

BRITISH CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, held on Saturday 2nd February 2019 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
	Dr Hazel Taylor (HT)	Committee
	Mr Graham Evans (GE)	Committee
	<u>Non Trustee Officers present:</u>	Mr Rick Gillman (RG)

AGREED

- 19/01 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Al Laius (AL) (Journal Editor), Tony Morris (TM) (Membership Secretary) and David Kirkbright (DK) (Treasurer).
- 19/02 **MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 1ST DECEMBER 2018**
As there were no further alterations of these minutes the agreed December minutes were then formally signed by Mr Thwaites.
- 19/03 **MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST MINUTES**
- 18/58/a **Accounting Report** – Mr Thwaites said that the inclusion of the word 'independent' when referring to Society Branches had caused a number of reactions from them and he had had to email an explanatory letter to all Branches, Zone Reps and Society Officers. This had said that we were working on a possible solution to this which had calmed most members' fears. There were, however, a number of queries about branch investment accounts (which he was investigating) and whether branches were still covered by the R.H.S. Insurance (which they were).
- 18/58/f **Zone 3** – Dr Gibbs said that following some questions raised about the Zone 3 accounts he had suggested that the accounts should be audited. The Zone had appointed two auditors who, after careful examination, were satisfied that there was nothing improper with them. They had made a number of suggestions to improve presentation and detail presented, some of which have already been incorporated, and were likely to be implemented in the next full accounts period.
- 18/67/4 **e-News Advertising** – This had been raised in the last minutes and been left unanswered. Since then Mr Evans had written a summary of his thoughts on this. In it he said that the classified adverts would be offered to members for a fixed price, but that non-classified ones would be offered for free to members to increase their attractiveness, that they be under the control of our Advertising Officer and subject to the same terms and conditions as in CactusWorld and thus make *e-News* a small revenue stream and offer an increased service to readers and advertisers. It was said that once it was running that it was possible that advertising could be done by anybody on our new website and there were safeguards built in. It was proposed that adverts. that appear in CactusWorld would also appear in *e-News* and that Mr Evans would consult with Messrs Quail and Bulmer to work out a system for this to happen. This was agreed by this committee.
- 19/04 **ELECTRONIC DECISION RECORDING**
1. **North Devon Branch** – Mr Harris had received an email from the current Secretary/Chairman of the North Devon Branch stating that as their active membership was significantly reducing and elderly and that as nobody wanted to take up the various officer positions, they were thinking of closing the branch and perhaps hold informal meetings in one another's homes say 4 times/year. Mr Harris had replied stating that the branch could not close without the Trustees' permission and that what the Secretary had suggested was within the rules of the Society and who knew what the future would hold. They had some £300 in funds to finance such meetings. It was said that we needed to know when this would happen and Mr Harris would ask this (EH).
 2. **Graham Walker Tour** – He had emailed asking if the Society would finance a speaking tour of the Scottish Branches in 2019 at a cost of some £500. Dr Gibbs had spoken to the Scottish Branches recently and said that most branches had already arranged their 2019 programmes and that if Mr Walker went this year all the branches would have to arrange special nights for his visits and all the branches felt that these special meetings would not be very well supported. If he arranged to do so in 2020 the Zone could pay for the tour themselves. Mr Harris would suggest this to him (EH).
 3. **Cactus Comic Book** – Mr Harris had received information from its author promoting this, which he showed this around this committee. It would cost £7.96 from Amazon.
- 19/05 **COMMUNICATIONS**
1. **Branch Innovation Award** – There had been only one application for this which was from the Bradford Branch and

primarily concerned their work in building a local presence for the Society with their shows and setting up a Society display at their local Cliffe Castle redevelopment. It was felt by this committee that although it was not as innovative as some of the other submissions previously received, it was agreed that the branch should receive the award this year. There was then further discussion within the committee, which finally agreed that we should publicise the award more and perhaps, in addition, set up an annual Branch Merit Award to reward those branches that work hard publicising the Society by putting on displays, etc., as well as continuing the Innovation Award. Nominations would be made by either the branch members or an outside referee and a criteria for the Branch Merit Award should be published. It was said that with the reducing number of speakers, a lot of branches were unable to finance their programmes each year and that perhaps we should look at how we could help with that (JG).

