

BRITISH CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, held on Saturday 13th May 2017 at 11.00 a.m.
at the Holiday Inn, Milton Keynes, Bucks.

Present:	Dr Jim Gibbs (JG)	Vice Chairman (Meeting Chairman)
	Mr David Kirkbright (DK)	Treasurer
	Mr Eddy Harris (EH)	Secretary
	Mr Tony Morris (TM)	Membership Secretary
	Mr Al Laius (AL)	CactusWorld Editor
	Mrs Alice Vanden Bon (AVB)	Technical Editor
	Mr Barry Tibbetts	Shows Committee Representative
	Dr Tony Mace (TMa)	Publications Officer
	Mr Bill Hildyard (BH)	Forum & Website Administrator
	Mr John Arnold (JA)	Legal Advisor
	Dr Alan Bromley (AB)	Marketing Officer
	Mrs Suzanne Mace (SM)	Committee

AGREED VERSION

It was agreed by the whole Board that now that Dr Roland Tebbenham had retired as a Trustee, we owed him a heart-felt vote of thanks for all his work and contribution to these meetings during his 10½ year period, plus his leadership of the Futures Committee, proof-reading skills and management of the Digital Programmes. He had indicated his intent to continue helping with the latter two involvements as needed.

17/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Dr Alasdair Glen. Mr Harris passed on Dr Glen's thanks for our flowers and card that had been sent to his wife.

17/12 MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 4TH FEBRUARY 2017

As there were no further corrections, an agreed copy of the minutes was formally signed by Dr Gibbs.

17/13 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

16/44/1 Branch Innovation Award – Mr Harris had written to Bradford branch to officially let them know our decision on this and apologised for omitting the presentation to Brighton branch from the A.G.M. agenda. This had subsequently been done at the Derek Desborough lecture event on 23rd April. It was agreed that we would run the Award again this year.

16/50 Discussion on the Sale and Showing of Illegal Mexican Plants – Dr Smale had said that there had been no meeting of the Nagoya Protocol committee set up by the R.H.S., but Mr Arnold said that Dr Smale was in contact with our Conservation Committee. Mr Arnold also said that he had spoken to Mr Rushforth, our seed purchaser, and it was also said that most of the seed was purchased from Czech and German sources.

17/10 Mrs Sellers – Dr Gibbs passed on her thanks for the signed card and flowers from the Society to mark the occasion of her 100th birthday.

17/14 ELECTRONIC DECISION MAKING

Mrs Seeley's Lithops Collection – Mr Harris had received an email from the son of a Wolverhampton member saying that she had recently died and wished her collection, which was quite old, extensive and mainly raised from seed, to go to the Society. He had spoken to Mrs Mace and it had been agreed that she would act as the contact point for this.

17/15 COMMUNICATIONS

1. Crawley Branch – It had been learnt that due to various reasons, this had decided to close and this decision was officially concurred by this committee. The whereabouts of the branch's show trophies and library were currently being sought and the branch had asked that, because its financial assets had always been 'ring fenced', these be given to the zone and 'ring fenced' for the formation of a new local branch. This was agreed by this committee provided the period of 'ring fencing' was limited to a maximum of 5 years.

2. Awards – Three Diploma of Merit awards were agreed and two further awards were discussed, these to be agreed subject to suitable cv's being received (DK/JA).

17/16 REPORTS OF OFFICERS

1. Vice-Chairman:

Dr Gibbs said thanks were again due to the Zone Reps for providing changes in their local branch information for the forthcoming List of Officials. He had also asked them for information on the content and layout of our current website but response had so far been fairly sparse and did not reveal anything that had not already been discussed. He said that Zone 3 had discussed the changes to our A.G.M. procedure, but wished to discuss these further before responding. John Foster had spoken to him about a problem he had had with our comments on Child Protection in the last minutes, where at one of their recent branch meetings there had been 3 mid to late teen-aged girls attending, but unaccompanied by a parent and he did not feel it right to turn them away, or insist that a parent accompany them. Dr Gibbs had reiterated the Trustees position in that we had to advise according to the law. John had also contributed his Zone's position with regard to Branch Libraries. Only two of his branches had libraries, both of which were kept in member's houses and not separately insured. There had also been concern that in the South Wales branch, both the Secretary and Chairman had stepped down, but fortunately replacements had been found for both positions. John also enquired about where we were with feather and table top banners as his Zone would find both very useful.

