



Notice of the Annual General Meeting 2023

The 219th Annual General Meeting
of the Royal Horticultural Society
will be held at 11.00am on
Friday 14 July 2023
at RHS Garden Hyde Hall,
Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 8ET



For an alternative format of this Notice, or for any other matters
relating to the AGM, please contact The Secretary by calling the
AGM helpline on 020 7821 3068; by email to agm@rhs.org.uk;
or by mail to 80 Vincent Square, London, SW1P 2PE

Agenda

- 1. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**
- 2. TREASURER'S REPORT**
- 3. DIRECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT**
- 4. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023**

4a. MINUTES To approve the Minutes of the 218th Annual General Meeting held on 14 June 2022

4b. ANNUAL REPORT AND CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2022/23

To receive and consider the Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for 2022/23*

4c. ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND TREASURER

To declare elected unopposed Keith Weed as President and Matthew Lindsey-Clark as Treasurer for the next year.

4d. ELECTION OF ORDINARY MEMBERS TO COUNCIL

To declare elected unopposed the following three ordinary members to Council:-

- Claire Austin
- Sue Beesley
- Baroness Kate Lampard

Details of candidates are given from pages 9 to 11.

4e. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS To appoint Crowe LLP as the Society's Auditors for the next year.

4f. APPOINTMENT OF VICE PRESIDENTS To receive the names of the Vice Presidents of the Society for the next year.

4g. CLOSE OF MEETING

5. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS (30 MINUTES)

* Copies of the Minutes for last year's AGM and the Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for 2022/23 are available on the RHS website at <https://www.rhs.org.uk/about-the-rhs/what-we-do/annual-reports> or from The Secretary by calling the AGM Helpline on 020 7821 3068; by email at agm@rhs.org.uk; or by post at 80 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PE. Copies will also be available at the Meeting. A summary of the Financial Statements will also appear in the September 2023 edition of *The Garden*.

Please note that photographs may be taken of the Meeting for publication in *The Garden*, the Society's own journals and/or on the RHS website. These photographs may also be released to other media organisations.

Attending the Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the RHS will be held at RHS Garden Hyde Hall, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 8ET at 11.00am on Friday 14 July 2023. The doors to the AGM will open at 10.30am.

How to get to RHS Garden Hyde Hall

By road:

Hyde Hall is conveniently located just 20 minutes from the centre of Chelmsford and is signed from the A130 (southbound). Sat Nav: CM3 8RA.

From the M25, leave at junction 29 for A127 (signed Southend). From the A127 exit onto the A132 (signed Wickford/South Woodham Ferrers).

From the A12, leave at junction 17, then at the roundabout take the second exit for the A130 (signed Southend/Basildon).

From the A130, Rettendon Turnpike roundabout, follow the tourist attraction flower symbols towards South Woodham Ferrers on the A132. At the Shaw Farm roundabout turn into Willow Grove/Creephedge Lane.

Car parking is free.

By train: The closest stations are Chelmsford (12km/8 miles), Wickford (8km/5 miles) and South Woodham Ferrers (5km/3 miles); taxis and/or buses will connect you to Hyde Hall. For times and tickets see the [National Rail Enquiries](#) website.

There is a bus that runs from Chelmsford station to Hyde Hall – please see below.

By bus: From Chelmsford Bus Station, Bus 3 (Chelmsford to Southend) runs regularly to RHS Garden Hyde Hall.

It's easy to reach RHS Garden Hyde Hall by train, bus, bike and foot. Plan your car-free journey at [Good Journey](#).

Access to the AGM: The venue has full access and facilities for people with disabilities. In the event that you require assistance, please speak to any RHS member of staff or volunteer. For more information about accessibility at RHS Garden Hyde Hall, please see <https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/hyde-hall/Plan-your-visit/accessibility-at-hyde-hall>

Facilities for those with a hearing impairment: There will be an induction loop available during the AGM.

Admission to the AGM: You will need to show your RHS membership card to gain admission to the AGM.

If you are attending the AGM as the representative of an affiliated society or other organisation, you will be required to produce evidence that you are authorised to act on its behalf. Further guidance on acceptable forms of authority can be obtained from The Secretary of the RHS.

Security: You will be required to keep any bags or other personal belongings with you throughout the AGM. You may also be asked to agree to your personal items being searched.

Mobile Telephones: Please turn off mobile telephones before entering the AGM.

