

**Mediterranean Plants and Gardens
Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 03 July 2025 at 6pm
Via Zoom**

Draft Minutes

Management Committee present

Mike Stearns – Chairman
David Mason – Treasurer
Gill Robinson – Secretary

Heather Martin
John Fielding

Apologies

Sue Tymon
Briony Marriott
Charles and Jenny Smith
M G Jones
Alex Clarke

Moira Thomson
Marlene Maguire

Members attending AGM

Kirsty Angwin
Sue Bennison
Jenny Bovaird
David Bruce
Faith Butt
Cleo Cantone
Nicola Colley
Anne Curtis
Christine Daniels
Lorraine Dodd
Chris Earl
Connie Ettema
John Fielding
Jacki Foden & Roger
Foden

Merula Frankel
Rosie Freeland
John & Sandy Graham
Maddy Hughes
Jackie Hunt
Diana Hurter
David James
Ilona Kumar
Tijana Marinelic
Sarah Marsh
Heather & Dick Martin
Mark Martin & Camilla
Martin
David & Helen Mason
Sibylle Mattern

Andrew Mayo
Jacqueline Potter
Alan Robinson
Gill Robinson
Cathy Rollinson
Briar Silich
Mike Stearns & Liz
Stearns
Michael Turner &
Christine Turner
Ann Twinn
Jane Yeats
Trevor Yelverton

Welcome & Chairman's report – Mike Stearns

Mike welcomed everyone to our 6th AGM via Zoom
MPG business will be discussed first before we move onto the talk by Fergus
Garrett.

Mike advised the online voting as follows:

	Mins	Finance	Budget	Andrew	Jackie	John	Heather	David
For	55	53	53	55	54	56	57	56
Against	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Abstain	2	3	2	2	3	0	0	1
Not voted	4	5	6	4	4	5	4	4
TOTAL	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61

The five candidates standing for election or re-election to the Management Committee were duly elected.

A couple of members had raised a question on the voting form about whether we should be concerned that the balance sheet shows a reduction in reserves, and one member had queried the accounting for bursaries.

David Mason, our treasurer, addressed the financial points raised. Our reserves on the balance sheet show a slight decline from over £55,000 in 2023 to over £53,000 in 2024. Reserves are accumulated from events which ran at a surplus. Ideally events should be run at cost. As we are a non-profit making entity, we should expect the balance to go up and down, the Management Committee has determined that £50,000 is a reasonable reserve, which provides a buffer against emergencies and enables forward buying of currency for overseas events. With regard to bursaries: the layout of the accounts ring fences this as sometimes money is donated specifically for bursaries. As there was none this year, money for bursaries was made available from the general funds.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AGM 2025

This being my first MPG AGM I am definitely a newbie to this role. Please therefore excuse any glaring omissions. I have been a member of MPG almost from its inception having been introduced to the society by some friends in Provence.

My wife Liz and I have a house in Provence and are developing a new garden in Hertfordshire, designed by Anne Keenan, a member of our management committee. My own gardening abilities are somewhat limited, and most would say they are more of the observational type. The history of my becoming chair of this Society is that at the end of last year Heather Martin asked if I would be interested in joining the management

committee of Mediterranean Plants and Gardens. I rather felt this was more an instruction than a request. However, I've been very pleased to be a member of this committee and to add what little help I can. One of the problems that the committee had was to elect a chairman of the society now that Sue Tymon has retired. The original job plan was for there to be a three month rotation for the chair, the position being rotated through the management committee, until a new chair could be found. It did seem to us, however, that with such a short period of time in office no individual could really get into the job before it was time to move on. Because of this I volunteered to at least occupy that position for 12 months in the first instance, whilst another chair was sought. During this first six months of my year, I have been extremely impressed with the hard work done by the members of the various subsidiary committees. So, what have we done so far this year?

Zoom lectures

We have seen several fascinating Zoom lectures including Hamish Sinclair speaking on wild orchids in Crete (in February) and Jackie Hunt on Gardens and Flowers in Corfu (in March). These Zoom lectures follow on from the series of lectures started during Covid, and of course we are delighted to have persuaded Fergus Garrett to speak to us today.

UK One day events

During the last twelve months there have been a number of one day visits, including to Pashley Manor and Broughton Grange, and of course the popular early bird entrance to Chelsea Flower Show in May (sponsored by Jaques Amand). The next visit is to Parham in August.

Tours

The foreign trips this year, which have been all been fully subscribed, were to Elba, Albania, Gardens of Fife(Just completed), and next, to Western Cape RSA August. Projected 2026 trips are to Cyprus, Gargano S.Italy, Northwestern Greece and Gardens of S. Gloucester, and Northern Morocco

Bursaries

6 bursaries (totalling £2615) granted for the year ending 30.06.25

Facebook Page

We have 1224 followers, however our membership is 458 paid up members!

Web Site

We have started work on organising the Website so that members can post short messages with the possibility of including photographs. Examples of the use of this could be to request identification of a plant disease, or advice on the culture of a certain plant. This is a rather complex facility to organise and will be rolled out for a trial period.

Finally, I must thank all those on the Management Committee and the sub committees for their unstinting work and support for the society and myself as acting Chair. These include:

Gill Robinson, our secretary, David Mason our treasurer and web master, John Fielding on the management committee, our invaluable advisor and seeker out of speakers, Heather Martin one of our founders who is responsible for membership and tour operational matters, Andrew Mayo tours and Kevin Begley bursaries. I would also like to welcome Jackie Hunt as a newcomer to the management committee.

There are of course many others supporting us in the various sub committees and I hope I can be forgiven for not mentioning them all by name.

Introduction to our speaker – Fergus Garrett

He is described on Wikipedia as one of the most influential living garden designers and horticultural educators in Britain today. He applied to study agriculture at Wye College in Kent but swapped to study Horticulture instead. There, he studied under the tutelage of Tom Wright who had been a student of Christopher Lloyd in the 1950s. In 1988 he visited Great Dixter and struck up a lifelong friendship with Christopher Lloyd. At the age of 27 he joined the team at Great Dixter and worked closely with Christopher Lloyd until his death in 2006. After Lloyd's death he went on to become the Chief Executive of the Great Dixter Charitable Trust.

The AGM meeting closed after the presentation.