

BRITISH CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, held on Saturday 1st December 2018 at 11.00 a.m.
at the Holiday Inn, Milton Keynes, Bucks.

<u>Trustees Present:</u>	Mr Ian Thwaites (ITH)	Chairman
	Dr Jim Gibbs (JG)	Vice Chairman
	Eddy Harris (EH)	Secretary
	Mr Graham Charles (GC)	Bradleya Editor
	Mrs Alice Vanden Bon (AVB)	Technical Editor
	Mr Barry Tibbetts (BT)	Shows Committee Representative
	Dr Tony Mace (TMa)	Publications Officer
	Mr Bill Hildyard (BH)	Forum & Website Administrator
	Mr John Arnold (JA)	Legal Advisor
	Mrs Suzanne Mace (SM)	Committee
	Mr Graham Evans (GE)	Committee
<u>Non Trustee Officers present:</u>	Mr Tony Morris (TM)	Membership Secretary
	Mr Rick Gillman (RG)	Potential Treasurer

Prior to commencing the meeting Mr Thwaites welcomed Mr Gillman who had agreed to take over from Mr Kirkbright when he resigned in September 2019. Mr Gillman had had several meetings with Mr Kirkbright to sort out the current and proposed prerequisites of the job. This also required a new computer system for Mr Gillman which was of the same standard as that of Mr Kirkbright and both would need software packages to meet with H.M.R.C. accounting requirements. These were agreed by this committee as was the proposed change of Treasurer. Mr Gillman said that he would not be taking over the other roles that Mr Kirkbright currently undertook within the Society and the latter was thanked by this committee for his extensive work in fulfilling these. Mr Thwaites also welcomed Mr Charles who had agreed to become a Trustee and attend these meetings.

AGREED

18/51 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr Al Laius (AL) (Journal Editor), Mr David Kirkbright (DK) (Treasurer) and Dr Hazel Taylor (HT) (Committee).

18/52 MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 26TH MAY 2018 AND 11TH AUGUST 2018

As both versions of the May minutes had now been corrected to incorporate the points made by Mr Arnold at the August meeting and there were no further corrections since our August meeting, the corrected copies of both sets of the May minutes and the agreed August minutes were then formally signed by Mr Thwaites.

18/53 ACTION UPDATES

Mr Harris said that most of the people that had action updates against their names had updated these either by email or within their reports. Dr Taylor was yet to update her paper on reserves until the question of the branch accounting issue was resolved. She suggested that perhaps the question of adequate reserves could be taken up again in 2019 now that the final report of the independent accountants had been received and circulated to this committee. The question of Mail Chimp personal privacy policy had been completed except for another point that had been advised by Dr Taylor and confirmed by Mr Arnold which was to produce a more detailed legitimate interest assessment document to be held by the Society Secretary so that it could be produced on request.

18/54 UPDATES FROM PAST REPORTS OF OFFICERS

a) Shows Committee – There was to be a document requesting for a budget to support all their future Judges Courses which Mr Quail was willing to provide to go into the journal although he was not involved in the budgeting and Mr Kirkbright had said that there was no problem in supplying this. It was suggested that the course fee be fixed for future years say at £150, which was agreed. *Post meeting update: Mr Kirkbright said that the last figure he'd remembered agreeing with Bill Darbon, who was negotiating with Moulton, was in the order of £160 - £165 and he'd also said that whatever figure was agreed must only be for one year at a time as it needed reviewing each year based on what Moulton charged our Society.*

Mr Thwaites said that Jo Adderley of Manchester branch was proposing to hold a city-centre show or display next year and had asked for advice on doing this. It was suggested that Peter Bint of that branch might be able to help, but that the Judges course dealt with all aspects of showing. Stirling Baker was willing to help her if necessary. Following on from what had appeared in the last journal, she and Greg Bulmer were to approach the university and other places and also had asked for financial assistance as it would cost more than their planned budget.

b) Journal Team – It was pointed out that Mr Quail had expressed a wish to retire as Advertising Manager but was prepared to help where necessary and Mrs Vanden Bon had indicated that in future she only wished to prepare 1 journal per year and Mr Quail had said the same thing. Mr Crewe had indicated that he would do this task occasionally. There was a possibility that another person might also join the team, but there was nobody left in reserve, a situation which was very worrying. It was said that Mr Quail was investigating other commercial resources and Mrs Vanden Bon explained the process involved in journal preparation. Mr Thwaites would consult with the people involved and Mr Laius when he returned from his holiday. Mr Thwaites said that he had arranged for CactusWorld to appear on the TV programme 'Have I Got News for You' and this had generated an increased interest in the journal. He since had a

number of reports from journal editors stating that they thought it was one of the best Plant Society journals they had seen. Mr Charles said that on his recent trip to Australia he had had many comments on how much their members enjoyed reading it. Mr Thwaites said that the R.H.S. magazine Garden was to feature an article on the more unusual Cacti next year, would feature the 2020 National Show in their advertising and as discussed previously, whatever lower price that our members would get in for, the same price would be offered to R.H.S. members. He was in discussion with other Societies on the same terms.