2. **Membership Secretary:**

Mr Morris stated that since the beginning of February 2017 he had enrolled 74 new members, 11 of whom had also subscribed to Bradleya. This compared with 58 at this time last year. These comprised 48 Full, 19 Senior, 6 Associate and 1 Junior. Of these only 5 were from overseas (1 each from China, France, Germany, Spain and the U.S.A.). 9 persons had joined using the Welcome Pack reduced price offer (currently a total of 98). He had also reinstated 6 former members. He said that renewals had been rather slow in coming in this year and meant that the address list sent to the mailing house for the March CactusWorld totalled just over 2,100 members. To date he had mailed around 200 late renewals, which put a considerable financial strain on our mailing costs and himself personally on his ability to carry such weights to the post office.

3. **Treasurer:**

- a) **Membership** – Mr Kirkbright said that current membership compared with last year was: Full 1,371 (-28), Senior 1032 (+31), Junior 20 (-3), which when added together, the Journal taking membership total was 2423 (same as last year). Associate membership was 185 (-2) and 83 Full members had switched to Senior and 50 the other way. If we adjusted for this, Full would be +5 and Seniors would be -2. So after a shaky start, it was reassuring that we had matched last year's figures. However there were still 251 Full members, 94 Senior and 17 Juniors (a total of 362) who were members at the end of last year, but who had not renewed for 2017 (this did not include any who had asked to be deleted, or of whom we had been notified to be deceased, all of who had been removed from the database. All non-renewed members had been contacted by email or snail mail. Bradleya takers were 484 (-14).
- b) **2017 Calendar** – Costs and postage had been £1,699 whilst sales net of VAT had been £1,403, a loss of £296. It was agreed that we would produce a 2018 calendar.
- c) **G.D.R. Publication** – The price had been set based on normal parameters and also as low as seemed reasonable to encourage sales. However, a number of costs increased after the initial price was calculated and a significantly larger number of complimentary copies were provided to contributors than expected. As a result, it would be necessary to sell almost all the stock before we broke even.
- d) **WebSite Rebuild** – He was keeping a separate item within the accounts to record and report on this and all related expenses would be shown there. So far these had amounted to £10,090 with a further £12,730 committed, plus the cost to rebuild the membership system (£8,330) and it was estimated that the total cost would be some £35,000.

4. **Shows Committee:**

- a) **Judges Course** – Mr Tibbetts reported that he had been unable to attend the last Shows Committee meeting where Mr Weobley thanked the retiring Mr Stansbie and his wife Pat's generous hospitality over many years. He said that the Judges Course had now been arranged with speakers and subjects confirmed. Contributions would be from Dr H. Taylor and Messrs G. Charles, G. Darbon, L. Hewitt, R. Stephenson and D. Tribble. Most of the meeting had been taken up with discussing the marking of the Judging Tests. It had been long felt that there was not enough emphasis being put on the two identification classes, with some people passing the overall test, but getting less than 50% in the identification classes. The committee had now revised the scoring system, so that in future, the Judging Tests could only be passed if pass mark scores were achieved in both Judging and Identification. Ray Stephenson would explain this at the start of this year's course.
- b) **R.H.S. Chatsworth Show 2018** – He said that some members would be attending the inaugural show this year and the Shows Committee would decide at their next meeting on 2nd July if it would support a proposal for a B.C.S.S. exhibit in 2018.

