportunities for further refinement of the Directory. We would like to make a complete review the 41 registered parks and gardens to make sure our information is up to date and accurate. Anyone interested in furthering the research on parks and gardens and the information that we hold, then please contact me or any Committee member.

The Trust now holds a comprehensive library. The catalogue can be viewed on the website and books are available for loan on application to Peter Hills at [events@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:events@avongardenstrust.org.uk)

We would also love to hear from if you have particular research project either on going or planned.

Gilian Clarke - [research@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:research@avongardenstrust.org.uk)

## **EVENTS REPORT**

The Lecture series held over the winter months of 2023-24 were a great success, and assisted in increasing membership of Bath and Avon people, as well as being brought to the notice of members of other local Bath organisations such as BRS LI, BPT.

The gardens visits since our last AGM were all a great success and well attended. Highlights were the historic gardens of Belcombe and Bradley Court, Tim Mowl led us on intriguing walks there!



Following the success of the lectures last season we have arranged a series of talks for Winter 2025 that I hope you will find of interest. We have also arranged a full diary of garden visits during 2025, that will soon be uploaded on the Events page of our website.

If you have any suggestions or comments for any visits or lectures, please let us know.

Peter Hills. [events@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:events@avongardenstrust.org.uk)

## PLANNING REPORT

Report by David Evans Trustee currently covering Planning

I joined the AGT committee on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024 with remit covering designation and co-ordination of Avon Parks with local Historic Environment Records and a side role advising on Planning Applications, however due to Anne Hills need to work on her studies I am now co-ordinating our planning advice sections, the two roles are linked as one advises the other. Help with dealing with planning applications.

### Data on Parks and Gardens (P&G)

I have not been able to co-ordinate this role as well as I hoped, however I am better informed as to how it may work in the future. One Success was to update the BANES database which had lost its mapping and some information and now is up and running again. The data for all LPAs in Avon is available on line, (KnowYourPlace) however the data does vary with Bristol having the most comprehensive coverage. There are problems with locally registered P&Gs, which may be difficult to solve

### Planning

A number of changes have been made in the way we receive and deal with planning application. It is now necessary to search a database provided by the Gardens Trust, again the data can be variable. I have initiated a pair of spread sheets on with I record applications to which we respond, on those on which we do not, but do inform the Gardens and the respond on our behalf. The latter group varies from replacement windows to appeals on which we have previously commented. An example of the latter group is Sulis Manor in BANES, a locally registered garden which we objected to, and is currently refused but there is an appeal. Fortunately, there have not been many serious threats. We have objected and advised Bristol Civic Society on an application adjacent to Queen Square (Locally Registered). The main problems with such application is the submission of inadequate heritage and cultural statements and the reluctance of Local Planning Authorities to gain the advice of Historic England (HE) who act as government agents for registered P&Gs. Unlike the case with listed buildings all grades of P&Gs must be referred to HE before planning permission can be granted. I have just objected to an application on a site adjacent to grade II\* Brislington House (in Bristol) on such grounds. Negotiations with South Gloucestershire council over planning matters concerning Old Church Farm, locally registered but on a C17 CE site illustrated by Kypp are ongoing.

Finally, a plea: while willing to continue giving planning I do not wish to remain as coordinator, and I need to remind members that more 'planners' are needed for the planning group.

**David Evans.** [planning@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:planning@avongardenstrust.org.uk)



**Avon Gardens Trust**  
**Annual Report and Financial Statements for the period**  
**1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024**

**Legal and Administrative Information**

**Status.** The Trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Registered Charity No. 900377

**Trustees.** During the 12 months to 30 June 2024, the Trustees were: Kay Ross (Chairman), Gillian Clarke, Anne Hills, Peter Hills, Selena Gray (Treasurer), June Shannon (to 30<sup>th</sup> Oct 2023), Peter Shannon (to 30<sup>th</sup> Oct 2023), David Evans (from 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024).

**Registered Office:** The CREATE Centre, Smeaton Road, Bristol, BS1 6XN

**Bankers:** There is a current account with Nat West opened in 2023. We also have an account with CAF Bank Ltd., 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ which will be closed in August 2024. Savings are held with the Nationwide Building Society, Kings Park Road, Moulton Park, Northampton, NN3 6NW.

**Report of the Trustees for the period 1 June 2023 to 30 June 2024**

**Objectives**

**1. Charitable Objectives**

The objects of the Charity are for the public benefit:

- to promote the education of the public on matters connected with the arts and sciences of parks, gardens and designed landscapes
- to preserve, enhance and re-create for the education and enjoyment of the public whatever parks, gardens and designed landscapes that may exist or have existed in and around Avon

**2. Public Benefit**

The Trustees, confirm that they have complied with the duty in Section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

**Activities**

Avon Gardens Trust has been actively involved in the protection and conservation of historic parks, gardens and designed landscapes in the Avon area. The Trust has made awards to community groups and schools. Research into all aspects of designed landscapes is encouraged by the Trust with all findings being published in its Journal.

The Trustees have actively sought to promote collaboration with owners, local authorities, educational organisations and Friends' groups.

Information about the activities of the Trust is included in our publications.

**Future Strategy**

The Trust intends to continue this range of activities, subject to satisfactory funding arrangements.

**Risk and Reserves Policy**

The Trustees are satisfied that the Trust is not exposed to significant financial risks, and that its reserves provide an adequate basis for meeting expenditure that may arise. They have agreed a budget plan that will release funding from the reserves to support the charitable objectives.

These accounts comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and the Charity Commission's SORP 2014 applicable to accounts prepared in accordance with the FRS102 SORP.

Approved by the Trustees on 24<sup>th</sup> Sept 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



	<b>2023/4</b>	<b>2022/3</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Subs	1035	1065
Donations	0	68
Gift Aid	248	0
Events	3346	4154
Grants	0	0
Interest	2	345
Other	0	0
Transfer	2500	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>7131</b>	<b>5632</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Grants	1,250	3,079
Events	3,845	2798
Donations	100	139
Expenses	49	0
AGM	139	0
Other	1,760	1351
Journal	776	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,920</b>	<b>7,367</b>
Net movement in funds	-788	-1,735
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>		
Total cash funds brought forward	22,014	23,749
<b>Total cash funds carried forward</b>	<b>21,225</b>	<b>22,014</b>

Funds consist of Nationwide Business Savings Account £16980 (included £660 interest received in 2023/4), CAF Account £3087 and Nat West £1158

Less grant applications were received last year, which possibly reflected pent up demand from the pandemic. Running costs include website, the Create Centre, and additional one of off costs of producing display banner for AGT.

The Trust has no liabilities. Stocks of publications are not included as assets since future sales are uncertain. These accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis. The Trustees received no remuneration from the Trust.

Signed on behalf of Trustees

Name

Date.