18/55 **MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST MINUTES**

18/34/e **Graham Charles Cultivation Booklet** – Mr Thwaites said that the intention had not been to upset people with this idea, but it had been felt by one of the people who had written the Society Information Pack that the booklet would clash with this. Mr Charles had had a long, nice and informative telephone chat with the member and explained that he intended the booklet to be more general and simpler in its dealing with the subject and the member had accepted that perhaps it wouldn't clash and had offered help and pictures from the Information Pack for Mr Charles' use. He demonstrated a mock up of the intended publication which was A5 in size and much thinner than the Information Pack and like the Information Pack would also offer the reduced membership and information about the Society. Garden Centres wanted something like this and Chris Pugh could sell them to the Garden Centres and these could then sell them on to the public at 99p/copy. Chris felt that he could sell a lot of the booklets through his numerous significant outlets to which he sold plants, including all the R.H.S. garden centres. Mr Charles asked for help in providing some of the pictures he needed to include in the publication. It was said that perhaps he should use plant common names and Mr Charles said that he would send all of this committee a copy once he had written it. Comments on these would be welcome. If the Society published them he needed an I.S.B. number which wasn't a Bradleya number, and would cost some £1,500 for 10,000 copies which could be covered if we sold them all to Chris Pugh or Garden Centres at the appropriate price. He said that storage would consist of 100 boxes containing the plastic holder and 100 copies. It was said that it could be distributed free at the Lullingstone event.

18/56 **ELECTRONIC DECISIONS**

An award of a D.O.M was agreed.

18/57 **CURRENT VALUE OF CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH FUND**

This was shown on the accounts as £66,578.66.

18/58 **COMMUNICATIONS**

- a) **Accounting Report** – The independent accountant had issued his report which it was said supported Mr Kirkbright's suggestion which stated that if we made the branches independent of the Society we would not have to include their accounts in those of the Society. This could be achieved by giving them their own constitution and them not being allowed to quote the Society Charity number and VAT number. This accountant's report had been reviewed by Messrs. Thwaites, Kirkbright and Dr Taylor and the former had collated all their comments and submitted these back to the accountant, who had offered further advice on the best way to demonstrate this independence. Mr Thwaites had then asked Mr Arnold for advice on how to do this legally by the next meeting, so this could be achieved in an orderly manner (**JA**).
- b) **Chinese Journal Order** – We had had a request from a Chinese asking to buy additional journals and Mr Thwaites proposed writing to him stating that next year we intended to produce our journals on-line and that if interested, once the concerned people had joined the Society, they would have access to these. He had also had a request to provide books for translation into Chinese. An agreement had already been signed for the Hammer *Lithops* book although we were still to see evidence of this. Mr Thwaites would ask what books they were interested in (**ITH**).
- c) Mr Thwaites had received an email from a young female member stating that she didn't want to go to meetings at a branch to listen to history lessons. He had forwarded this to Jo Adderley who had suggested that we appointed a 'Young Person Coordinator' and he asked if we should appoint her to this position. Mr Arnold was surprised at this member's view as he said that the last time he had spoke at said branch there were 60+ people there including a number of young people and they had a young person who had been appointed to this position. He would start by asking Jo to contact this lady although there were members of this committee who felt that the younger generation were less tolerant of the history of our hobby and the views of the older generation.
- d) **Logo and Badge** – He had provided two of the proposed designs of logo to a graphic designer that he knew and who said that he felt that they would not appeal our female members, so he had asked him to provide a design that appealed to both sexes. This would be available soon (**ITH**). This would be in colour, black and white and outline versions. It was said that there was only a stock of 10 of the old badge design left and it was agreed that we would delete any reference to this on our literature until a new design had been agreed.
- e) **E-news bulletin** – A new lady member from Portsmouth branch had been providing an article for this. She was an international P.R. consultant and author who had done some very good work for the Portsmouth branch and had offered to run a 2 hour workshop for some 20 people of mixed age and ability which was designed to take the Society forward. A venue was to be arranged, say in February/March, and a suggested list of attendees was compiled which might possibly include Mr Thwaites, Jo Adderley, Greg Bulmer, Rick Gillman, Al Laius, Graham Evans, Vicky Davies, Laurie Poulson, Steve Taylor, Bill Hildyard, David Quail and our as yet to be appointed Marketing Officer (**ITH**).
- f) **Zone 3** – There was apparently a financial problem within the Zone. It was said that the accounts were currently being audited and it was agreed that this would not be pursued until this had been done.
- g) **Zone 14** – Mr Thwaites had had a request for £500 via their Zone Rep. to help 'kick start' the Zone. They currently had £400 in the bank and wished to have a convention in the spring. The issue that was causing problems was the

Lullingstone event which was thought to be good publicity for that Zone, but because of the recent changes of who was currently running it, had upset certain branches and members within that Zone. Mr Thwaites had arranged that half the non-member's entry fee would be returned to the Society if they joined the Society at the event and then this £5 would be taken off their Society membership fee and had also arranged for two prominent speakers to give lectures there. After considerable discussion, it was agreed that Mr Thwaites would write back saying that before we could provide the money, we would need a business plan of how and what it would be used to finance, that it was known that there were two branches in serious problems and that the Lullingstone event was an ideal opportunity to make all the branches known to the general public and also would publicise our hobby.