5. **Conservation Committee:**

- a) **Projects** – A project had been received from a Cuban academic asking for financial support to examine 2 known populations of *Escobaria cubensis*, but on further examination it was considered that whilst it was worthwhile, the request as presented was not supportable and the requester had been informed of this and asked for more specific aims and their financial details so that it could be supported. It was also stated that we would be as helpful as possible with the drawing up of the project and had suggested where other help could be obtained. We had also had a request for financial help from Leicester branch, who helped with the succulent part of the Leicester Botanic Gardens Collection, this to pay for the labelling of plants and for interpretation panels which would include the Society name. It was felt that this cost had nothing to do with conservation and if agreed, could set a dangerously expensive precedent for similar payments to other establishments. However, it was felt that this request provided the possibility of publicity for the Society and it was agreed that Mr Arnold would refer it to this committee and our Marketing Officer. This was discussed by this committee and after extensive discussion it was agreed to provide the finance from the conservation funds (some £1,577) as it was a good Society publicity/education venture. Dr Bromley asked that social media logos be used on the display panels. (He subsequently emailed these to all BoT members for onward distribution, but they were freely available on the internet.)
- b) **Bill Maddams B.C.S.S. Travel Award** – No applications had been received for 2016 and with the proposed changes to our website, it was agreed to use the same system this year for applications. Closing date was 31st December and contacts were Messrs J. Arnold or R. Stephenson.
- c) **R.H.S. Meetings on Nagoya Protocol** – Dr Smale, who was the Society's representative on this committee, had agreed, prior to this appointment, to pass on any relevant information to the Conservation Committee and on learning of this appointment, the Conservation Committee was happy with this, provided that any information sent to this committee was also relayed to them.

6. **Research Committee:**

Alan Hill in a written report said that an application had been received from Madeleen Struwig for help with funding a project entitled 'A taxonomic revision of *Nananthus* N.E. Br (Aizoaceae) in South Africa'. A similar request had been made by her to the Mesemb. Study Group. She planned to use her post doctorate grant towards the costs plus any money from the two U.K. organisations and would make up any deficit, if either U.K. organisations did not contribute, by applying to a South African organisation. This committee and the M.S.G. had agreed to work together to fund all of this project. The M.S.G. had agreed to provide £1,000 and would receive a general article on the field expedition and the B.C.S.S. was in the process of agreeing to pay £1,689 and would receive a full technical article to be the first to publish the findings in Bradleya. However, a peer assessment of the project for the M.S.G. had suggested that there was an urgent need to review *Rabiae* which grew in the

same area as *Nananthus*, so would cost no extra money for fieldwork. Madeleen Struwig agreed that this could be added to her initial project, but the extra laboratory work, it had now been learned, would cost £1,324. The Research Committee members would therefore be asked their opinion, having a choice, if agreeing to participate, of increasing the B.C.S.S. contribution to their maximum of £2,000 stand alone grant (and leaving Madeleen to find the remainder elsewhere) or asking the BoT to sanction the remainder (£1,013). The final total from the B.C.S.S. would be £3,013. Subsequent to his report Alan Hill reported that the Members of the Research Committee had voted for the latter and this committee therefore sanctioned the additional spend.

7. **Journal Editor:**

- a) CactusWorld – Mr Laius reported that there were 20 articles that were ready, 11 of which would appear in the June journal. 13 were with the production team awaiting design and layout and 10 were work in progress. There were enough articles for the next 2 issues and beyond. He said that the June journal was on schedule and being put together by David Quail whilst Mrs Vanden Bon was on holiday and he took the opportunity to express his thanks for Mr Quail's proactive approach and assistance in the journal production considering the lack of layout designers. He ended his report by stating that the last advert in the journal had been positive and produced 3 new volunteers who were being trained in Quark Xpress by Mr Quail.

8. **Technical Editor:**

- a) Journal – Mrs Vanden Bon reported that layout of the June journal was being done by David Quail to whom she was extremely grateful, particularly as he had suffered multiple Quark crashes whilst compiling the journal. This made the whole process very stressful and incredibly time consuming. We would investigate the problem once the June journal files had been dispatched to the printer and the proofs signed off.
- b) Membership Form – Due to incorrect centring prior to printing the Membership Forms had visible tick marks and the colour pictures were much darker than on the proof supplied. The printing company had agreed to reprint the forms at their own cost and these had now been received and accepted. Some 16,000 had been printed.