2. Chinese Journal Order – Mr Thwaites had written to the Chinese person stating our journals would be available on-line to members via our new Website once it was up and running. The person also wanted to reprint a number of books in Chinese. Mr Thwaites had passed this request to Mr Quail and Dr and Mrs Mace for advice. The latter people said that there seemed to be a problem in China about doing this, judging from the 2 year delay in the existing agreement which involved the Steve Hammer *Lithops* book and he asked for them to send him details of the process involved in this, so that he could pass this information to the Chinese person and also ask him to provide a list of what books he wanted to reprint (ITH).
3. Alpine Garden Society – Mr Thwaites had recently had a meeting with their President, Chairman, Editor and other committee members, who had said that they wished to work closer with us in the future. They would promote our branch meetings to their members and we would do the same for them. They would also be willing to sell more of our publications and increase the Cacti section in their shows and engage a Cactus Judge to judge these and he did suggest that one or two of their members might wish to attend our Judging Weekend to learn how they were judged. They were also prepared to open up their overseas tours to our members and were also prepared to produce joint publications. Mr Thwaites said that he was in the process of producing a beginner's book on growing succulents outdoors which might be ideal for this. He said that they might also be able to offer advice on how to compile our journal simply and involving minimal technical support and hopefully in a form that its existing and newer readers would find more attractive (ITH).
4. Branch Leaflets – He had obtained the leaflets from Alan Bromley and had been asked if the Society would pay for their printing. It was generally agreed that we would, but Dr Gibbs said that there was a problem preparing the final pdf for the printers that would need Alan Bromley's advice to solve. Mr Evans showed a leaflet that his Zone had paid for and contained information about the three branches in his Zone, but not their annual programme and said that they were issued to garden centres and other publicity sources. If the branch programme was included this would mean that they would need to be rewritten annually to keep them up to date. It was said that the printing could be covered by the Branch Award (see 19/05/a), although it was also said that a limit on the number printed should be set and if we just printed the one without the branch programme, they would not time restrained. It was also said that not every branch would make use of them. It was agreed that both templates would be issued to all branches and that the Society would pay for 50% of the cost and that they be told this (EH).
5. Mr Thwaites said that he had been involved in a three incidents that were happening in three branches and thanks to his advice the incidents were not to happen again.
6. Workshop – Mr Thwaites said that this had now been arranged and that he had some 20 people attending, a mix of young and old, and he said that everybody who was coming would be asked to interview somebody who had just joined the Society and also question the membership using SurveyMonkey. SurveyMonkey was a company based in the U.S.A. and the survey was a new initiative for the B.C.S.S., so a proposed change in the wording of the Research section of the B.C.S.S. Privacy Policy had been drafted by Dr Taylor to cover this. This meeting had approved the amended wording and agreed that it be posted on the old and new websites. Dr Taylor was to provide the updated Privacy Policy to Mr Hildyard to post on the websites (HT/BH). The data that it would produce also involved 2 days of 'number-crunching' which the Workshop organiser was able to provide somebody to do this at £275/day unless we knew of somebody who was able to do this cheaper. It was agreed that we did not have anyone available with the date skills and would therefore engage the organiser.

19/06 LOGO AND BADGE

To date all of the proposed designs of logo had not been very successful and Mr Thwaites produced another which was a strap line but which was generally thought to be acceptable and consisted of the two lines 'CACTUSWORLD - A Succulent Adventure'. It was agreed that we would use this for the next year to gauge its effect. However, the latest design consisting of half of a *Cereus* top and half an *Echeveria* rosette without a line dividing them was generally agreed as a suitable logo and a finalised design would be produced in 3 sizes (large, small and possibly badge size) as our logo. However, all the badge designs so far submitted had had a number of criticisms and it was generally agreed that this was not as important as the logo, so alternatively a simpler badge designs would be sought in the future (GC). However, there was a question of what we should do now that the stock of current badge design was down to 6 badges, plus the cost of them had risen quite steeply (see May BoT Minutes 18/26). It was suggested that junior members be issued with a plain oval badge and a sheet of stick-on designs so that they could make up their own badge. In the meantime a more acceptable badge design would be sought. In this way, the pressure to choose a design would become less important.

