

**Minutes of Friends of Geilston AGM and Public Meeting held Cardross Golf Club Wednesday 26th
March 2025**

1. Welcome and Housekeeping
2. Apologies Recorded in Appendix
3. Minutes of last meeting

Approval proposed – Janet Peatie

Seconded – John Evans

4. Matters arising

Q. Patrick Trust Plan to carry out hydro-survey, has this been carried out?

A. Ian McLelland (NTS). A report on Geilston waterways was carried out and following contact from Cala re proposed housing development nearby this was passed to a hydrographic engineer for comment. The response was that the proposed scheme would not affect the waterway. Ian made it clear that the NTS was not required to contribute to the decision-making process and that this report was for their own use only.

5. Chair's Annual Report – as circulated

Events – These are carried out to promote and bring people into the garden. Thanks, recorded to all who contributed to the organisation and delivery of all events and Alana Ingram for co-ordination.

Community Visits – this outreach project, supported by generous funding from the Miss Bell Trust, has facilitated access to the garden for several groups. Support has been given with Non-Profit Organisation Memberships of NTS, transport and co-ordinating visits. Several barriers to people accessing the garden have been identified and work will go on with the NTS in trying to address these. Thanks, recorded to Fiona Lockhart and her team for their work with this project.

Memories project – round-table event and individual interviews have been recorded providing a wealth of information from people who have been involved with Geilston and with Miss Hendry and Miss Bell. The information is yet to be collated into a form which can be made available to the public but will provide background information to support 'History walks round Geilston with Miss Hendry and Miss Bell' this season. Thanks, recorded to Chris Moore and Jacky Sherwood for their work on this project.

Calendar – Continues to be a popular component of FOG's work in promoting the garden locally and far afield. Members urged to submit photos throughout the year to avoid stress on Ken as the deadline approaches though, as ever, a really good number and range of photos were received this year. Thanks to Ken Readman and to the judge Dennis Hendry for their work on this project.

Sign board and Maps for visitors – a simplified and easy to follow map has been created and produced. Maps are already in use for visitors and a new sign board for the admissions area

is in production and will be fitted in the next week. Thanks, recorded to member Hamish Ingram for his work on this project

Shelter – there is ongoing collaboration with the NTS towards establishing a shelter for visitors within the garden.

The Garden! – the garden is always the star of the show. Sincere thanks to Alison Farrell, the gardening team and volunteers for their work in the garden. Thanks also to the Visitor Services staff who do such a good job of welcoming visitors and ensuring they enjoy their time in the garden.

Subscriptions – Membership stands at 461 and the strength of FOG relies on a healthy membership. Members reminded that subscriptions are due and can be paid tonight or online.

Volunteers – all our activities require a lot of work in planning and execution, and members are invited to contribute in any way they can to support FOG. This can be on a regular basis such as volunteering to serve on the committee or on an ad hoc basis supporting a particular activity – please contact Chris to discuss.

Q. Veronica Davie raised the issue of access to the garden which is very limited for wheelchair users due to the difficulty moving over the gravel paths and even some areas of tarmac which are uneven.

Martha Lyon also contributed that this is a problem for parents visiting with prams/pushchairs

A. Chris Moore responded that although FOG could raise this issue with the NTS it was an operational issue for them to address.

Q. Rosemary Wilson commented on the filming which had taken place in the garden last season had raised money and whether the money had gone into NTS or Geilston coffers.

A. Ian McLelland responded that the filming of 'The Buccaneers' had resulted in a payment of around £20,000. This was used to defray Geilston's operating deficit i.e. to the NTS coffers!

Approval of report

Proposed by Jacky Sherwood

Seconded by Patrick Trust

6. Treasurer's Report – as circulated

Andrew explained the deficit of £208 this year is largely due to the second tranche of payment for the mosaic project was paid this year but deposited in the previous year.

Also, there were no grant payments this year as none had been sought.

Q. Dennis Hendry – did the calendars make a loss?

A. As cash and payments come in, allocating them to the correct project can be problematic so not an exact science! On paper the calendars made a £1 profit but as the purpose of the project is to promote the garden rather than making a profit FOG is happy with this

Thanks, recorded to Mike Paterson for auditing accounts

Approval of report

Proposed by Allison Hillis

Seconded by Susan Mitchell

7. Election of committee

Thanks to retiring committee member Lesley Quirk who has been a valued member for 2yrs.

Remaining committee members, as per the constitution, all stand down but the following stand for re-election.

Wendy Alexander Dorothy Dolier Alana Ingram Fiona Lockhart Susan Mitchell Chris Moore
Ken Readman Jacky Sherwood Andrew Smith

En mass Proposed for re-election by Veronica Davies

Seconded by Janet Peattie

Election of new committee member Susan Schnadhorst

(in absentia)

Proposed by Kenny Lockhart

Seconded by Fiona Lockhart

8. NTS Update from Ian McLelland Regional Director South and West Region

Ian explained that he was pleased to be able to confirm that a sum of £2.5M was being ring-fenced for the development of Geilston House into a holiday let. It is anticipated that the two rooms in the bungalow area will be retained for event use and the courtyard will continue to be used as a bothy etc area by the garden staff. However much of the detail of this has yet to be ironed out and so he was unable to give accurate time scales etc. It is anticipated that the project would go out for tender this year with work starting towards the end of this year/next year and be completed within 2yrs.

He confirmed that the current management was committed to this project and felt a moral obligation to ensure the house was returned to good order and use.

Q. Sefton McGuire asked might the bungalow rooms be made available for business use?

A. That may be possible

Q. John Hanks asked might there be a problem getting the right contractors?

A. There will be specialist skills required for the project and there are skill shortages.

Q. Patrick Trust expressed that it was positive that Miss Hendry's intentions on bequeathing the property were being respected. The contents of the house were inspected by himself and Nigel Allan in 2015. He was pleased to see that Miss Hendry's documents had been appropriately archived. At that time £160,000 had already been spent on storage. Is this still the case and if so, will any of the contents return to the house once it is restored/converted?

There was at that time a picture thought to be a Constable, is that still in storage.

A. As far as he is aware the contents are still in storage and unlikely to be suitable for use in a holiday let. The disposal of the contents does not fall within his remit, so he is unable to comment further. The picture mentioned was assessed and thought not to be a Constable. However, any income from disposal will be rerouted to Geilston.

Comment from Rosemary Wilson that whilst accepting that much of the brown furniture would not be suitable for modern use she recalled some very nice pieces being in the house which might sit well in the new arrangement

A. Ian suggested liaising with FOG re this

Q. Ian Gregory asked, what happens next?

A. Brief and tender this year, work to start by next year.

Q. Alana Ingram – we were told last year budget had been allocated for work on rot in house this year will this still proceed?

A. Money has been spent on some rot treatment and maintenance. No further work on rot will be carried out.

A question was raised as to whether there will be accessible toilet facilities within the bungalow area?

A. The entire project will have to be compliant with disability access regulations

Q. Bob Murray asked if the £2.5M going to be enough?

A. the £2.5M is all new money and there will also be funding for outfitting the build from internal NTS funding

9. Thanks

Thanks, expressed to members for attending, the Golf Club for their support and hospitality.