

MINUTES OF THE 34TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD AT TREBAH GARDEN

ON

SATURDAY 11 OCTOBER 2025

1. PRESENT

Council of Management

Robert Dudley-Cooke (Chair), Charles Richardson, Harry Bradshaw,
Ray Townsend,

Claire Vickers, David Wood and Jonathan Cuncliffe new Trustees

Apologies

Tim Hubbard, Zoe Curnow, Mike Harvey, Peter Hodgson, Nina Khaira, Helen Fletcher,
Steve Philpott, Janet Anderson Kay, Caroline Carver, Sue Child, Bernard Little, Brenda Button,
Martin & Amanda Ayliff, Pamela Bettie, Carol & Mike Hurst, Vivien Stals, Janette Mellor, Jane
& Nigel Burnett, Carole Perkin, Charlotte Hammersley

In attendance

Jon Cummins CEO & Sam Hosking (Finance & HR Manager).
Tracy Campbell (Membership Secretary and minute -taker),
Joss Presdee (Events Manager)

Members Present

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2. MINUTES OF THE 33rd AGM HELD ON SATURDAY 12 OCTOBER 2024

All members had access to a copy of AGM Minutes 2024, it was moved that the Minutes be taken as read and approved.

Proposed by Ray Townsend, seconded by Gill Pipkin, approved.

3. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Sam Hosking, Finance & HR Manager read the minutes from a presentation of the audited accounts to the Council of Management on 19 July 2025. These were read on behalf of David Hastings from BK Plus Accountants (who was unable to attend) for the financial year ended 31st January 2025.

Approved by Ray Townsend & seconded by Charles Richardson

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As I mentioned at the outset, this is the 34th AGM of the TREBAH GARDEN TRUST.

For those of us who were young enough to be involved all those years ago, at the outset, it is difficult to assimilate that such a period of time has passed. Looking around Trebah however, demonstrates just what has been achieved in those intervening years.

It is a no secret that the running of Trebah and the success it has achieved relates principally to achieving the delicate balance of providing sufficient funding on a year by year basis for the garden to continue, and the need to put the garden first and ensure our commercial activities do not impinge or adversely affect the enjoyment of such a beautiful garden or interfere with its preservation. We the trustees hope and the trust that you our membership therefore in consequence support and understand this driving force behind the trustees' actions which are always governed by those two considerations.

This afternoon we are considering the financial year that ended on the 31st of January 2025 (what is now an historic period) and all members have had an opportunity to look at the accounts for that year. In addition, you have just heard the auditors' report read by Sam Hosking. Against the backdrop of many other gardens having difficulty in sustaining their numbers, their foot falls, it is good to report that the number of visitors increased in the year from 100,500 the previous year to 111,000 for the year to 31st of January 2025 and our management accounts for the current year suggest that we will be able to continue the upward movement.

We do have as you would expect a strategic plan for going forward which we update and renew each year as well as a formidable list of projects and actions we would like to take, to sustain and improve Trebah's position.

The detailed report of the Council of Management forming part of the Trust accounts very clearly sets out "our objectives and priorities" for the current year and as such there is no need for me to list them in this report.

However, there are a number of points upon which I can elaborate. Firstly, the need to be ever my mindful and prepared for cyclical repairs and replacement of facilities wearing out and the need to bring in an up-to-date computer schemes for our trading activities.

The current year we have in addition, a new challenge, to absorb within our trading situation the increases arising from minimum wage and national insurance increases, amounting to some £130,000 in the current year

We have voiced previously the wish to increase the numbers on our Council of Management, and I have already introduced to you the three new prospective trustees who have stood down at the commencement of this meeting with the hope and expectation that they will formally be appointed later in these proceedings. We have a fourth new Trustee who will join us in January 2026.

I am so pleased to include in our plans and aspirations a project relating solely to the improvement of the garden and the need to look after our existing collections in these climatically changing and challenging times.

We the Trustees over many years have wished to increase the amenities we provide for education of the future generations I should say horticultural and environmental education. The difficulty always has been the cost to schools of transport to Trebah for the groups of young people which we would wish to encourage to come here. Problems must be overcome and we shall persevere.

Trebah is in a healthy position as to its income and cash resources. The reserve fund is growing in line with our stated objectives. Our surplus for the year we are considering today has increased to £104,000 from £65,000 in the previous year and this is notwithstanding a considerable adjustment we have made with regard to the accounting for membership

payments. Speaking of Trebah membership, I am pleased to confirm that the numbers remain strong and the figure of over 7,000 has been recorded during the year.

I believe this illustrates not only the attraction of our membership package and the wish to be associated with Trebah Garden, but also reflects the loyalty of our existing members, many of whom have held their membership for many years.

As I walk around the gardens sometimes in the company of the members of our Garden Committee, it is forcefully brought home to me if I did not already know, just what an important garden Trebah is. The exhibition we put on in the visitor centre showing the history of Trebah reinforces this growing importance over several centuries and of course plants are always being added. Nowadays, with the, sometimes, wanton destruction of enormous areas of the world, it is becoming ever more important that plants and trees are saved from extinction. We at Trebah have a very favourable climate and environment for nurturing a vast range of plants from many far distant parts and I suspect that future generations will look upon Gardens such as Trebah as living museums. This of course puts a heavy burden on Trebah and similar gardens to do everything they can to maintain this heritage and provide a caring environment for future acquisitions.

