

**GROUNDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING minutes**  
held at: **Vaughan Parry Williams Pavilion, University of Nottingham**  
on: **Thursday 22nd September 2022 at 12:00 noon**

**ORDINARY BUSINESS:** to transact the following ordinary business:

1. **Opening** – Alan Clarke called the meeting to order at 12:00 and invited the GMA Independent Chairman David Carpenter to open the meeting.

David welcomed those present to the Grounds Management Association Annual General Meeting and thanked them for attending.

David introduced those joining him on the platform, Geoff Webb, Chief Executive Officer of the GMA, Alan Clarke, our Financial and Administration Director and Company Secretary. We should also have had Ruth Dorans our Auditor but, unfortunately, Ruth tested positive for Covid earlier this week so Alan will read a report that Ruth has submitted.

The AGM is an important event in our year, not just from a statutory standpoint, but also as an update on GMA governance, strategy, policies, finances, actions, people and purpose.

Those of you who attended last years AGM will recall that the GMA was in ‘recovery mode’ coming out of the Pandemic. This past year has been Strategy re-set moving to implementation. We have staged a very successful SALTEX after the 2020 cancellation and we are looking to take the Pitch Advisory Service and Education to new levels, plus add resources that can tackle key industry issues.

David confirmed that we are going to take a similar approach to this year’s AGM as last. We’ll report formally on the financial year to 31st March 2022, but we’ll also give you an update and information through to the current time and beyond. We’ve weathered the storm, stayed calm, a lot has been achieved, but things still remain challenging.

2. **Apologies received** – There have been 8 apologies received - Fred Hammond, Tom Jones, Geoff Burgess, Kimiyo Rickett, Carol Doran, David Roberts, Mark Coulson and Ruth Dorans.
3. **Voting details** – Alan Clarke confirmed that, in total, there were 29 attendees, of which 13 were entitled to vote during the meeting. The voting would be counted using voting cards, Green in favour, Red against and Orange to abstain. Alan confirmed that no proxy votes had been received prior to the meeting.

4. **To approve the minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting** (Held virtually on Thursday 23 September 2021 at 12:00 noon)

Favour: 13          Against: 0          Abstain: 0  
**Unanimously Approved**

There were no matters arising from these minutes.

5. **Statement from the auditor**, Ruth Dorans of Sherwoods, read out by Alan Clarke

Good afternoon everyone, I am sorry not to be with you today.

Before I mention the financial statements just a reminder that my report is made to you as GMA members. It is not addressed to the staff, or the directors (except in their capacity as members). The auditors role is one of independent examination of financial statements and the provision of an opinion on those statements to the organisation's members.

When I spoke to you last year, I reported, that in my view, the outlook for the GMA was positive. This was despite the enforced cancellation of SALTEX 2020, and the loss, for 12 months, of the GMA's major revenue source.

The financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022, demonstrate quite clearly that the optimism I displayed last year was fully justified.

Looking briefly at the results for the year: total revenue generated, from all sources, (including grant funding) exceeded that of 2019, the last year in which SALTEX was run, and pre-tax profits far surpassed the budgeted deficit for the year. This surplus for the year is stated after a material reduction in the book value of listed investments has been recognised in full.

The balance sheet at the year-end, page two of the published financial statements, probably presents the most resounding testament to the sound financial management of the GMA before, during and since COVID, something we all had to learn to live with.

Most importantly, liquid assets, (being cash and cash equivalents) have increased by over 60%, while in the same period, short term creditors, payable within 12 months, have increased by only 15%. For those who are unaware, it is worth mentioning at this point, that the GMA will always have a material short term creditor balance, due to bookings being taken in advance for SALTEX, membership payments received for the forthcoming year and grant income allocated to future accounting periods.

Current liabilities, at 31st March 2022, also included a government backed Business Recovery Loan, obtained last year, and applied for by the Directors on a 'just in case basis'. The loan was repaid in full in May 2022, before any repayments had become due and before any interest had been charged.

Tangible fixed assets (represented by property, fixtures and fittings and computer equipment) showed a small increase in value, after accounting for all additions, disposals and annual depreciation charges.

Investments held and managed by two authorised stockbroking firms, lost value in the year, and this is recorded in the profit and loss account and also, as required by the relevant financial reporting standards, on the balance sheet. This was due to a combination of market conditions, the ongoing BREXIT 'fall out' and some general economic uncertainty. The portfolios generally are well diversified and, over time, are fully expected to recover the value lost.

In total, balance sheet value, or the net worth of the GMA, increased in the year to March 2022 by over 19%, a result, which, in the current uncertain, post COVID, post BREXIT economy is highly commendable to say the least.

The audit report, which I will be happy to sign, once these financial statements have been approved is unqualified, as it has been for as long as I can recall. This means that, based on the testing and checking I completed, I am satisfied that the financial statements do provide a true and fair view of the results for the year ended 31st March 2022 and of the assets and liabilities of the Grounds Management Association at the same date.

Last year, I stressed that the reasons for my optimism for the GMA's future financial position were a combination of a prudent approach to budgeting, careful and well considered financial strategy planning and a long-established culture of aversion to taking risks with what are essentially, members funds. I am delighted to report that I was correct and, in my view, whatever 2023 and beyond has in store for the Grounds Management Association, financially the organisation is ready for it.

I would like to close by, as ever, offering my sincere thanks to the team at Head Office for their help and support with the audit.

Alan confirmed that Ruth had stated, she was happy to answer questions either today or by telephone or email later.

**Statement from,** Alan Clarke, Director of Finance & Administration

I would like to thank Ruth for her report, I know how disappointed she was not to be able to attend in person today.

