

PRESS RELEASE

Embargoed until 22 February 2021

Plants@work celebrates 20 years of success

Plants@work Ltd, formerly efig Ltd, is celebrating its 20th anniversary on 22 February.

The organisation was formed to offer one voice to speak for the interior landscaping industry as a whole and to promote the many benefits of plants in the workplace in particular.

*The Association's first Chairman, **Steve Atrill** then of **Rentokil/Ambius** now of **Flora-tec** explained, "Prompted by a media outcry about the fit-out costs of Portcullis House including the installation of 12 large Ficus trees in the atrium, a group of businesses in the interior landscape industry lead by Tony Sawyer of Clarks and Spears, now Living Green, came together to form the Association.*

"The cost of the trees at Portcullis House was considered astronomical and the trees were seen as purely decorative for the MP's new home. A case of government over-spending for their own. Several spoke out about the benefits the trees offered.

"This was the incentive that encouraged us to form an official body to speak out on behalf of the industry. Since then the organisation has gone on not only to fulfil its original plan but to cement an association to support the industry in many ways."

An on-going cause

Over the years plants@work has campaigned tirelessly to raise awareness of our need for plants both inside and outside and the many benefits that they bring to businesses and to the health of employers and employees. This has meant responding to government and the media when plants have not been recognised for their many qualities beyond pure aesthetics.

In recent years, the popularity of houseplants and the rise of interest in biophilia have made this a little easier.

Building a strong support for members

Over the 20 years, the association has developed a good basis for members too from training programmes, exhibitions and conferences, seminar programmes, prestigious annual Leaf Awards and much more.

Plants at Work Association Ltd

PO BOX 196, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 7PF, T: 0044 1794 521 744; info@plantsatwork.org.uk
Reg. Address: Linden, Downton Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP2 8HR Company Registered in England and Wales: 4114672

The current chair of **plants@work, Madeleine Evans of Indoor Garden Design** explains, "*Last year wasn't easy for our members but we kept them all informed of what was going on in the industry generally plus we had several Zoom social meetings as well as official meetings including our AGM.*

"Last year's Awards ceremony was also held virtually via Zoom; this was a great success with a bumper crop of strong entries.

"This year we hope that we will be able to meet up in person later in the year to celebrate our 20th Anniversary. However we won't let the pandemic stop our celebrations as we have several events planned for the year which will be held one way or another.

*"Some of our plans include: the publication of '**Plants for Wellbeing 2**', a conference for our members, a series of interviews with past Chairs about interior landscaping industry issues, plus a series of monthly special weeks on social media promoting different aspects of our industry which have already been launched plus much more.*

"Last year our industry faced unprecedented challenges and I am looking forward to taking the Association into our next 20 years where plants are going to become a necessary and permanent fixture of each workspace, hospitality venue, home and public space. We are here to carry on our mission of promoting plants and their many benefits to us all."

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Editor's notes

Efig becomes plants@work

The association was named efig (European Federation of Interior Landscape Groups) Ltd at the outset but changed its name to plants@work Ltd in 2018 at the instruction of the committee to make the name of the association more relevant.

Revisiting the Portcullis story

Almost 12 years after the initial inauguration of efig/plants@work to the day, the murmurings about the cost of the Portcullis trees cropped up again.

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At the time, cuts were rife and the word austerity at the top of everyone's mind, the annual rental of these huge trees was seen as a government extravagance.

Our chairman at the time, Kenneth Freeman wrote letters and appeared on Radio 4 and BBC2 in discussions to explain the importance of the trees in that location. He finally succeeded by meeting the Government Estates Department and sending a full report to them. The trees remained and a better deal was negotiated with the landscaper involved.

Three images:



20 year logo



Madeleine Evans of Indoor Garden Design, plants@work current Chair



Steve Atrill of Flora-tec, first Chair of efig/plants@work