- h) Student Membership – A request had been received from Mr Cowdell asking if we could set up a lower subscription rate for students similar to the Senior rate. This had been raised and discussed at last year's A.G.M. and rejected as it was said that our current rates were the cheapest in the world, so no further action would be taken.
- i) Avonia – Mr Harris had received another request from Dr Colin Walker asking if the Society would consider an electronic exchange of journals with Avonia and as we currently exchanged actual journals every quarter. Further action would not be considered until Avonia was asked the reasons for their request.
- j) Awards – One award request had been received and agreed by email since the last meeting and the one discussed at the August meeting had not been progressed.

18/59

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

1. Chairman:

Mr Thwaites reported that it had been a very busy few months trying to start the process of modernising the Society and equipping it to meet the 21st Century. He had had lots of support from Society members wherever he had been and had 118 positive responses to his piece in the journal. He now believed that he had the mandate to help the Society on the journey to attract the next generation of people who would enjoy growing our plants. If one looked in the shops now everything was cactus or succulent, so this was the time to sign up new members. We were working hard to get the new website up and running and next year we would be able to offer direct debits as our preferred method of payment. He was keen for the Society to get out to attract new members and we were planning events at Lullingstone, R.H.S. shows and R.H.S. gardens. We were looking at the logo and how we branded ourselves as it was important that we had the right presence to attract the next generation.

He had been distracted to some extent as he was heavily involved with a review on whether branches should be included in the Society accounts. We had discovered that there were two ways of doing this and he believed that the preferred way was to continue as we always had where the Branches were autonomous. This might require the branches to have their own constitution, but before we did anything he would always ask our Legal Advisor on the best way forward. He would like to assure the Branches and Zones that he would never do anything willingly to affect the way that they operated. To him the Branches were the heart of the Society.

2. Vice-Chairman:

- a) Zone Reps Meeting – Despite a very disappointing turnout, we had held an interesting meeting with some proposed developments. Zone reports continued the trend of modest increases in numbers reported by many branches. Highlights included 2 branches; Teesside and Oxford, joining the group celebrating their 60th Anniversary, Bradford completing their replanting and signage at Cliffe Castle, Isle of Wight gaining a Gold Medal at one of three shows attended and Macclesfield's four flower shows with an R.H.S. Gold Medal achievement at Tatton Park Show. Some innovations included Portsmouth appointing a Marketing Manager with an immediate beneficial effect using Social Media to attract an influx of new members and following this up with a survey of the new members who had attended for 6 months, Manchester benefitting from their policy of shadowing their officers as loss and illness to committee members was mitigated by relatively seamless replacement by their shadows, Manchester again innovating by arranging for their next meeting to be organised by 3 of their new and younger members and Stoke buying a voice amplifier to combat poor acoustics and age related hearing loss. Whilst the formation of the new Rother Valley branch, successful satellite meetings by Brighton and Littlehampton and the successful merger of Hull and Bridlington were hopeful signs, some branches had found difficulty in replacing officers, Isle of Wight was finding difficulty with the additional costs of getting speakers to the island and others highlighted the difficulties with disposing of collections
- b) Chairman's Question and Answer Session – Mr Thwaites initially presented some of his thoughts on how he would like to improve the Society, emphasising that he did not want to change the Society, maintaining Shows, Branch meetings and all the bits that worked well. He wanted to enhance what we had and believed there were two or three things that we needed to do, to get out and capitalise on the current popularity with Cacti and Other Succulents. Mr Thwaites asked that all Zones appointed a Social Media Coordinator, something we had tried with limited success previously. Branches and Zones were very important and could start going out and holding pop-up meetings in city centres (short talks or conversations, plant sales, question and answer sessions) at a convenient time to meet the public and try to sign them up to the hobby. Mr Thwaites would like us to be active in R.H.S. shows where available, with pop-up displays provided centrally so that the Zone would only need a tray of plants. He was keen to emphasise that he didn't want to land all this work on individuals, wanted Zones collectively to do these things with the Society helping with materials and members from branches only working short periods of time. Discussions following his presentation included problems with inactive Zones, although it only needed one active, interested person in a Branch or Zone to turn everything around. Members should be reminded that the Zone Rep. was an annual position. A thriving Branch and solid infrastructure to help people learn about growing plants and we needed to do something to revive the falling branch numbers.