9. **Advertising Officer:**

- a) Advertising – Mr Quail's written report said that the 2nd quarter advertising income was £404 (£645 last year).
- b) CactusWorld Production Trainees – He said that as a result of the advert in the March journal, we now had 3 new volunteers for layout training, 2 to start immediately and the other after completing University finals. He said we had managed to obtain two licences of our version of Quark Xpress at reasonable cost, installed these successfully and the training of the first two was in progress. He also said that we had also managed to find a way to deregister the licence acquired for a previous trainee, who had then disappeared from contact without deregistering the licence. This was about to be issued to the third trainee, so we should soon be able to find out if the non-standard deregistration process worked successfully. We might also have the opportunity to buy one or two more licences of our Quark version at a similar low price if we wish to do so, which could be issued to future trainees. He said that to upgrade all the team to the currently sold licence version would be very expensive and would prevent us from accessing layouts of more than one licence version ago.
- c) Layout and Printing – He said that work was in progress to finalise and assemble the June journal this week. We were also pleased to welcome a new proof reader, John Watmough.
- At the end of his report, the thanks already expressed by Mr Laius and Mrs Vanden Bon in their reports for his assistance in helping to produce the June journal, was reinforced by thanks from the whole of this committee for his invaluable background assistance in both training new layout volunteers and stepping in to help with the journal production.

10. **Bradleya Editor:**

Mr Charles had said that this year Bradleya had got off to a good start with 13 papers received and at least another 3 more promised. He said that as usual Cacti were poorly represented, but that he hoped to get more cactus papers before the deadline. He also said that there were a number of new succulent descriptions. He said that it was likely that a suitable size of journal would be reached before the July deadline and therefore he hoped to publish in August. So if people knew of anybody planning to make a submission this year, please note that the deadline was mid-July. He was happy to report that last year's edition had been very well received, especially the review of *Cleistocactus* by Martin Lowry.

11. **Publications/Internet/Website Officer:**

- a) Publications – Dr Mace reported that orders for the new G.D.R. book were steady. The residual stock of the 2017 calendar had been given to branches to serve as publicity material. He also said that he had noted that several recent U.K. book orders had come from non-B.C.S.S. members and had included membership publicity information in the parcels. He would therefore check all future U.K orders and include appropriate material with these.
- b) Internet/Forum/Website – Dr Mace said that unfortunately there had been no volunteers to back up his role as server manager to date. He said that he had had to intervene rather frequently (about weekly) on the server over the last quarter to fix problems with failed software updates and incomplete backup runs, so this role was very important. He would advertise the position again, but more aggressively and in a different position in the next CactusWorld and emphasising its importance. A group consisting of himself, Bill Hildyard, Dr Bromley and David Kirkbright had met with Brian Coleman of Pedalo to discuss details of the design and implementation of the new website and new membership database. (*see also minute 17/19*).

12. **Update on the Society Digital Programmes:**

David Lambie had been in touch with 2 of the larger domestic purchasers of programmes, who were both complementary about what they had seen to date. He had had personal experience of viewing a programme at his local branch where there had been multiple problems during the evening. He had also been in touch with clubs in the U.S.A., Australia and Toronto on exchanging programmes and although the responses had been less than positive, they were appreciative of the contact, but had nothing similar to offer. Additional digital programmes featuring *Dudleyas*, the 1979 National Show and Doug Donaldson's Indian programmes had been added to the library and scanning of the slides from Tom Lavender and Bill Christie were in progress. A copy of the 2012 National Show DVD was now to be added to those from the 2004 and 2008 Shows and Ian Thwaites had been contacted to provide the 300 images taken at the 2016 Show. Slide sets continued to be reviewed and

would be withdrawn if their condition deteriorated. The team was also reviewing the process of creating recorded video presentations although there was no current intent to do so and the image gallery work was awaiting further volunteers to work with Bill Hildyard and Alice Vanden Bon to set this up and integrate it with the existing website.