Refreshments: Will be available on arrival and water will be available throughout the meeting.

Medical Care: If you require medical attention, please contact any RHS member of staff who will ensure that you receive assistance.

AGM Helpline: 020 7821 3068. If you have any questions about the AGM, please call this Helpline between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday. Your normal telephone call charge will apply.

Hyde Hall location map:
<https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/pdf/hyde-hall/rhs-garden-hyde-hall-map.pdf>

RHS Garden Hyde Hall Tours

On the morning of the AGM, RHS Garden Hyde Hall will be open early exclusively for RHS members attending the AGM and will be running a number of exclusive pre-bookable events **(non-member guests are unable to attend the AGM or events):**

09:30 – 10:30 Garden Manager led Horticulture tours

Explore the grounds of RHS Garden Hyde Hall on an exclusive guided walk with Garden Managers Ian Bull and Tom Freeman, taking in the seasonal highlights of the garden. This is an outdoor event so please come prepared for the weather.

Please arrive 10 minutes before the session begins, meeting at the Welcome Building for a 9:30am start and finishing at the Hilltop Lodge for pre-AGM refreshments.

09:30 – 10:30 Aesop's Fables Sculpture tour and Storytelling

Join Sculptor Susan Bacon and storyteller Mike Dodsworth on a tour of the Aesop's Fables Sculptures in the Dry Garden. Learn how these fables have amused generations of adults and children for centuries.

Please arrive 10 minutes before the session begins, meeting at the Welcome Building for a 9.30am start and finishing at the Hilltop Lodge for pre-AGM refreshments.

9:45 – 10:30 Lawn Care with Nigel Downs

Under the guidance of Horticultural Specialist, Nigel Downs, RHS members will be given an insight into the making of the perfect lawn, with hints and tips on maintenance and after care. With a few tips and a little care, you too could have a majestic lawn at home.

Please meet on the Hilltop Lawn by the Farmhouse Pond at 9.45am. This session will finish with pre AGM refreshments at the Hilltop Lodge.

RHS Members attending the AGM are welcome to book a place on one of the above events. For the enjoyment of all, numbers will be limited. Please send an email to hydehall@rhs.org.uk as soon as possible to secure your place. Please include your name and membership number.

Agenda Item 1 President's Report

The President will make his statement.

Agenda Item 2 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer will make his statement.

Agenda Item 3 Director General's Report

The Director General will make her statement.

Agenda Item 4 Annual General Meeting

4a Minutes

The Chair (the President unless he is not present) will invite you to approve the Minutes as an accurate record of last year's AGM by a show of hands at the Meeting.

4b Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements 2022/23

The Annual Report is presented to the Meeting by the President and explains what the Society has achieved over the past year and its plans for 2023/24.

During discussion of this item, you are very welcome to provide feedback and ask questions. However, it is helpful if you let us know your questions in advance of the Meeting so that we can ensure we have the information available to give you a full answer. You can provide advance notice of your question to The Secretary by email to agm@rhs.org.uk or by calling the AGM Helpline on 020 7821 3068 or by writing to 80 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PE.

4c Election of President and Treasurer

PRESIDENT

The President of the Society is elected annually by the membership and provides leadership and direction to the Society's Council Members, enabling them to fulfil their responsibilities for the overall governance and strategic direction of the RHS. The President also acts as Chair of Council and the Horticulture Board and is a trustee of the Society.

The only candidate validly nominated for election as President this year was Keith Weed. As there were no other candidates, Keith Weed will be declared elected unopposed as President of the RHS.

Keith Weed



Proposed by: Tony Kirkham

Seconded by: Tazim Essani

Supported by: Wesley Kerr, Pamela Maynard, David Rae, Darren Share, Nicola Spence, Janet Walker.

I have had a lifelong love for gardening and enjoy spending as much time as I can in my own garden which includes a productive vegetable and fruit plot.

During my career, I have gained broad experience in leading businesses in the public and charitable sectors as Chair, CEO and Director. While my main focus is now the RHS, I am also on boards of other charities and can transfer best practice to the RHS.

I have experience in the key areas of developing and implementing strategy, supporting and guiding the CEO, fundraising and business delivery to fund charitable initiatives. Last year I led the search for a new Director General to help shape the next chapter of the RHS.