Zone Structure and Identity. A few years ago the Zone Reps attempted a minor re-organisation of the Zones, but were unable to reach any agreement. However, there were still too many Zones that were inactive or not functioning well,

which excluded Branches from one of the main organisational units of the Society and with the number of Branch closures increasing and making some Branches even more remote, a change was badly needed. With the earlier minor rearrangement failing to reach any agreement, a more radical solution was needed. It was already proven that we could not get 17 Zone Reps, so reorganisation to fewer areas was really a requirement. Barry Tibbetts had been asked to look into this and presented his findings to the Zone Reps' meeting. He presented a large map showing the current branches with a number on it for its current Zone. Using similar areas as other organisations do, common divisions were presented showing, with a few tweaks, North East, North West, Midlands (East and West), South West, East, with a large number of Branches (27/28 or nearly 50%) left in South East, an area which would need some more work, perhaps using the Thames north and South, plus Scotland and Ireland. In particular another motivation was interaction with the R.H.S. who would, in many areas, give us so much for nothing, e.g. he had spoken to the people at Rosemoor and Harlow Carr and both would love us to put on displays there. This was too much to be left to individual branches. Another example was the new R.H.S. Bridgewater garden opening in the North West this year and it would be great if the B.C.S.S. could be one of the first to get involved there. The R.H.S. had areas to put on displays, shows and won't charge. Anybody with an interest could help, with the Society helping with travel expenses. This could also help to emphasise that groups of branches could and should co-operate outside Zone or Regional boundaries, boundaries that were artificial and should not be barriers. The Rep. should be an organiser, getting branches to interact for the greater picture. Having regional co-ordinators instead of Zone Reps might be difficult to work out where there was more than one active Zone Rep in the region, but many regions would certainly need more than one person who could co-operate, particularly where there was a large area and/or travel time involved. Fewer identifiable regions would make it easier to market and there would be a need for some tweaking to get it right. It was important to emphasise that we needed to break down boundaries so people interacted over larger areas but also smaller groups within regions that already hold successful events should be encouraged to continue. The map was a broad structure with boundaries not hard and fast, just a starting point. A counter-proposal for smaller regions was put forward. So the way forward was to take this to the Trustees for discussion and if approved then to the A.G.M. for a vote after the map was reproduced in the March journal. This was not a lot of notice for the A.G.M. but change was needed now. It should be promoted with the benefits clearly stated. The proposal was largely accepted although there were mixed views.

- c) Zone and Branch Changes – Zones 3 and 14 had successfully found replacements for out-going Zone Reps; Simon Snowden and Dave Appleton respectively, and we wished them well with their tasks. Thanks were also due to the outgoing Reps. who spent their time and efforts on behalf of their Branches and members. As mentioned above, a new branch had been formed within Zone 12; Rother Valley branch and following the merger of Waltham Forest with Lea Valley, Dr Gibbs had received a request for the merged branch to be renamed Lea Valley and District and this was agreed by this committee. Whilst both Coventry and Lowestoft had discussed closure recently, there was still hope that there was enough interest in both branches that their fortunes could be revived.
- d) Speakers List – The new version of the Speaker's List was now completed and had been distributed electronically to Branch Secretaries by Mr Harris.

3. **Membership Secretary's Report:**

Mr Morris said that this report was an overview of membership activities since 11th August 2018. He had enrolled 174 new members of whom 113 were Full, 28 Senior, 12 Associate and 21 Junior. There were 14 new overseas members; 7 from the U.S.A., 3 from Australia, 2 from Germany and 1 each from France and Canada; 20 new members took Bradleya. There were 7 new members who had joined using the reduced price offer when purchasing the Information Pack; this brought the total to 124. The total enrolment figure for the same period last year was 151, for a similar period in 2016 the total was 101. He had also reinstated 15 former members. He had almost exhausted the supply of seed for new members which was included in their Welcome Packs. These seeds were mainly supplied to him by Peter Lewis and were the residue of seeds that weren't sold from the December 2017 seed list; plus some contributions from Tony and Suzanne Mace. He had contacted David Rushforth and he was preparing new supplies, hopefully there wouldn't be a break in the supply chain for new members. He had very few badges left and unless new supplies were forthcoming before Christmas we needed to reduce the junior membership to £5 and remove the reference to the badge in the on-line application. He didn't wish to go over the issues surrounding the September journal and particularly the address file. However he thought it was worth noting that some former members receiving an unexpected journal had realised what an excellent publication it was and what they had been missing, so they had rejoined the B.C.S.S. He said that he had enrolled 14 new members since November 27th.

4. **Treasurer's Report:**

- a) Membership – Mr Kirkbright in a written report gave an updated current membership as at November 21st 2018 compared with the same time as last year which was Full 1741 (+183), Senior 1161 (+67), Junior 54 (+25), which when added together, the journal taking membership total was 2956 (+275). Associate membership was 232 (+36) and that as the inclusion of Bradleya takers was meaningless at this time of year, this was omitted. He said that new membership continued to forge ahead and was some 10.3% up on last year and that of the 1741 Full members, 372 were from overseas.
- b) Convention – Total attendee numbers had been disappointing and the final result was a loss of £2,127. All bills had been paid.
- c) Annual Accounts – Copies of these had been prepared in line with previous years, but due to our current auditors for the last 50 years closing down, had not been audited. The alternative auditing firm that they had suggested, had then said that they knew little about charities and declined to take them on. He had discussed this with another firm who were willing to take them on and although the accounts could not be audited by our December meeting due to this delay, he felt there would be little change. The accounts were therefore accepted and approved by this committee with

the proviso of 'Subject to final examination'. *Post Meeting Update: Subsequent to the meeting the examination of the accounts was completed and agreed by the new accountants (Messrs Collett Hulance LLP) without any changes. The figures presented to the meeting remained unchanged. They were also happy to be reappointed for this task next year.* He also said that the value of the investment fund had increased by £22,734. He had always counselled against dependency on this figure and the volatility of the investment markets since September 30th had reduced that gain to £8,011 and said that if that had been the situation on September 30th our overall surplus for the year of £6,980 would have been a loss of £7,743. He also explained some of the specific large movement such as:-