13. **2018 Convention:**

Mr Arnold had now produced a final draft of the Programme of Events for this plus an updated advert. for the event. It was suggested that the speakers' countries should also appear on this. David Quail has also asked for and been provided with all the speakers' biographical details for journal publicity nearer the event. He had also approached Brian McDonough as a reserve speaker for John Ellis and was awaiting his reply. In this he had been guided by John Ellis, who still wished to remain on the list. He said that there were all the ancillary matters to be prepared and he wanted suggestions on what might be included in the delegates 'goody bag'. We also need to decided what items we needed for the auction and it was said that we should limit the number and size/quality of plants that might be donated for this. The question of whether there should be plant sales whilst the lectures were in progress was discussed, because there were reasons for and against this and it was agreed that it would be the same as last time. It was suggested that we had another photographic competition and show the results at the venue and this was agreed.

14. **Marketing Officer:**

Dr Bromley reported on the various aspects of his intended media coverage which included the following items:-

- a) Social Media – He said that most of the expressions of interest had mostly fizzled out apart from one. He had hoped to gather interesting images of plants, Society news and details of events and post these on all 3 social media platforms but this took a lot of time and effort. However, he was still using Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to spread the word. As noted previously (*minute 17/16/5(a)*) he had asked that that social media logos (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) be used on all BCSS materials in the future, (He subsequently emailed these to all BoT members for onward distribut, but they were freely available on the internet).
- b) Marketing Strategy – As mentioned before he would do no more on this unless there are signs of more involvement from the Zones.
- c) Helping Zones/Branches to benefit from Local Events – Branch leaflets had been produced by Woking, Sheffield and Hull and a Zone version for Scotland. There had been an enquiry about the flag banner mooted last year.
- d) Emailing – He had continued his monthly emails using Mail Chimp, although with the new website it should be easier to manage the mailing list. He said that after the May exercise, he had found some 80 email addresses to be incorrect and the opening of his sent emails was probably higher than 60%.

17/17 **SOCIETY A.G.M.**

It was generally thought that the new process for our A.G.M. had worked very well with over 90 members attending, although some 20 people left before the second lecture. There was some comment that the lectures could have been slightly longer than they were, but we would try the same procedure again next year. Several points were raised from the floor and these are minuted later (*see minute 17/18*).

17/18 **ITEMS ARISING FROM A.G.M.**

1. Introduction of Student rate membership – This had been raised and was discussed further at this meeting. Dr Taylor had sent in an explanation of how the R.H.S. defined students, which also covered older students. It was discussed very extensively and the general feeling was that as our Society was a relatively small one and our membership rates were so low, that students would not have a problem paying these. It was also said that very few other specialist Societies had student rates.
2. To encourage branch liaison with their local schools – it was initially said that it was not known what was meant by this, but on further discussion it was thought to mean that we should encourage more young people to join the Society and encourage branches to liaise with their local schools as a means of encouraging this. This could be done via items in the journal and on the website. It was also agreed that the Society needed some form of educational resource pack available via our website and one possible resource would be the modification and regular updating of our junior website. We needed to source a teacher from among our members to specify what was required and once this was established, publicise this via our website. Dr Bromley volunteered to write an advert to go in the September issue of CactusWorld (**AB**). It was also said that there were two people among the A.G.M. audience (Jo Adderley and Greg Bulmer) who wished to meet and discuss this further and it was agreed that if necessary we would fund this. Dr Gibbs would contact them about doing so (**JG**).
3. Patrons – There had been a query as to the purpose of having patrons. Dr Gibbs said that there had been an email from Ian Thwaites offering to liaise with them and it was agreed. Mr Harris would speak to him on this at the next Shows Committee meeting on 2nd July (**EH**).