I am a RHS member and Fellow and live just 7 miles from RHS Wisley. I am a regular visitor to the gardens and shows which are such powerful examples of horticultural excellence. I am also interested in the outreach of the Society to communities, its education programme and the positive impact gardening has on people's physical and mental health. The RHS is an amazing society and has a strong reputation for its horticultural excellence. The role of science, sustainability and flora diversity continues to grow in importance in an increasingly challenged world.

I would be privileged to continue to serve as RHS President to build on its considerable heritage and bring my passion for gardening and business experience to help develop the future direction of the Royal Horticultural Society.

TREASURER

The Treasurer of the Society is elected annually by the membership and is responsible for advising the President and Council on the Society's financial and business affairs including those of the trading subsidiaries. The Treasurer also acts as Chair of the Society's Commercial Board and is a trustee of the Society.

The only candidate validly nominated for election as Treasurer this year was Matthew Lindsey-Clark. As there were no other candidates, Matthew will be declared elected unopposed as Treasurer of the Society.

Matthew Lindsey-Clark



Proposed by: Janet Walker
Seconded by: Andrew Sibbald
Supported by: Edward Banks, Swagata Ganguly, Dominic Geer, Mary Hopkins, Mark Porter, Corrinna Wakefield-Wyld.

I have been associated with the Society for over 25 years, having been a member since 1995, a Founder Fellow since 2011, on the Commercial Board since 2014, a member of Council since 2016 and Treasurer since 2019. Through my involvement over recent years, I have gained a thorough understanding of the Society's organisation, its financial affairs and its many activities, including the transformative strategic investment programme that is so important for its future development.

Professionally, I have been a corporate finance adviser for over 35 years, with extensive experience of helping a wide range of businesses to navigate significant strategic and organisational change. I have worked with the same team since the mid-90s, helping to build the business we founded from a handful of partners into one of the largest independent advisory firms in Europe.

I am a keen gardener and nature lover. I am passionate about the charitable aims and vision of the RHS and believe that the organisation has never been more relevant. By helping people to connect with plants, gardens and the natural world, the RHS can play a vital role in improving both the environment and people's well-being and quality of life. It would be a great privilege to serve a further term as Treasurer of the Society.

4d Election of ordinary members to Council

The RHS Council is responsible for the strategic direction of the Society and ensures that it acts in accordance with the objectives set out in the RHS Charter. Council comprises the President, Treasurer, 15 ordinary members and up to two co-opted members. Those who serve on Council are the trustees of the Society.

Every year, as part of the democratic running of the Society, at least three ordinary members of Council retire and the resulting vacancies are filled by election at the AGM.

At this year's AGM, Xa Tollemache will retire as an ordinary member of Council having completed two five-year terms. Sarah Eberle and Kate Lampard will retire as ordinary members of Council having completed their first terms. Kate is eligible for re-election and has chosen to stand for a second term.

Claire Austin and Sue Beesley have also been validly nominated for election. There are therefore three validly nominated candidates for three vacancies and all will be declared elected unopposed as members of Council at the AGM.

Candidates for election to Council

The following candidates are validly nominated for this year's election and will be declared elected unopposed:

Claire Austin



Sue Beesley



Baroness Kate Lampard



Claire Austin

Proposed by: Chris Young

Seconded by: Catherine Dawson

Supported by: Arit Anderson, David Foreman, Constance Craig Smith, John Grimshaw, Alistair Gunn, John Massey.

I have spent my entire working life and much of my leisure time with plants. This includes running a nursery and working in my garden. Running a nursery involves creativity and many skills such as numbers (counting plants), words (describing plants) and these days more importantly IT skills, all of which are necessary for being involved in a society such as the RHS.

I also strongly believe the connection between plants and people is essential to a healthy way of living. Everyone and anyone can enjoy gardening at any age. It doesn't matter whether the gardener lives in a flat or a mansion, there's a way to bring joy and interest into everyday life by growing plants and gardening.

Sue Beesley

Proposed by: James Alexander-Sinclair

Seconded by: Cathy Rollinson

Supported by: Janet Bashforth, Stephen Byrne, Christine Hollingworth, Clare Olver, Alison Pollock, Christine Purslow.

For the past 40 years, I have been a keen grower of plants of all kinds. In 2007, I took the opportunity to make horticulture my career by acquiring Bluebell Cottage Gardens, an RHS Partner Garden and specialist perennial

nursery in Cheshire. Since then the business has grown and thrived, winning Gold medals at RHS shows in the Floral Marquees and for a show garden at RHS Tatton in 2011.