- i) Journal cost up approximately £3,000 due to the September mailing problem (reprints and extra postage).
- ii) Payment to branches reflected the movement of monies from branch closures back to recipient branches.
- iii) The increase in Library cost was due to the removal and storage of the G.D.R. library.
- iv) The Audit and accounting fees included £5,000 for the review by the independent accountants (a further £700 was due to be paid for additional work providing further clarification of the advice and recommendations provided).
- vi) Communication was up significantly from Mr Morris mailing journals to late renewals, who were many more than usual and sending out journals from earlier in the year and info. packs to the much larger number of new members than usual. This also affected supplies where we had to order additional supplies for the info. packs.

- d) Accommodation Payments – He had produced the current list of these and these were agreed by this committee
- e) Trustees Report – He had produced a report to go with the unaudited accounts, but as this would appear as part of the A.G.M. Agenda, this would not appear in these minutes.

5. **Shows Committee Report:**

- a) Committee Membership – Mr Tibbetts reported that Messrs Thwaites and Baker had now resigned from the committee effective April 2019, so 2 vacancies would be announced in the December journal.
- b) Shows Committee Terms of Reference – These were discussed and a new draft had been written and passed to the Society Secretary. Effectively the committee would be responsible for producing promotional material and the future name of the Judges Course changed to 'The Showing and Judging Weekend'.
- c) Judges Course 2018 – This had been another successful weekend, based on verbal and feedback report forms, especially the interactive sessions. However, attendance had been down (39 instead of the normal 45) resulting in an increased cost to the Society. The end tests had resulted in 2 new cactus judges (Ms. Vicky Davies and Geoff Penrose).
- d) Showing and Judging Weekend 2019 – This had been confirmed for Friday 30.8.19 to Sunday 1.9.19 although due to an administrative error by Moulton College, we would not have the Barn for the Judging Tests, but another part of the site had been agreed for our use.
- e) National Show 2020 – Now confirmed for 3rd/4th July 2020 at Arena MK, Milton Keynes and our deposit accepted by the venue. Following enquiries by Bill Darbon at E.L.K. earlier this year, even more European nurseries had expressed a desire to attend.
- f) Lullingstone Castle Event 2019 – Following management changes of this event, it was agreed that the Shows Committee would give support when required.

6. **Research Report:**

Mr Hill said that no applications had been received since their August 2018 report. That report contained the information that money was to be sent to Ignacio Soto for research in the National Reserve of Valle Fertile, Argentina. He was later told that there was a problem for him to receive the money and he had not heard that the problem had been solved.

6. **Conservation Report:**

Mr Arnold reported that the committee had held their usual 2nd meeting of the year in August. They had discussed a number of matters including the continued uncertainty surrounding the movement of plants within Europe arising from the decision to leave the E.U. In the past Craig Hilton-Taylor was a member of this committee and provided us with regular updates on matters relating to international decisions on plants. They had heard that he might be back to Cambridge with the CITES Red List group and, if so, they might be able to resume this useful association. They had struggled since he left to obtain information. They discussed Plant Heritage and notification about plant disposals. There was an advance notification about a possible Cuban project which had been referred back to the "applicant" for a much more detailed application.

There was a project from Roy Earlé relating to the re-establishment of *Lithops schwantesii v. rugosa* on the Farm Sinclair in Namibia. This was approved and considered extremely well presented and worthwhile. It exceeded their remit and so was referred to the B.o.T. for approval with their recommendation.

7. **Journal Editor:**

Mr Laius' written report said that after the December journal had already been compiled and would contain 13 articles plus the usual features. Looking ahead he had 9 articles which were already designed with another 10 which were with the production team awaiting design and layout and 3 were currently work in progress. There would therefore be enough articles for the next 2 issues (March and June 2019). Consequently the December issue was currently on schedule and he would like to thank David Quail for his time and effort in taking charge of the technical compilation.

8. **Technical Editor:**

Mr Quail's written report stated that the December journal was compiled successfully and the printers' files uploaded before the agreed deadline. Phil Crewe came over on the agreed Journal compilation date to be trained in the process. The training was completed successfully and he then re-performed the whole process, with commendably little further guidance needed from Mr Quail. They were both confident that he now had the skills to do this on his own, assisted by the detailed guidance contained in our Technical Standards manual and initially with some remote support from Mrs Vanden Bon or himself. His work commitment would limit his future involvement in the process to occasional quarters when needed.