This should not be considered a burden but a real opportunity to do something of a great consequence, and enjoyment should be taken from the continuing experience. For example, recently the Garden Committee spent a splendid afternoon searching for and hopefully correctly identifying a number of mature rhododendrons hybrids emanating from our part of Cornwall which it was feared had been lost forever. A small contribution but a worthy one.

Trebah is experiencing a change in its weather patterns and is, of course, most of the world. In Trebah's case the records show a diminution in annual rainfall (often at crucial times) which is putting additional stress on some of our plants, for example, the bamboos in the Bamboozle. Clearly, we must remain vigilant and where possible take measures to modify or ameliorate such changes.

I have in my Report spent considerable time talking about the garden itself which of course is the reason we are all here. It is easy to talk on an occasion such as this on the commercial matters which enable the garden to continue, I hope I have your forbearance as speaking of the Garden 'balancing the books' so to speak.

It is often said that an organisation is as good as those carrying out the day today functions i.e. it's management and staff, and I believe that this principle particularly applies in an undertaking whose primary responsibility is to its public on a daily basis.

We are at Trebah are indeed fortunate, in having, through what we term as Trebah's values, created over the years a strong reputation for friendliness and welcome and for the courtesy given to all our visitors. I would go as far as to say that our visitors in the main have an expectation as they arrive at Trebah and it is the function of all at Trebah, to fulfil that expectation.

The tone and ideals are set by the management and passed down through all ranks thus ensuring that everyone does their part to provide a pleasant and hopefully a memorable visit. There is a strong competition out there from other great Gardens of Cornwall and the National Trust the gardens.

Working closely with our management team, particularly through the Management Committee which is made up of three trustees and Jon Cummins and Samantha Hosking the Finance & HR Manager, it is easy to see the enthusiasm, energy and commitment of the various members of staff in fulfilling their respective remits.

So a very grateful and sincere thank you, on behalf of the Council of Management goes to Jon and all his staff for ensuring Trebah continues as a very special place. In addition, the charitable trust that owns and runs Trebah is very fortunate to have a strong and committed Council of Management and Garden Committee members bringing to the table many skills and in addition giving freely of their time

This current year shows that we are continuing to move forward in increasing insecure times and I must thank our members (some here today) for their continued support and for the growing support as our numbers increase.

This concludes my report.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Robert, thank you for your report and your kind words.

Good afternoon. Thank you for taking the time to attend today's meeting.

I'm aware I stand between you and a talk on camellias, tea and war from Jeremy, so I will do my best to keep this brief.

2024/25 was a very good year for Trebah in many aspects and I am proud of what we have achieved as a team and as an organisation.

2025/26 has also been good to date. I will reference both last year and this year today.

In 2024/25 we saw growth in both our visitor numbers of around 11% over the prior year, and in our surplus, which after the adjustment for the FRS102 accounting standard for membership income was a healthy £104,000. We achieved this result in a challenging environment which many attractions have found difficult with rising costs. Some businesses, as I'm sure you're aware, have closed their doors permanently in the last 12 months. This financial year, after some helpful sunshine over summer, we predict our visitor numbers will reach c.113,000 and our surplus after depreciation c.£260,000 at year end. Our trading arm is on course to make a profit after management changes and rent, which is good news. Of course, everything could change - we are always at the mercy of the weather.

As Robert and David have said, our cash position continues to grow stronger. Our rolling budget predicts that our cash reserves will sit at approximately £1m at the end of this current financial year. Our reserves today are deposited across a number of financial institutions to both maximise return on investment and reduce risk in line with the FSCS £85,000 guarantee.

Trebah membership continues to grow and our members now make up just shy of 25% of visits to the garden this year to date. During the winter months your garden visits as members can represent up to 50% of total visits, which really illustrates the value of your support to our charity and in maintaining our ability to open year-round.

Thank you to everyone who submitted a response to our first members survey last month. We received over 600 responses and some very useful feedback. The team and the Trustees have yet to review the feedback, once we have done so, I'll share some more detail through the newsletter.

The completion of the Lodge project in 24/25 and creation of our first holiday let represented a significant investment for Trebah at c.£280,000. It not only has very high levels of occupancy through to December 2026, it also generated a high level of national publicity during its launch which benefitted the wider business. Guest feedback has been excellent. Our long-term let in Trebah house will soon become vacant, and this success gives us good insight into at least one of the options for how we use that space in future.

This year we don't have a large capital project but have been busy with many smaller projects. In the Garden we've invested in new composting facilities, new equipment, tree planting and we have completed the first tranche of work to re-label the plant collection. As Robert described earlier, the garden committee is in the process of planning works to the bamboozle. An application for listed building consent has been submitted to resurface Healey's Hill to improve accessibility and safety; we now have planning permission to make the amphitheatre shed a licensed bar to improve service at events, works to improve the look and feel of the entrance route past the court garden will be undertaken during winter; the visitor route signage within the garden will also be renewed in the coming months with a high-quality new scheme. A new guidebook is planned for launch in 2026.

