

**GROUNDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING minutes
Virtual meeting via online registration
Thursday 23 September 2021, at 12:00 noon**

ORDINARY BUSINESS: to transact the following ordinary business:

1. **Opening** – Alan Clarke called the meeting to be opened 12:01 and invited the GMA Independent Chairman David Carpenter to open the meeting. David welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending and introduced the AGM panel of Geoff Webb (CEO); Alan Clarke (Company Secretary); Ruth Dorans (Auditor).

David stated that the AGM was important for updating on GMA finances, actions, governance, policies, people, and purpose.

David Carpenter commented that the focus of the AGM is normally for the period that runs to the 31st March 2021 but due to unprecedented times the GMA will also be reviewing what is happening at this current time and also looking to the future. The storm has been weathered but times are still challenging.

2. **Apologies received** – There are 8 apologies Jagdish Rana, Richard Linley, Nick Lockhart, Peter Lee, Chris Harbott, Fred Hammond. David Teasdale, Rob Edwards.
3. **Voting details** – As this is a virtual meeting the ‘hand raising’ function is being used to record votes. Prior to the start of the meeting attendees had been given instruction on how to use this function. It was also confirmed that votes were verified and recorded with screen-shots taken. Showing those in favour, against and any abstentions, with a simple majority of votes passing any proposed resolution. Non-Voting Members, including Corporate Members, were also welcomed but reminded that they were unable to vote on resolutions.
4. **To approve the minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting** (Held virtually on Wednesday 25 November 2020, 12:00pm)

Favour: 7

Against: 2

Abstain: 1

Approved

There were no matters arising from these minutes.

5. Statement from the auditor, Ruth Dorans of Sherwoods,

Ruth advised that she is responsible for reporting to the GMA members and not to the Board (except in their capacity as individual members) or the staff.

This year, the audit had again been completed remotely and Ruth was grateful to Alan Clarke and Jo Cornford for their help and assistance in making all the information needed available. Remote audits are always challenging and would be far more so without the efficiency of the finance staff, who themselves had to manage their workloads this year under difficult circumstances.

The accounts have been prepared to the 31st March 2021 and in relation to that year, the Board and Senior Executives at the GMA have had to make some difficult and unwelcome decisions.

Back in February 2020, Alan asked Ruth, at Geoff's request, if she would prepare a review of the potential financial implications of a cancellation of SALTEX 2020, scheduled for November. Whilst such a review was a sensible, 'belt and braces' approach to a worst possible case scenario, at the time we did consider it to be an unlikely scenario and that the virus would be all over and done with well before November.

Of course, the virus was far from over and the decision to start considering the worst and making robust plans for it's happening, however unwelcome, was the right one.

In the 2021 year, the GMA, as a direct consequence of the SALTEX cancellation, did return a deficit but for several reasons, not least the advance planning completed, and the strategies employed to keep costs as low as possible, the deficit for the year was considerably less than it could have been.

Additional COVID support grant income also contributed to the results and whilst income from learning activities was reduced significantly, the GMA learning programme and associated revenue stream was able to continue with increasing numbers of online learning options replacing some of the face-to-face courses.

The investment portfolio continued to generate income and added value. Dividend income was reduced as a direct consequence of COVID as businesses globally continued to retain profits rather than distribute them, but profits generated on the disposal of selected holdings remained consistent with the previous year. On March 31st 2021, the market value of the portfolio had increased which is recognised in the results for the year.

Looking ahead to 2022, the GMA remains in a strong position, despite the deficit for the previous year. The Board will be able to tell you more about the response from the industry and exhibitors to the cancellation of SALTEX but from a financial perspective, the prepaid balances held on 31st March 2021 confirms that a large proportion of the 2020 bookings have been carried forwards by exhibitors, affirming their ongoing support.

The GMA have historically taken a prudent approach to financial management and as a result has considerable liquid assets. Although the events of 2021 and earlier have reduced these, Ruth is confident that following the planned return to the NEC the GMA will see a return to profitability in the short term.

Statement from, Alan Clarke, Director of Finance & Administration

SINCE LAST YEAR

At the 2020 AGM, following the cancellation of SALTEX, the GMA reported the potential for a significant deficit for the year to 31st March 2021.

The GMA also announced that they would be conducting an ‘in-depth’ review of the budget for the ongoing financial year as well as producing revised projections for the 3 years to March 2024. We were also at the start of a process where we had been encouraged to approach sport’s governing bodies for further funding, which was hoped would help us through that three-year period.

The past 12 months has seen significant progress in these and other areas.

As stated by Ruth, we have reported a net deficit for the twelve months to 31st March 2021. Whilst, as a not-for-profit organisation, a deficit is not ideal, this result was much better than originally anticipated although, it was helped by the increase in the value of the Investment Portfolio. However, despite Covid, the GMA still had a relatively strong Balance Sheet at the end of March 2021.

I mentioned last year that we had been encouraged to pursue further governing body grant support. Unfortunately, that did not lead to the level of financial contribution initially hoped for. However, through the Pitch Advisory Service Programme, we were able to secure further support, primarily to help through the year to March 2022 but also extending, on a lesser scale, to March 2024.