9. **Advertising Officer's Report:**

a) Advertising – Mr Quail's written report said that the net advertising revenue for 2018 was £1902 compared with £1,410, £1906 and £1705 in the three preceding years.

b) Minimisation of Plastic Usage – He said that he was not aware of any problems presented by the September Journal's plastic (semi-)recyclable wrapper and the revised carrier sheet which indicated how the wrapper should be recycled. However this remained a short term solution and for Warners only. For the December Journal he had agreed with Cavalier Mailing, the mailing house for our December Journal printers, Swallowtail Printers, that again as a trial, they should use a paper envelope for the Journal and inserts, with a paper name and address label, also containing much of the information currently included on the mailing carrier sheet insert. The remaining information would continue to be included on a paper sheet inside the package.

He would soon be renegotiating printing contracts for 2019 and the preferred mailing wrapper solution remained as compostable potato starch film, if technical issues relating to its too-fast speed of degradation could be resolved.

10. **Bradleya Editor's Report:**

Mr Charles reported that the production of Bradleya no. 37 had started early. He already had 17 papers submitted, of which 11 had been approved for publication and were already paginated, filling 74 pages. He also had the promise of a further 5 papers concerning Cacti and 2 more about Other Succulents which should result in a well balanced edition.

11. **Internet Server Report:**

Dr Mace said that it might be noted when the December Journal was published that he had stopped advertising for an assistant to his work on managing the B.C.S.S. server. This was not because somebody had been found, because they hadn't. He had come to the conclusion that there was nobody that had the ability and facilities to do this task and also had the time to do it. The solution would be to pay the appropriate companies involved to do the work. The company from whom we rented the server could almost certainly do more of the work on maintaining current versions of the system software, anti-malware and anti-viral software. The company writing our new website and database systems could be charged with the maintenance of these systems. This would reduce his job down to allocation of resources and accounts. All this needed to be set up with very precisely defined areas of responsibility to avoid the situation where each blamed the other for failures. This really could not be completed until the new website/database was in place.

The current operating system was Centos 6.10 v76.0.8. He had recently completed an upgrade from Easy Apache 3 to Easy Apache 4. PHP version was 7.2.7 MySQL 5.5.6

12. **Publications report:**

Dr Mace started his report on the loss his nearest Post Office in the village adjacent to him due to closure. This used to involve a round trip of 2.8 miles, but he or his wife now had to make a round trip of 7.6 miles. The consequence of this was that they now tended to make the trip only a maximum of two times a week instead of three so that there was a slightly increased delay of posting items to U.K. destinations. All overseas mailings go via a Mailing House which was a round trip of 8.6 miles which usually they only did once weekly. He reported that October was relatively quiet for orders but sales had picked up this month and with all their other jobs they were now struggling to keep up with the workload. It would be okay if everything went smoothly, but it didn't. About one in ten orders did not include a delivery address and they chased the purchaser to give this. Also some purchasers expected them to provide Amazon style service and started chasing their orders if these didn't arrive immediately. At Mr Thwaites' request Dr Mace had enquired of our mailing house if they provided a fulfilment management service and indeed they did. This would involve them keeping stocks of the items they sell and them doing the packaging and dispatch. He was not quite sure how this would work in practice as their shop currently lists 192 different items for sale. They could get them to deal with just the most frequently ordered items, but orders often included multiple items and they would still be involved in receiving the orders and forwarding them and keeping track of stocks and the financial reporting.

He said that he and his wife were extremely concerned about what had happened over the idea of producing a cheap booklet on cultivation for distributing through Garden Centres and Nurseries. They were not saying that it was not a good idea either, an alternative packaging of the existing very well produced information sheets or a new text. The N.C.S.S. used to have such a booklet. However, they were not convinced that the storage and distribution of such a booklet had been given anything like enough thought. They could not store any more at Brenfield and didn't have the capacity to send out much more than they were currently doing and indeed the systems they had in place for doing so would be far too expensive. They were not convinced that it would be easy to sell such a booklet through Garden Centres. Ones in their area tended to have their own Cactus and Succulent care sheets. They were atrociously misspelt, ungrammatical and full of factual errors. They had offered to edit/rewrite these (for free), but this had been refused. They also tried to maintain Alan Bromley designed leaflets in a plastic holder detailing their local branch meetings placed near cacti and succulent sales. These often went A.W.O.L. Cactus and Succulent Nurseries of course could use

these booklets, but how many Nurseries did one now that actually accept personal visitors on a regular basis: very few and declining. Many now were just eBay sellers. They had a similar idea a few years ago from Roy Mottram to distribute CactusWorld through W H Smith and similar outlets. They got as far as printing a price and barcode on the journal but it proved impossible to get any sort of sensible deals. They were extremely worried that the proposal of this project had understandably upset the journal technical production team. If a point was reached where we were unable to continue to produce our high quality journal within its expected timetable then all these valuable ideas would be completely wasted.