19/07 ACCOUNTING REPORT UPDATE

Mr Thwaites had already reported on how he had dealt with the queries raised in the last minutes and had also asked Mr Arnold how the branches could possibly refer to our charity number and get discounted rates. It was said that we needed to be very careful how this was done and now that we had professional advice were working on this (JA).

19/08

FINAL ARRANGEMENT FOR THE 2019 A.G.M.

Mr Harris said that he had finalised the agenda for this and a 30 minute slot had been arranged for Mr Thwaites and that there would be no elections necessary for either the Trustee's Committee or the Shows Committee as there were an exact number of candidates for the former and one outstanding on the latter, but that nobody had offered to take Mr Hill's position as Minutes Secretary or the remaining vacancy on the Shows Committee. Mr Evans had agreed to write the A.G.M. minutes for this year. Mr Tibbetts would have a table displaying the suggested Zone reorganisation and Mr Thwaites would highlight the critical vacancies we currently had amongst Officials. He would also highlight this in the next *e-News*. The conversation then switched to the position of a replacement seed purchaser and a possible candidate would be approached (**GE**). It was suggested that the criteria for all nominees for the Shows Committee being qualified Judges be changed to one committee position being for somebody with extensive showing experience and it was said that this was a future possibility. Mr Thwaites suggested that Officials who don't attend these meetings should have an identified member of this committee to contact, raise their concerns to and represent them on this committee. This was agreed and would be done. However, they should continue sending their report to the meeting if they usually did so. Dr Taylor was currently compiling a list of suitable Trustees for the various officials. As the planned 2020 A.G.M. coincided with Easter it was agreed that this would be held on 25th April 2020.

19/09

WEBSITE UPDATE

Mr Thwaites said that he, Messrs Gillman, Hildyard and Morris were meeting with Pedalo tomorrow to discuss the new Website, the membership database issues, direct debit payment and on-line registration of people wanting to join and our shop problems, plus maintaining our database security. He also asked those present if they had reviewed the new Website and if it was up to date in their opinion. Dr Gibbs said that not all that he was working on was, but once he had completed what he had been allocated, he would make the appropriate changes. Mr Hildyard said that certain out of date items could be deleted and Mr Thwaites said that he would not mind a few blanks on the Website as these could be filled in later. Mr Charles said that he had reviewed it and that he had found a few mistakes, mis-spellings, but suggested that everybody now review the new Website and give their written opinion on what needed to be done. Mr Thwaites said that we needed a Website Editor working under Mr Hildyard to ensure that the contributions were in the same style. It was also said that our old Website was full of out of date data which gave a poor impression to anybody reading it and needed to be changed more regularly, but it was then said that the old Website was virtually dead and that we had not been told how to update it. Mr Hildyard said that with the new Website, once it was finalised, he would go on a full day's training course with Pedalo and then, if everybody reviewed the website and let him know what mistakes there were and what updates needed to be shown, then he would ensure that these were addressed. It was also said that everybody needed to be informed how to update the various aspects of the site and that we needed to make it more attractive to the younger element of our membership by getting them involved with the site. This should be done before it was launched.

19/10

FUTURE PUBLICATIONS

It was said that there was currently a market for introductory books and that we needed people to write these or maybe reprint certain ones which the German Society currently produce. Mr Charles would bring examples of these to the next meeting (**GC**).