The Story of Trebah History exhibition, which ran in this space from May to September this year was very well received and brought together work over recent years to collate archive material, stories and photographs to tell for the first time a balanced and accurate story of our gardens past. The exhibition will return, with minor updates during 2026 and 2027. Other relevant exhibitions such as local art continue, and our Christmas offer continue around those.

I remember in the AGM last year we had a question regarding provision, or rather the lack of, toilet facilities on the beach. I mentioned this in the newsletter, but I wanted to mention that today. In November 2024 we involved a wastewater consultancy to look at the possibility of providing permanent toilets on Polgwidden Cove. We were informed that a conventional drainage system with soakaway was not possible due to proximity to the sea, the watercourse in the garden and also due to the fact we don't own enough land of a suitable type nearby to provide that soakaway. Temporary toilets are of course possible but come with their own drawbacks. Subsequently we discovered that the drainage for our current operation was in less-than-optimal condition. Work continues to scope a potential solution for that.

Any repairs or replacements to large scale private drainage infrastructure are potentially very costly and need careful consideration. We are awaiting a reply from SWW as to whether there is a possibility in the long term of connecting Trebah to the main drainage network. Projects are rather like economics, a permanent status quo of unlimited wants and limited resources.

Any organisation's greatest asset is its people, and there have been some changes at Trebah over the last year.

In spring 2024, we rationalised the retail and nursery staffing structure, which led to one redundancy and the creation of two permanent full-time managerial roles.

Earlier this year we welcomed Samantha Hosking, initially as part-time Finance Manager, but Sam's remit has since expanded, and she is now our full time Finance and HR Manager. Sam has made a very positive impact not just with finance, but also with work to update our IT, till and HR systems.

In January this year we made the commitment to pay at least the real living wage foundation rate for anyone over 21 years of age who has worked at Trebah for more than a year. Maintaining and growing our reputation as a good employer is very important and I'm pleased we were able to make this investment in our team, despite the widely publicised increases in pay costs identified as a result of the Government's autumn 2024 budget statement.

Recruitment for the role of Operations Manager is currently underway. I hope the successful candidate can join the team early in the next year. As our trade and team have grown this additional post is needed to assume responsibility for managing much of the day-to-day operation and help provide a sustainable staffing structure. In turn it will free up time in the CEO role to work on strategic matters and plan & deliver more complex project work.

All our work is framed by our strategic plan, budgeting process and project planning. At the start of the year, the team, council and I agreed a Vision for Trebah, to pair with the values we developed in 2023/24. Our Vision is quite simple, to be known as one of the best gardens in the world.

Away from Trebah we continue active involvement in industry networks such as Great Gardens of Cornwall, Cornwall Association of Tourist Attractions and Visit Cornwall.

I mentioned in my newsletter piece this month about Visit Cornwall entering liquidation. This is a shame for our industry and our county, but as a Director of CATA I have a role to play in discussions alongside other stakeholders with the aim to ensure there is a body to represent and promote Cornwall in future.

I'm very pleased to say we have been shortlisted for the Cornwall Tourism Awards in the Large Visitor Attraction of the Year category. This is great recognition for our brilliant team of staff and volunteers.

At this point I would like to say a sincere thank you to the staff team for their dedication to and support of our Trust and for their collective efforts in helping us achieve what I've described and much more besides.

Thank you also to our sixty plus strong volunteer team for giving their time and knowledge in supporting Trebah's work throughout the year.

Thank you to the Council of Management, our Committee Members and to Robert as Chair for their time, support, and the expertise they provide across the year. I'm delighted that we've been able to welcome David, Claire and Jonathan as three new Trustees this year.

Finally thank you to you and the rest of Trebah's 7000+ members for your support – and to those of you who've given your afternoon to attend the AGM today.

6. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

It was recommended that BK Plus Accountants be re- appointed.

Proposed by Charles Richardson, seconded by David Ackroyd, approved.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

In accordance with the Articles of Association, the Re-election of officers by rotation Ray Townsend

Proposed by Gill Pipkin and seconded by Pat Kirkham.

The appointments of Claire Vickers, David Wood and Jonathan Cuncliffe as Trebah Trustees were proposed by Chris Hibbert and seconded by Gill Pipkin

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Comments/questions from members present.

Jackie Wibley raised a question regarding how Trebah captures garden visitors, particularly when members, like herself, visit only the café and not the garden.

Jon explained that a visitor counter is located above the main entrance doors, tracking people (excluding dogs) entering the building. Current data shows that approximately 28% more visitors entering the building and then do not proceed into the garden.

Another member enquired about the garden's inventory.

Robert confirmed that Trebah maintains a large volume of inventory with great detail of name and location.

A query was raised regarding rainwater collection.

Jon noted that while rainwater is not currently being collected as effectively as it could be, he is reviewing options and solutions. Improving drainage and rainwater collection is on the project list.

MEETING CLOSED