13. **Digital Programme Library:**

- a) Activities had been restarted enabling us to release 2 programs to the society:-
 - i) No. 10 – a substantially renewed and improved version of this program on cactus and succulent flowers, largely thanks to the help of Laurie Poulson.
 - ii) No. 58 – From the national show 2012, largely supported by judges' comments
- b) A “straight from digital” presentation of cactus flowers had been commissioned. We had 150 good images with names, and commentary for around ¾ of them. Name checking was underway. If we get good feedback it should be ready early next year.
- c) Enquiries had been made about a second such talk, perhaps with a succulent focus.
- d) Scanning continued with a number of slides available including Tom Jenkins' material and Vic Morris' which were being post processed.
- e) Resources for at least 2 more national show programs existed and would be soon in the line.
- f) So far this year 6 branches had ordered 17 programs. This compared with 13 branches making orders last year.
- g) The issue of digital delivery of programmes had been highlighted as a strategy point needing some agreement.

Sample thumbnails from the new digital presentation:-



Sulcorebutia arenacea



Corynopuntia pulchella



Mammillaria
melanocentra ssp. rubrograndis

14. **Social Media (Twitter) Coordinator's Report:**

Steve Taylor reported that he had taken over as the primary user on the B.C.S.S. Twitter account (@cactussucculent) and his aims were as followed:-

- a) To create a new interactive, friendly and informative online presence with the aim of attracting new members and followers, but with particular focus on those in the Millenium age group (born between 1980 and 1997). The reason for this focus was that this was the age group which was driving the current houseplant trend, which included cacti and succulents amongst other plant types.
- b) To contribute to the B.C.S.S. becoming the primary place online where members and followers alike came for succulent information, assistance and engagement.
- c) To assist with the online promotion and coverage of B.C.S.S. events, whether those be local show events or larger national events.
- d) To attract our online audience to attend their local shows and to attend national events.
- e) To encourage our largely offline members to engage with our online audience.
- f) He also said that he had access to the Instagram account, but there were 2 new volunteers who would take that over. We were currently speaking between ourselves to get some cohesion between the accounts when applicable.

18/60 **FINAL ARRANGEMENT FOR THE 2019 A.G.M.**

Mr Thwaites said that he required a 30 minute slot to answer questions and views from the membership on what they wanted from the Society at some point in the A.G.M. Mr Harris had said that this could be arranged before lunch. Mr Harris reminded all present who were to send him their reports for the A.G.M. agenda, that he needed these a.s.a.p. as he had to compile this ready for inclusion in the March journal by the end of this month. As Mr Hill was standing down as Minute Secretary, Mr Evans volunteered to take the minutes of the A.G.M. Mr Charles felt that now we had made it a good day out, we should publicise it as such to encourage a bigger attendance.

18/61 **SUCCESSION AND FORWARD PLANNING**

Mr Thwaites said that at the A.G.M. we were short of an Advertising Officer, an A.G.M. Minutes Secretary, although thanks to Mr Evans that was not immediately urgent, a Marketing Officer, a P.R. person and a young person's rep. and an assistant to Mr Hildyard to assist with the new website. It was said that perhaps we should advertise these positions on the E-news site. There would be an election for the 3 Annual Trustees positions at the A.G.M. as there were potentially three extra people wishing to stand for the positions. For Dr Mace's position it was intended to ask Pedalo to be involved in maintaining the technical side of the new website and use the hosting company to do more of his work. However Dr Mace said that he had a password problem with 2 branches that had their own website and used

WordPress which was causing problems. Mr Thwaites felt that we needed to pay for help in maintaining our systems rather than rely on a Society member to do so. He also said that once the new Website was up and running there should be measures in place to prevent hacking and unauthorised access to it, a criminal offence. He had told Pedalo that they would be responsible for the Website security and the hosting company the server security. We needed to ensure that our own security was up to date as well. Mr Harris said that anybody due for election at the A.G.M. would need to provide him with their C.V. by the end of the month.

18/62 **WEBSITE UPDATE**

- a) Facebook – Mr Hildyard said that there was not a lot to report: the group continued to grow and we were now approaching 6,000 members and have over 8,000 followers on the page. We also have over 1,000 ‘members’ registered on the forum.
- b) New Website – Mr Thwaites started the discussion by stating that this needed to be up and running urgently and that he had recently had an email from Pedalo stating that they had completed all that we wanted and it needed to go 'live' so that the existing data could be transferred over to the new website. However there appeared to be a misunderstanding that the site was as wanted and Mr Thwaites said that we needed to ensure that the site went on line as soon as possible and that we should buy in the best membership system that would do what we wanted. He also said that he would ask Mr Kirkbright what was required to sort out the database/journal run problems especially with the March journal and said that he'd spoken to other Societies who had changed their membership programmes such that if somebody joined their subscription renewal date would be 1 year after their joining date rather than the current Society system of 1st January for everybody. He had suggested this to Mr Kirkbright who said that this would work, especially if they paid by direct debit or PayPal. Mr Charles said that there may be problems with the posting of Bradleya, but it was agreed that this was the way forward. However, it was asked that Mr Thwaites circulate a list of these proposals so that all this committee was aware of what was planned and if necessary could ask questions on particular points. If we went that way then we would need to modify the membership form to include direct debit. There was considerable discussion on these points. but it was said that apart from the membership problems the rest of the new website was okay. Messrs Thwaites, Hildyard, Morris and possibly Kirkbright would have a meeting with Pedalo in the near future to sort things out (**ITH**). Mr Hildyard had said in his report that little progress had been made on moving the new website forward; this was a conscious decision that he had made and informed Mr Thwaites of this, in light of the lack of progress/timescales on the database/membership side of the site. He had produced a list of who he thought should be responsible for the various aspects of the site (as shown in the attached Tables 1 & 2), but no decision was on this was taken at this point in time.

