

**Annual General Meeting 23 January 2021**

**Teleconference**

**Present:**

**Board:** Malachy Dolan (Dolan’s Social Farm) David Drury, Gemma Hooper (Surrey Docks City Farm), Maria Hornsby (Rice Lane City Farm), Michelle Howarth (SF&G Trustee), Caroline Hutton (**Company Secretary**), John LeCorney (Friends of Firth Park Community Allotments), Sally Partridge (Community Farm), Paul Savident (William Hobbayne Community Gardens Association and **Chair**)

**Staff:** Chris Blythe (Director and Coplow Street Grow Site), Ian Egginton-Metters (Volunteer), Diane Godwin (Membership), Connor O’Kane (Derry Project Co-ordinator), Patricia Wallace (NI Manager),

**Voting Members:** Eugenie Aroutcheff (Grow 73), Bob Donald (One Seed Forward), Rosemary Farley (Gorfenna), Kate Gibbs (Swansea Community Farm), Jane Hooper (Grassroots Forest School), Liz Marley (Poppies Care Farm), Barbara Mills (Hoofprints Miniature Haven), Adam Ogilvie (Meanwood Valley Urban Farm), Sue Pearson (Heeley City Farm), Geoff Stevens (Pathways Care Farm), Bex Syrett (Fordhall Community Land Initiative), Rod Waterfield (Woodland Skills Centre),

**Non-voting Members:** Gregory Cohn (Seeds for Growth), Keily Elvin (Elm Tree Farm), Pamela Harling (Growing in Haringey), Bev McAlpine (Companion Gardening), Graham Marshall (A Greener Hawick), Michael Marston (Gibside Community Farm), Les Moore (Nightingale Community Garden), Angela & Paul Ogden (Belle Vue Strawberry Gardens)

**Apologies:** Sue Cartlidge (LACAS), Mark Fry (Board), Gill Milburn (Martineau Gardens), Doug Milne (Milton Community Garden), Amanda Rutkowski (The Katherine Buchan Meadow Trust), Sarah Urwin (Youngs Farm)

**Minutes** of the 24 January 2020 AGM: agreed by email

**Chairs’ report:**

Paul welcomed and thanked all for attending.  He said the turnout was very good and reflected how the past year's events had brought easier access to online events such as this AGM.  There had been a continuing increase in members over the past year and also an increase in voting members.

The Board met more regularly than usual in the past year by choice and necessity with ever changing guidelines and rules across the four countries.  Diversity, youth engagement and countries/regions are high on our list for the coming year, some of which will likely require constitutional change. Paul thanked all members, staff, board, funders, partners, associates and stakeholders for their continuing and growing engagement.  
Paul responded to two questions raised under Any Other Business and a verbal question:

* *"Does the charity have a long-term strategy to address the reliance on grants and subsidies, the accounts show a heavy reliance on this with a lot spent on wages. I was also under the impression after the merger with CFUK and a transition period, a review of senior management structure and director would take place. Can this be confirmed?"***Botton Village Social Farm**
* *"I believe SF&G aims to represent a diverse range of communities yet attracts only a limited range. E.g. I notice that BAME communities are not represented on the Board of Trustees. In the coming year it would be good to see research into why this happens and how to change it."***Highbury Orchard Community CIC**
* *Graham Marshall (***A Greener Hawick***) asked: With Scottish independence on the horizon are SF&G looking at appropriate governance and structure?*

**Responses:**

* The business plan is under major review as we are in our third year post-merger.  Structure and funding diversity are within this review.  Our Director is now on a permanent contract.
* Diversity on the board as well as across the organisation is in discussion, with the Board having had a diversity presentation the day prior.  Some wording had been changed on the Trustee application form to explicitly request applicants of a diverse background to apply.  Diversity within the organisation is a key agenda item for the coming year.
* SF&G commissioned advice from Charity legal specialists on the options a couple of years ago. The Board watches developments closely but has decided not to change structure for the time being. Devolution will remain an ongoing agenda item.  The Board is also looking at how each country could be represented by design rather than default, which would be preferable and would require constitutional change.

The members who raised the first two questions were not present at the meeting and Caroline Hutton agreed to respond to them both, as Company Secretary.

**Director’s Report:**

Chris Blythe presented a report on the **activities of the organisation** over the year.

**Election of Trustees**:

from the votes cast by members with voting rights the following four people were re-elected as Trustees from 1 April 2021:

**Sally Partridge, Maria Hornsby, Malachy Dolan, Paul Savident**

Thanks were expressed to the other people who put themselves forward. There remains one additional place for the Trustees to appoint, which will be decided at the April SF&G Board meeting.

**Trustees Report and Audited Accounts**: agreed by email.

**Auditors**: The Board recommended Burnside Chartered Accountants, 61 Queen Square, Bristol BS1 4JZ who were agreed by email.

The AGM was formally **closed**.



***Social Farms & Gardens*** *is the result of a merger between the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG) and Care Farming UK (CFUK)*

Head Office: The GreenHouse, Hereford Street, Bristol BS3 4NA

Tel: 0117 923 1800 e-mail: admin@farmgarden.org.uk

Patron: HRH The Prince of WalesPresident: Lord Curry of Kirkharle CBE

**www.farmgarden.org.uk**

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