

BRITISH CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Saturday, 2nd August 2008 at 11.30 am, at the Holiday Inn, Milton Keynes, Bucks.

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| <u>Present:</u> | Mr J Arnold | Chairman |
| | Dr A Glen | Vice Chairman |
| | Mr D Kirkbright | Treasurer |
| | Mr E Harris | Secretary |
| | Mr D Slade | Membership Secretary |
| | Mr R Mottram | Journal Editor |
| | Dr C Walker | Bradleya Editor |
| | Dr A Mace | Publications & Internet Officer |
| | Mrs C Darbon | Shows Committee Representative |
| | Mrs S Mace | Committee |
| | Mrs A Vanden Bon | Committee |
| | Mr T Morris | Committee |
| | Dr R Tebbenham | Committee |

AGREED VERSION

08/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr D Quail.

08/26 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3RD MAY 2008

These were formally ratified and signed after 3 corrections were made, namely in minute 08/16 should be Mr Hart-Dyke, in minute 08/18/6(b) should be Steve Penfield and minute 08/24/1 date should be 4th April.2009.

08/27 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

07/20 Monitoring Potential Awards – Now in place and some of the awards considered at this meeting came via this.

07/41/3(g) Returned Equipment – Mr Quail had reviewed the returned files (up to year 2005) and asked Mr Neville to check and send a known missing one.

07/45 Society Logo – Joyce Coccozza was yet to send Mr Quail her suggested design but appeared to have given it much thought. It was felt that in view of the long time scale to date an early conclusion was needed and a design must be available for consideration at the December meeting. If this proved unacceptable then possibly other sources would be explored but the situation needed a quick resolution.

07/52 Society Robins – Juliette Hatt had contacted all robin members and a number were underway again. It was suggested that she be asked to maintain an electronic record of all information gathered via robins and that she give us adequate notice if she no longer wishes to run them to prevent a re-occurrence of the recent situation and make any changeover that much easier. (Mr Harris).

08/26/1 Wyevale Garden Centres – It was reported that this had not been very successful due to restrictions imposed, but from other member's experiences it was felt this was probably due to the local rather than overall management policy.

08/28 ELECTRONIC DECISION MAKING

There had been none since the last meeting.

08/29 COMMUNICATIONS

1. Chelsea Show – Paperwork for the 2009 show had been received and was passed to Mr Harris.

2. George Fricker – He had written to regretfully resign from the Society but wished us well.

3. Jean Ellis – Mrs Mace gave a progress report and contact details for her as she was currently in hospital.

4. Awards – 9 A.O.M.'s and 2 R.H.M.A. were approved. It was agreed that, in future, where members were approved for R.H.M.A.'s without having previously received an A.O.M., the latter would also be awarded, as the former was in fact a 'bar' to the latter. This would also be done retrospectively, there only being 2 previous recipients to which this applied.

08/30 REPORTS OF OFFICERS

1. Vice-Chairman:

Dr Glen reported that there appeared to be unhappiness at Plymouth branch regarding their current secretary/Zone rep., it being said that he was unavailable to members and suggesting that a new contact be appointed. The method being suggested to do this was against Society rules and he and Mr Kirkbright had been in contact with the branch involved suggesting alternative courses of action. He had still to hear from the branches in Zone 14 on the suggested splitting of the Zone into two, returns to be made by September. He was also aware of some branches that were not holding the minimum number of 4 meetings per year and would acquaint them of the Society ruling and encourage them to do so or maybe consider merging with a nearby branch, or if necessary, consider closure. There was also discussion on the branches in the North-West which also seemed to be having problems. He said that the September journal would contain details of the expansion of the repertoire of 3 speakers and an additional speaker. The slide librarian, David Greenaway, would welcome the addition of digital presentations and urged that they incorporate

captions/commentaries. He said that another good display had been staged at Tatton Park by 6 members of Macclesfield branch despite being judged in the wrong category. The organisers had apologised for this. Over the 5 days of the event, 19 members of 6 branches from Zones 5 and 19 had helped to staff the stand.

2. **Membership Secretary:**

Mr Slade reported that from 1st October to 28th July he had enrolled 202 new members compared with 231 for about the same period last year. These comprised 152 Full (-5), 36 Seniors (-9), 1 Junior (-4) and 13 Associates (-11) a down turn of 29%. Of these 118 joined via the internet (-16) and 33 were from overseas (-15). Malvern Show had gained 8 members, BBC Gardener's World Live 5 members and 3 members were known to be via the Forum. Zone 3's 20ft display at the Great Yorkshire Show had won the Large Gold Medal and gained 5 members.

3. **Treasurer:**

- a) **Membership** - Mr Kirkbright reported that membership to date for this year compared with the same period last year was: Full 1990 (-91), Senior 847 (+34), Junior 7 (-4), making a journal taking total of 2844 (-61), and Associates 265 (-18), and a total membership to date of 3109. Part of this drop in Full members was due to a change to Senior status (89) which if included in the calculation would have meant a Full membership of 2079 (-2) and Senior membership of 758 (-55) i.e. we were losing more Senior members. He also said the recent 'first name' exercise had resulted in these appearing against some 85% of U.K. members on the database. It was emphasised that these would only be used in personal correspondence. Bradleya renewals were 611 (-69). He had now completed the mailing of non-renewed members (some 480) which resulted in renewals from 108 Full, 41 Seniors and 4 Associates totalling £2,128 plus 20 Bradleyas worth £280. No overseas members were in this mailing although he understood Dr Mace had emailed some where addresses were known. Mr Kirkbright then gave a detailed breakdown on Bradleya costs and sales which showed a need to increase its price, and after discussion and a vote (12 for with 1 abstention), it was agreed that 2009 prices would be £16 (prepublication) and £21 (post publication) in the U.K. and £20 and £25 for overseas.
- b) **Gift Aid** – The claim for the fiscal year up to April 2008 resulted in a total payment of £9,942, which excluding the £1,744 applicable to branches and special funds, left £8,198 from regular income.
- c) **Books** – The *Ferocactus* book sales were steady and now had a positive cash flow to date of £2,832, whilst the *Ariocarpus* book sales remain sluggish and still needed £1,236 to break even. However, if these were combined, then the overall break even point had been reached and we were £1,596 in surplus. The *Echeveria* book was now completed and will be delivered by Wednesday. Original estimated costs had risen 11% due to an increase of 30 pages since estimated and a last minute costing crisis had been averted after intervention by Mr Kirkbright.