18/63 **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Mr Thwaites had recruited Steve Taylor to this position who was doing great things on Twitter and several other people who wanted to help the Society and were active on Social Media with the younger generation. He said that on Social Media the pictures posted although botanically correct and eye-catching but did not necessarily appeal to the new generation and this needed correction although he felt that the Social Media was generally going from strength to strength.

18/64 **ZONE RESTRUCTURING**

Mr Tibbetts had produced a map of the U.K. with lines dividing England into 6 or 7 areas and ignoring the Zonal areas, but with the locations of the B.C.S.S. branches also shown plus the Scottish and Irish branch locations. This was what he had shown the October Zone Reps' meeting. The map showed that our current Zonal system was not working and there were instances of either two or three branches within a Zone and these basically existing in isolation to one another, or having many branches within them. This was especially true within the Kent and Sussex areas and to a lesser degree the Essex/Greater London area. The idea was to educate the general public as to our geography, so that when for instance the Zone 6 show was advertised, it's location was known. It was said that we needed to be more specific on location and that more than one branch should be participating. It was suggested that a table be set up at the A.G.M. with the map on it and Mr Tibbetts and other Trustees in attendance to discuss and collect attendees' view on this (**BT**). It was said that we needed to let branch Secretaries know of this intent. There was also a financial issue if it was decided to reduce the number of Zones/branches in that do we return the Zone funds to their respective branches? We needed a change in the Society Constitution to cover this. Mr Evans and Mrs Mace would circulate ideas that he had on this subject to this committee's members (**GE/SM**).

18/65 **MANAGEMENT OF RESERVES**

The latest information on the G.D.R. library project was that the prospective Trustees of the Trust for this felt that that three items of furniture: a huge Victorian bookcase, a small grandfather clock and a small writing desk made by Gordon's grandfather, which they believed should form part of the Rowley Library, once in its new, permanent home. Logistical issues in June 2018 had prevented them packing a number of items, including approximately a dozen pieces of artwork and a small number of box files of minor interest. They had also subsequently found a number of Gordon's diaries, the full set of which dated back to 1936. They were proposing that the above items be stored with a removal company, such as Pickfords, a small local company, or alternatively a self-store company. Quotes were currently being sought and they would request that the B.o.T. considered paying for temporary storage of these items at what was probably a small additional outlay. They would provide more detailed costs as soon as possible. Building on informal discussions amongst the nominated Trustees, planning for the longer term future and location of the library would proceed in the New Year. This was obviously linked to securing the long term finances for the project which were principally the assets currently tied up in his house. Action was in train to establish the nominated Trustees' authority

in respect of this. Maintenance of his house was of concern and they now needed to store (or otherwise clear) the remaining contents.

Mr Thwaites said that with G.D.R. currently being in care, this cost would come out of his estate and that if it went on long enough we might end up having to sell some of his books. Mr Charles said that that scenario was a possibility, but unlikely, as the Trust Trustees planned to hold a meeting in the New Year to avoid that. A possibility was that the Rowley Trust would pay back the Society money which it had currently spent, so that with the debt cleared the B.C.S.S. might feel able to help at a later date. He hoped that our two charities would be able to work together because they had a common aim and he wondered maybe whether the B.C.S.S. might buy a premises which they could both share.

18/66 **DISCUSSION ON THE G.D.P.R.**

Mr Thwaites said that he would ask our legal advisor to review our current G.D.P.R. documentation and advise on what should appear on the new website. Dr Gibbs said that he intended to send out the G.D.P.R. permission forms to all secretaries in the next few days so that they could appear in the next Officials List.

18/67 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Speakers' List – It was asked that a version of this, without all the contact details, be made more generally available so that branch members could ask their secretaries to book a particular talk that they wanted to hear. This was agreed
2. Internet Charities – Mr Gillman said that there were various internet companies that offered a percentage of what was spend with them was then given to a charity and he wondered if this was possible for our charity to be involved in this. He would try to establish how this was done.
3. Booklet on Peru – He showed a French booklet designed basically for children. It was said that it may be ideal for the Lullingstone event and could be sold there.
4. Advertising on E-news – Mr Thwaites said that as we currently did not have an Marketing Manager this would be 'rolled over' until we did.

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at approximately 4.45pm.

NEXT MEETING: 2nd February 2019 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 1.30p.m.