17/19 **WEBSITE**

Mr Hildyard reported on the meeting held with Brian Coleman of Pedalo on 6th May. This was to specify what was wanted from our new website and the meeting progressed through quite an agenda with Brian guiding and ensuring we covered what was required. It was said that it went quite well and a working framework was agreed on the following: Site Structure (Information Architecture), Functional Page Layout (Home page, Forum, Image Gallery, Shop/Products, Event, Membership Form), Forum Functionality and Gallery Functionality. The Homepage was discussed at length, agreeing the key elements that should appear, which would be items of immediate interest, like forthcoming events, Plant of the Month, etc and be more dynamic than at present. It would be laid out in such a way that would suit modern responsive websites that change to suit device screen ratios. It was agreed that much of the 'dry' content would become part of the internal members' website. Pedalo would now use this to build a wire frame mock up of the site for sign off. Good and bad website designs were then reviewed and it was apparent that most good designs were clean, bright layouts which informed. It was agreed that the only features of our existing site worth retaining were the B.C.S.S. logo, house font for the B.C.S.S. title and the 'strap line' (Research, Conserve, etc). Whilst discussing the data sources, the discussion came to logins and the need for an email address, not just for members to be able to access the site, but these were a required field in the database. Quite a number of member's email addresses were either unknown or did not exist and for some associates were the same as the main member. Simple solutions

to both problems were agreed, although those members without an email address would have to contact us to add one if they wished to access the site. Ralph Martin's database was discussed and Brian said it would not be a problem. User Groups were agreed and broad functions, but these were flexible and could be adjusted as we saw fit. The future time scales were Wireframe: 2 to 3 weeks, Fully working website: 2 to 3 months. The launch was currently planned to coincide with the September journal and the plan was to place an article in said issue to explain the new site and how to access it. The final comment was that everybody needed to assess their part of the website now and ensure that all their content was up to date; it's important that we were not caught out by having a shiny new website and not having an up to date content and nice bright images to go with it.

17/19 **TO APPOINT A TREASURER FOR 2017/8**

There being no other nomination Mr Kirkbright was appointed by acclaim.

17/20 **FUTURE PUBLICATIONS**

Gordon Rowley's book was now printed and on sale. We had also received a request from Graham Charles to create a costed plan for the translation of Ritter's 'Kakteen in Südamerika' to be offered free to those wishing it. There was considerable discussion on the value of doing this and it was finally agreed that the small number of people who might be interested would not justify the cost of the plan (estimated at some £50,000). There were 4 books in the work and Ritter's use of German was somewhat unique making translation problematic. There were no new titles currently for consideration, but it was agreed that we would produce another reprint of Steve Hammer's book on *Lithops* (say 500) as stocks of this were running low (currently 60).

17/21 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Society Labels – Mr Kirkbright said that he had ordered another batch of material for producing these, but due to the producer Jeff Capel's uncertain health, he was unsure of what would happen in the future.
2. Grimsby Library – Mr Harris had taken possession of this and asked what we should do with it. He had emailed our book librarian about some of the books and was still waiting reply. It might be possible to use some for the 2018 Convention auction or raffle.
3. New Seed Purchaser and additional Annual Trustees – No volunteers had come forward for the former position and as David Rushforth, the current seed purchaser, had indicated that he would only do it for this coming year, we needed somebody to replace him. It was agreed that we would advertise the position again in the journal, but more aggressively this time, pointing out that if nobody came forward, then there would be no seed list for 2018. As there was currently only 1 annual Trustee this was reviewed and there was somebody who may volunteer later this year and whom we could then coopt. A possible candidate for the third annual Trustee position would be thought about, but in any case would be advertised in time for next year's A.G.M.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 2.50pm.

NEXT MEETING: 29th July 2017 at the Holiday Inn, London Road, Newport Pagnell, MK16 0JA (just off junction 14 of M1). It would start at 11a.m. and a buffet lunch would be served at 1 to 1.30 p.m.