The Senior Management Team proceeded with their ‘in-depth’ review of the budget projections and cash flows for the three years to March 2024. Identifying significant savings against the initial projected deficits over that period.

Another positive over the past 12 months had been the successful negotiation to extend GaNTIP, now called the Pitch Advisory Service programme, for a further 3 years. The funding, provided by our partners in sports governing bodies, is invaluable to the development of grassroots sport and the improvement of pitches generally.

GOING FORWARDS

The GMA is undoubtedly now in a different financial place to the one enjoyed pre-Covid. Which means we now have focus on new areas outside of just income and expenditure reports, such as cash flows and balance sheets.

The GMA have been able to successfully tap into a low level of local authority financial support, provided to businesses affected by Covid measures.

The organisation also took the precaution of applying for a short term CBILS loan (government backed loan scheme). This was in case there was a second year without SALTEX, and the GMA might have needed some additional funding to help the organisation through. The current intention is to repay the loan before any interest kicks in.

At the start of this financial year, the GMA introduced a budget tracker tool that has helped identify any significant variances between our budgeted results and the likely actual results. Variances are then actively managed by the Senior Management Team to ensure overall budgets and cash flows remain on track.

Alan is pleased to report that, so far this year, the actual results, budget tracker and cash flow projections are all showing better results than originally anticipated across the 3 years.

Current results and projections are still heavily reliant on the continued success of SALTEX. The GMA have worked tirelessly this year to ensure that SALTEX can proceed in November and there have been many operational reviews, floor plan revisions and budget re-writes to ensure the event can be operated safely for all involved.

The fact that SALTEX sales figures are currently above target is excellent news and there are still over 5 weeks of selling to go before the opening day!

SUMMARY

Alan closed by saying that, 12 months ago the GMA was in a very difficult position. Facing a cancelled SALTEX and an overall financial downturn caused by Covid. At the time, The Senior Management Team, guided by the Board, were in the middle of creating a recovery plan and Alan expressed concerns at the AGM over what the future might hold and the uncertainty that came with that.

Since then, through the hard work and dedication of everyone at the GMA, led by Geoff Webb and the Senior Management Team, we have been able to stabilise the association's finances. A detailed strategy was created that would lead us out of the difficulties faced, as well as introducing additional management tools to ensure the organisation could stay on track to achieve that.

Whilst the GMA are not completely out of the woods yet, there is certainly some light through the canopy of trees. Projections for the next 3 years show a return to an overall surplus. The balance sheet, whilst weaker than a few years ago, should remain relatively strong and cash flow is projected to remain positive.

6. **RESOLUTION 1**

To formally approve the Statement of Accounts and the Balance Sheet of the Association for the year ending 31 March 2021.

Favour: 13 (including a proxy vote) Against:2 Abstain: 0
Approved.

7. **RESOLUTION 2**

Resolution 2 to formally approve the auditors for the ensuing year.

Favour: 13 (including a proxy vote) Against:1 Abstain: 0
Approved.

8. **Annual Report / Appointments and Re-Appointment GMA Board.**

David Carpenter reports on the Board Appointments and Re-Appointments
There are 2 Independent appointments: -

- Geoff Burgess is entering his final term of office to September 2024
- Neil Stublely is entering his second term to September 2024
- Carol Doran is reappointed as representative of the voluntary sector and is entering her second term to September 2024

- Adrian Kay from the Professional Sports sector is reappointed to his final term of office running to September 2024

9. CEO Annual Report

Geoff Webb provided a formal presentation of the Annual Report including the Grounds Management Association activities, achievements, and actions for the future.

Geoff wishes to congratulate his team of staff at the GMA on the hard work and dedication to the organisation.

Question from Lee Thorne – Lee congratulates Geoff Webb for the excellent presentation and the event. Lee wanted to know if the GMA monitor the uptake of volunteers within the sectors and their potential interest in going into paid employment.

Geoff advised that the GMA can see a transition of learning from volunteer to professional learning, it's not analysed in full at the moment but something where work is progressing.

Question from Will Newell - What are the views and concerns on the new E10 petrol for mowers and machines used throughout the country.

Geoff Webb advised that it is the government's decision to reduce CO2 emissions and the impact to the environment, and this is something the GMA are behind. The advice is to consult the manuals and manufacturers / dealerships. There is an article in the next edition of the magazine on this subject.

10. **RESOLUTION 3**

To formally approve the annual report that had been published on the GMA website and within the Grounds Management magazine.

Favour: 12 (including a proxy vote)

Against:1

Abstain:0

Approved.

11. **Any Other Business**

None

12. *David Carpenter closing remarks*

At the last meeting, the GMA talked about survival this year it is all about recovery. The GMA are not complacent, but have made amazing progress in difficult times. David thanked the BOD members and executive team for going the extra mile and the dedication to the organisation.

Thanks, were given to all the staff working in the background and thanks to all attendees of the meeting.

There being no further business the **Chair announced the AGM was closed.**
13:05pm

By Order of the Board of Directors

Geoff Webb, CEO, The Institute of Groundsmanship, 28 Stratford Office Village,
Walker Avenue, Wolverton Mill East, Milton Keynes, MK12 5TW