In 2017, I was delighted to be appointed an Advisor to the new RHS Bridgewater garden. I also serve as Vice Chair of the Herbaceous Committee and am involved with several plant trials.

Before moving into horticulture, I was co-founder and director of two successful IT companies over a span of 27 years, where I built experience in business leadership, strategic thinking, financial management and customer service. I champion investment and positive change in organisations I am involved in, taking a long-term view wherever possible.

Two specific passions that I would like to champion at the RHS are:

- Widening access to adult horticultural education, regardless of location.
- Sustainability. I have been a peat-free grower since 2007 and continually seek ways to reduce our resource consumption by managing energy and water use and eliminating plastic waste.

I now have an excellent team who run Bluebell Cottage on a day-to-day basis. I would love to have the opportunity to share my business, horticulture and sustainability experience with the RHS leadership team.

Baroness Kate Lampard

Proposed by: Richard Oldfield

Seconded by: Alice Coptcoat

Supported by: Emma Dowley, Lord Falmouth, Cressida Inglewood, Lady Kingsdown, Lorna Parker, Lady Tollemache.

I took my first steps as a gardener in my early 20s, when I grew vegetables in the small back garden of a rented flat in central London. On getting married and moving to Kent, I had the opportunity, with my husband, to create a garden from scratch on chalk down land. Thirty-five years on, that garden, which we have opened under the NGS scheme, now consists of herbaceous borders, a woodland garden and walks planted with spring bulbs, and a walled vegetable garden. Gardening, gardens and horticulture continue to fascinate me and to occupy most of my leisure time. I am a regular entrant in our local horticultural society show.

Over the last decade and a half, I have been able to put my legal, charity, management and governance skills and experience to use as a member of the various RHS committees on which I have served including the Nominations, Appointments and Governance Committee (NAG), the Audit and Risk Committee and RHS Enterprises Limited. Over the past five years, I have served as a member of Council.

In my working life, I was for a number of years a practising barrister; I have held senior non-executive roles in the public sector and advise public sector

organisations on their governance arrangements. I also chair a national charity.

It would be an honour to be able to continue to contribute my legal, charity, management and governance experience to the work of the RHS Council.

Council Members continuing in office after the AGM

The following ordinary members of Council will continue in office after the AGM:

Prof Mick Crawley
Nicholas Dunn
Tazim Essani
Wesley Kerr
Tony Kirkham
Pamela Maynard
Lorna Parker
Dr David Rae
Darren Share
Prof Nicola Spence
Janet Walker
Ruth Willmott

4e Appointment of Auditors

The Society is required to arrange for its accounts to be audited by a firm of chartered accountants and the Bye-laws provide for an auditor to be appointed annually at the AGM.

Council recommends that Crowe LLP be re-appointed for the financial year 2023/24.

The Chair will invite you to vote on this recommendation by a show of hands at the Meeting.

4f Appointment of Vice Presidents

Each year, Council appoints a number of members of the RHS to serve as Vice Presidents of the Society. The office is honorary and appointment recognises people who are deeply familiar with the RHS, knowledgeable about its activities and passionate about horticulture. Vice Presidents are expected to promote and represent the RHS.

Council has re-appointed the following to the office of Vice President for 2023/24:

James Alexander-Sinclair
Rosie Atkins
Michael Balston
Baroness Floella Benjamin DBE DL
Christopher Brickell CBE, VMH
Raymond Evison OBE, VMH, F.I.Hort
Mark Fane
Jim Gardiner VMH
Rosy Hardy
The Rt Hon the Lord Heseltine CH, PC
Robert Hillier OBE, VMH
Roy Lancaster CBE, VMH, F.I.Hort
Jekka McVicar VMH
Sandy Muirhead
Dr. Henry Oakeley VMH
Dougal Philip
John Ravenscroft VMH
Prunella Scarlett
Vicomte Philippe de Spoelberch Tom Stuart-Smith
Alan Titchmarsh MBE, VMH, DL
Richard Webb VMH

In addition, Council has appointed Sarah Eberle, Mark Porter and Jon Wheatley to the office of Vice President for 2023/24.

4g Close of Meeting

The President will formally draw the AGM to a close.

Agenda Item 5 Members' Questions

There will be an allotted time of 30 minutes for members to ask questions. Questions should be submitted in advance to agm@rhs.org.uk or in writing to The Secretary, 80 Vincent Square, London, SW1P 2PE.