19/11

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

1. Chairman:

1. Mr Thwaites reported that since the last meeting he had been inundated by branches worried that the Society would cast them adrift as the word 'independent' had been mentioned in the December minutes. He had since, via Mr Harris, emailed all Branch secretaries, Zone Reps and Officers to explain the position and he was still getting queries. He said that we were in danger of alienating the membership over the issue and that we needed to address it.
2. He was pleased that we had launched the CactusWorld Live event at Lullingstone Castle and he was sure that this would be enjoyed by the young generation who were growing our plants at the moment and existing members who would visit to have a fun memorable time.
3. A membership card would be issued with the next journal and he was determined to start offering members new benefits of membership.
4. We had meeting arranged with the Website developers on 3rd February and he was hoping that we could start to plan for a live date in 2019.
5. He said that there was a Workshop planned soon which would look at:-
 - a) The creation of ideas for moving the Society forward to appeal to the next generation, including Marketing to attract new members.
 - b) Understanding what new members want.
 - c) Keeping existing members happy.
 - d) Helping Zones and Branches to be multi-generational.

2. Vice-Chairman:

Dr Gibbs said that the G.D.P.R. permission forms had been circulated to all Branch Secretaries, Zone Reps and all Officials on the Honorary Officials and Details of Branches list. So far all three groups had shown similar response rates (73%, 75% and 69% respectively) and he intended to follow up both non-responders and those that reported a change in Branch Secretary at their upcoming A.G.M.

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

Mr Morris had enrolled 115 new members of whom 78 were full, 27 senior, 6 associate and 4 junior. He said that of these there were 14 new overseas members; 4 from China, 3 from the U.S.A., 2 from Canada and 1 each from Kenya, Australia, Spain, Czech Republic and Croatia. Nine of these new Members also took Bradleya. Three of the new members had joined using the reduced price offer when purchasing the information pack; this brought the total to 127. The enrolment total for the same period last year was 114. He had also reinstated 7 former members.

4. **Treasurer's Report:**

1. **Membership** – Mr Kirkbright said that the current numbers as at January 27th compared with a similar date last year were as follows: Full 1088 (+56), Senior 884 (+57), Junior 27 (+9) which when added together gave a journal taking membership total of 1999 (+122). Associate membership was 161 (+1) and Bradleya takers were 391 (+51). He said that although the combined journal were up 122 on last year's figure he would have hoped for a greater increase taking into account the large increase we had during 2018. He also said that of the 1741 Full members so far renewed, 227 were from overseas with a renewal rate of 60.5% and that he had separated out figures for the two groups which were very significant: out of 2472 members who were members prior to 2018 and remained in membership at the end of 2018, 1705 (69%) had so far renewed and out of 558 who joined during 2018, only 167 (29.9%) had renewed. This represented a terrible waste of resources and of Mr Morris' time in enrolling them. If their renewal rate was the same as the previous group we would have had 218 more renewals.
 2. **Annual Accounts** – He said that these were examined by the auditors and finalized and copies had been signed by the relevant Trustees. He also said that one figure of which he had always counseled against taking too much notice of in the accounts was the amount in the investment fund which in the long run had grown, but was subject to market fluctuations. In the current Brexit climate the market had fallen back and the value of that investment had fallen by £19,119 since the end of September, almost entirely wiping out the growth in 2018. However, the return on that investment in dividends was a very healthy 3.4%.
 3. **Badges** – In his membership report last May (Minute 18/25), Mr Morris highlighted a problem regarding badges and Mr Kirkbright then gave his thoughts on this and what we might do to overcome this problem. This had subsequently been discussed at this meeting (see Minute 19/06).
5. **Shows Committee Report:**
Mr Tibbetts said that there was no report due as the Shows Committee's first meeting for 2019 was scheduled for Sunday 10th March.
6. **Research Report:**
Mr Hill had resigned from his position as Secretary of the Research Committee and a new contact person was yet to be appointed. However, it had also been learnt that no new proposals had been received since their last report.
7. **Journal Editor:**
Mr Laius' written report said that the March journal was in the process of being put together and was on schedule. Phil Crewe would be compiling the March issue together with telephone support from David Quail, if required. The team had been involved with a lot of extra work this quarter, particularly regarding the inserts which this time would comprise of the Index, Membership card, A.G.M. Agenda and reports, Cultivation Cards, etc. Looking ahead, he had 13 articles which were already designed, with another 3 which were with the production team awaiting design and layout, and 4 that were currently work in progress. There would therefore be enough articles for the next two issues (June & September 2019).
8. **Technical Editor:**
Mr Quail's written report stated that progress on preparing the articles for the March 2019 Journal was on schedule. Phil Crewe had agreed to manage the assembly and paging of articles for the March Journal and the compilation of the Journal, with Mr Quail on standby for telephone assistance.
9. **Advertising Officer's Report:**
1. **Advertising** – Mr Quail's written report said that the net advertising revenue for March 2019 was £498, compared to £515, £457 and £656 in March of the three preceding years. He was in discussion with Gregory Bulmer, who had agreed to take over as Advertising Officer and who had also recently joined the Journal layout team and therefore already had the required skills for laying out adverts. He was including him in all planning and communications relating to the March Journal and they would do the work on the June Journal together with a view to him assuming responsibility thereafter. This appointment was agreed by this committee.
 2. **Discussions with our printers** – The invitations to our two printers to tender for 2019 printing were sent out before Christmas (10 December) and a reminder after Christmas, but one (Swallowtail) was yet to respond with quotations. Both were asked if possible to propose compostable wrappers. Both had also been asked to include Cultivation Notes pages, drilled with two holes. We had also designed a draft membership card and both printers were asked if possible to print these, including the members' names and membership numbers printed individually on them. He had now accepted Warners' quotation and proposals and they had agreed to print the March and September Journals. They were now able to offer compostable potato starch wrappers and we had asked them to do so. They had no problems producing the Cultivation Notes. They would also print the membership cards, but for this year they were not able to print member numbers and names on them individually, although there might be ways which we could investigate and test for next year. They would therefore print the cards without these details on A5 sheets which would contain