The accounts to March 2022 were significantly better than those of the previous 12 months. The stark contrast in the results for these two years emphasises how much we have come to rely on the success of SALTEX for our financial stability. Having to cancel the event in 2020 was a serious blow to the GMA's finances, and to its future strategy and development.

Our year-end balance sheet was bolstered by the improved trading results which provides us with a strong platform on which to move forwards.

I reported last year that, as a precaution, we had applied for and received a government backed COVID loan. I am pleased to report that we did not need to use this loan and, as confirmed by Ruth, it has been repaid in full without incurring costs.

The past couple of years has seen us, and many other organisations, fighting for survival against the effects of the global pandemic. At last year's AGM I was reporting that, whilst we were not out of the woods, we appeared to be getting back on track.

Roll forwards 12 months and we now have additional issues to deal with both nationally and internationally. The invasion of Ukraine, and the economic fallout and associated energy crisis, is creating a very uncertain future for all businesses and countries across the world. It's impossible to predict how and when economies will start to improve again. But we do have to look forwards and plan as best we can.

At the end of last year, we revisited our 5-year strategy, which had originally been created in 2019, with a view to starting in April 2020. The strategy reset maps out the future direction and strategic goals for the GMA from April 2022 to March 2027.

As an organisation we have always been limited by financial constraints when it came to attempting to grow and develop the GMA. Time and again, since my arrival at the GMA, I have witnessed existing staff working above and beyond in order to support the GMA in its day-to-day activities. Ensuring that the GMA is seen and respected as a highly professional organisation, despite its financial limitations.

The five-year strategy provides the senior management team with the opportunity to invest in not just additional staff but, also in IT systems, as well as a much-improved communications strategy.

Such investments will not be able to pay returns immediately and the SMT, supported by the Board, has approved detailed income and expenditure projections together with associated cash flows, which show that we are likely to be in deficit for each of the three years from April 2022 to March 2025.

We have been able to fund these deficits as a result of the better than anticipated March 2022 result combined with the disposal of a small part, around 12%, of our investment portfolio.

As previously mentioned, there is concern over the short to medium term economic situation. It will undoubtedly impact on what we would like to do and could potentially restrict the GMA in how it progresses with its strategy plans. We do, however, have strong financial processes in place, including the budget tracker management tool that was introduced in 2021. This will help guide the SMT and Board towards making decisions around both strategy and finances.

The investment in this 5-year strategy is vital to the future of the GMA and how it can influence the industry and the working environment of the people employed within it. Turf maintenance has come a long way in recent years, but those grounds people employed within it very rarely receive the recognition and reward for the part they play. The GMA has an important role in improving working environments as well as helping improve the quality of the pitches that many millions of people use on a regular basis.

When we return, in 12 months' time, I hope we will be able to provide a positive update in this regard.

**6. RESOLUTION 1**

*To formally approve the Statement of Accounts and the Balance Sheet of the Association for the year ending 31 March 2022.*

In Favour: 13                      Against: 0                      Abstain: 0  
**Unanimously Approved**

**7. RESOLUTION 2**

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

In Favour: 13                      Against: 0                      Abstain: 0  
**Unanimously Approved**

**8. Update from the Chair and CEO** - to include details of any changes to the GMA Board of Directors

David Carpenter confirmed that Independent Directors: Andy Spetch, British Topsoil, and Dr Peter Grant, City Business School, have been re-appointed for a second term of office to 2025.

James Wright, University of Leeds, and Greg Smith, University of Nottingham have been re-elected to the Board as Education Sector representatives. For James it is his final term to 2025, for Greg it is his second term.

David Carpenter also confirmed that he had been re-elected by the Board as Independent Chair for a further three-year period, adding that he was excited by what we might achieve and he'll do his absolute best to continue to take us forward, but it would be his final Term of Office.

### **CEO Annual Report**

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

It highlighted a number of areas that the GMA is focussing on, such as industry challenges, research and awareness, workforce development, collaboration, pitch advisory service and the grounds management framework.

The presentation highlighted how important it was that we look to build the profile of the GMA and the grounds management sector in general.

It also confirmed that the GMA was creating a communications strategy to support its long-term success. Using its products and services to help achieve both its short- and long-term goals. Staffing would also be central to the GMA's future strategy and growth. Over the past 12 months we have added considerably to our overall staffing structure.

SALTEX would continue to be a key part of what the GMA has to offer to the industry with a brand new look in 2022. Geoff was saddened to report the loss of two SALTEX stalwarts, John McFarlane and Tony Horne. Both had dedicated many days over many years to the SALTEX event and would be sadly missed by all.

Geoff confirmed we would continue to engage on the issues that matter and would continue to lobby for and enhance the opportunities available to our professional, associate, and volunteer members.

9. **RESOLUTION 3**

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

In Favour: 13

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

**Unanimously Approved**

10. **Any Other Business**

None

11. **David Carpenter closing remarks**

Firstly, thanks to Greg Smith and his team, for hosting us here at the University of Nottingham. Their effort and contribution to the meeting has been greatly appreciated by the GMA.

Last year at the AGM we talked about survival and recovery. This year we are talking about Strategy re-set and implementation. It has been a real challenge, but we have made excellent progress in many areas.

When I took the Chair three years ago, I said I was not happy with the attitude that the NGB's took towards us and our contribution, thanks mainly to Geoff, Jason and the PAS Team that attitude has changed considerably since then.

I'd like to thank our Board Members for rising to the challenge, I'd also like to thank our Executive team for going the extra mile, you have been terrific, I've said to Geoff on several occasions that five years ago if you had described where we are now you would have been doing somersaults.

There being no further business the **Chair announced the AGM was closed.**  
**13:12pm**

***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