instructions to tear out the perforated central, credit-card-shaped/sized membership card and to write their member number and name on them. He was assured that our other printer was almost ready to come back to us with proposals for all the above and, subject to these being satisfactory, they would be offered the June and December Journal printing and mailing. We were also in contact with a number of other printers interested in printing our Journal.

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

1. Mr Charles reported that after an early start on *Bradleya* 37 (2019) he already had 22 papers submitted, of which 12 had been approved for publication and were already paginated, filling 88 pages. He had 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.
2. He had updated the B.C.S.S. listing on the Neilsen I.S.B.N. database to include all of our books which were currently available. The database was used by the book trade internationally to see what books were currently in print and should result in more sales for the B.C.S.S.

11. **Cultivation Booklet Report:**

Mr Charles said that he had planned to finish writing the first draft of the A5 promotional booklet in time for our February meeting, but this was now running late. It would then be distributed to the BoT for checking. Everybody would be asked to offer pictures that were needed and he did not have available. He apologised for the delay in producing it but he had had the 'flu and his computer had had problems over Xmas. It was also said that contrary to what had appeared in the last meeting minutes (Minute 18/55), branches could not give them away for free as this would compromise the scheme, but could sell them to possible publicity outlets.

12. **Publications report:**

1. Calendars – Dr Mace said that we had 108 copies left, with a few orders still trickling in. At this point we usually reduced the price to clear a few more. He said that we needed to take a decision on production of a 2020 calendar. This was agreed to be done. It was said that the calendar needed to be better publicised and Mrs Mace said that if we doubled the number of flyers being printed, we could include them in both the September and December journals, but that as we used different printers for each of these editions, storage could be a problem. She said that possible images for the 2020 one should be sent to her and that envelopes were required to be ordered for the 2020 calendar.
2. Graham Charles' Cultivation Booklet – Although Dr Mace could not store the total quantity produced, he thought that we could store some for sale to branches, etc.

13. **Digital Programme Library:**

1. A “straight from digital” presentation of cactus flowers, referred to in the last report had now been released.
2. Work had started on a potential collaboration with John Ellis on a program, again mainly cacti.
3. Enquiries had been made about another such talk, perhaps with a succulent focus. This was mentioned before. SOURCES OF SUCH MATERIAL WOULD BE WELCOMED. Alan Bromley had been contacted over sources of the images that he used for Social Media, but due to time constraints this had not yet been pursued.
4. A number of presentations, filtered for quality of the images, were passed to the Social Media team for use on the net. This had started with a nice shot of *Dudleyas* from Sonia Barker-Fricker. The posts aimed to reference the Society library, in the hope that this might alert people to the advantages of branch meetings.
5. Scanning continued with a number of slides available, including Tom Jenkins material, which were being post processed.
6. Dr Gibbs had provided over 100 images from Vic Morris, mainly of cacti. There was some repetition but a short programme was planned later in the year.
7. Resources for at least 2 more National Show programs existed. Slides had been selected for a 2016 program, but the commentary was needed and, with no judges comments, this would be a long job.
8. AS BEFORE:- The issue of digital delivery of programs has been highlighted as a strategy point needing some agreement. This was discussed by this committee and it was thought that a more effective way would be to process it via the new Website when this had been sorted and this should be available to everybody (individuals or branches).

14. **CactusWorld Live:**

A major milestone was reached with the formal launch of CactusWorld Live and its brand image in the January edition of *eNews*. Most of the planning was complete and focus was now shifting to preparations for the event, including the show, displays, opportunities for branches and the all important promotion.

15. **eNews:**

Mr Evans said that *eNews* had been published regularly in the first week of the month since October, when he had taken over as editor. The planned distribution date of the first Friday was missed once (in January) on account of clarification being needed for a particular announcement. Feedback had been very positive and Sheila Cude was to be thanked for her invaluable work on layout.

19/12 **UPDATES/POINTS FROM OFFICER'S REPORTS**

1. CactusWorld Live – Mr Harris asked what accommodation had been provided for the 1st Aiders and who would occupy the various display tables, as he was sorting out the floor plans for the two marquees. It was said that the display areas and branch displays were still to be arranged, but it would appear that all the nurseries booked could be accommodated.
2. Members Benefits – Mr Thwaites said that there had been a delay caused by the accounting problems but he would be arranging these in the near future, but he asked the meeting to let him have any ideas on what future membership benefits they could think of that were within the rules.

3. Journal Production – Mr Thwaites would put Mr Laius and the Editorial team in touch with the Alpine Garden Society people about the possibility of an alternative method of producing the journal. It was noted that the journal team, and indeed other Officers of the Society, provided their services free. As we modernised the Society, it was likely that we would need to mitigate the burden on our willing volunteers by contracting out some tasks where possible. The implications of this for the Society subscription and other annual income might need to be considered in due course in order to ensure that the Society could continue to provide existing services to members and to be in a position to provide new member services and benefits (**ITH**).
4. Treasurer's Report – Mr Kirkbright had made the point that there had been a high attrition rate amongst our new members and Mr Thwaites said that possibly this was due to their expected experience of our Society was unsatisfactory and we should be aware of this.
5. Internet Charities (see 18/67/2 in last BoT minutes) – Mr Gillman had now discovered what we needed to do and had obtained the necessary paperwork, which Mr Kirkbright needed to sign, to register our charity and then we should publicise this benefit.

19/13 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Mrs Mace said that there was a serious problem with using PayPal to buy seed, which needed to be sorted out as it seriously increased the workload of both Mr Morris and Mr & Mrs Lewis. This would be looked into.
2. Dr Taylor said that she could provide a Trustees Pack to let Trustees be aware of their responsibilities of their roles, but Mr Harris said that Dr Tebbenham had already provided this at a previous meeting and said that he would send her a copy.

As it was her last meeting Mr Thwaites thanked Dr Taylor for all her hard work and support during her time as an annual Trustee.

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at approximately 4.50pm.

NEXT MEETING: 11th May 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.