4. **Shows Committee:**

- a) **Judges Course** – Mrs Darbon said that this year's course had been cancelled due to only 11 people signing up, well down on previous years, making it unviable. The future of next year's course and beyond would be discussed at the next meeting of the committee in October and the effect of E.L.K and other events. An earlier commitment would be sought in future.
- b) **National Show** – Preparations were well in hand and it had been agreed to display sponsorship source on each class. Prize cards had been pre-scribed by computer so only the winners' names need to be written in. There would be 9 scribes, 1 per set of judges. Ways of improving the efficiency/effectiveness of the wristband entry system had been discussed and members of this committee were requested to provide themselves with and wear name badges, especially those on the Society stand. The future of the Keith Grantham Memorial Fund residue (approx. £659) was discussed but a decision deferred to the next meeting.

5. **Conservation Committee:**

Dr Maddams in a written report detailed the following:-

- a) **DEFRA/Animal Health** – a summary of the 58 replies to the consultative questionnaire on increased changes to import/export licences had been forwarded to the minister in charge of DEFRA but no reply had been forthcoming to date and implementation of the changes was now not expected by the due date of October 2008.
- Projects** – Detailed proposals for 2 related projects in the Keiplaat District of South Africa had been received from Martin Scott. These were for fence protection of endangered *Euphorbia brevirama* and *Euphorbia astrophora*, these to be undertaken at the same time at a total cost of £1,498 plus a suggested rider of 15% to cover rising costs. Preliminary committee consensus seemed to be in favour of this. Dr Paul Mguba, a new contact at the Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya, had made a tentative approach about funding for a detailed field study of *Sansevieria pinguicula*, but the committee felt that this was too ambitious and expensive and had suggested a smaller project or for him to find additional sponsors for this, as only part funding would be possible as it stood. Dr Maddams also reported that plants grown by Gordon Foster from seed supplied by Carlos Ostolaza, would be on sale at the National Show.

6. **Research Committee:**

Alan Hill in a written report said that Darrell Plowes, a well known *Stapeliad* expert, had been in email correspondence about the possibility of an expedition to Angola to visit various type localities, plus other sites of *Stapeliads* in order to close his investigation into the plants. This would be so that he can complete his work which could replace White & Sloane's epic publication. The committee has considered his 'pre-proposal' and his answers to searching questions posed, including expected publication and how his current residency in Zimbabwe would affect money transfer, and expressed an interest in seeing for consideration a detailed and costed proposal, which he was now preparing. Members of this committee said that a replacement work had already been published by other authorities in the last couple of years and that the Research Committee should be made aware of this.

7. **Advertising/Journal Production Officer:**

- a) Advertising – Mr Quail in a written report said that the third quarter advertising was £461. This was down on last year but we had not lost or gained any series-of-4-advertisers. He felt that the member, who had previously volunteered to help, might not be entirely suitable and that another volunteer might have to be sought to actively gain more advertisers. He suggested approaching one of the volunteers for the Society Future marketing project to do this.
- b) Journal Production – Colour content in the last journal had been good again, apart from 2 technical issues which the printers had been asked to investigate. The September journal was almost finalised and provided the September Newsletter could be finalised quickly, would be with the printers at least a week early, enabling the proofs to be cleared before the National Show, thus giving him time to prepare for it. Mr Mottram's help in providing all the journal material particularly early had been appreciated. Steve Penfield had continued to contribute to a high standard and another member interested in joining the team had been provided with further training material with a view to hopefully moving on to the next stage of induction into the team. Mrs Vanden Bon had done most of the article layout work to a consistently high standard as well as laying out the BCSS News, for which he expressed his thanks. Steve Morris could only process 1 article due to his other business commitments but continued to be of great value as a proof reader and checking the complete assembled Journal. He had used the procedure specified by Mr Quail for assembling the journal on one of his own Quark business projects so should have no problems using this on the journal if called upon to do so. Mr Neville had rejoined the proof-reading team and had contributed well.

8. **Bradleya Editor:**

Dr Walker reported that Bradleya 26 was published on July 18th and authors copies and reprints dispatched on 22nd. Work was already starting on Bradleya 27, this being another special issue to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth, the 150th anniversary of *The Origin of the Species* and the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The theme this time would be Evolution. It would probably be a larger issue again (maybe up to 160 pages). He said that the first manuscript on Darwin and succulents was to hand and gave a list of some 8 other offers or commissioned papers planned and another non-evolutionary paper, if they materialise, plus an unpublished painting of *Stapelia hirsuta*. He had also very recently received another paper. There was some discussion on whether these specials should be in hard back but it was agreed that this would not happen both on cost grounds and the fact that it would not match the other Bradleyas. Dr Walker would also arrange advanced advertising to help with sales, especially in other journals, including those of Kew.

9. **Journal Editor:**

Mr Mottram reported that comments on the June issue had been limited but the big bias towards Other Succulents in that issue had featured among these comments. He had had very favourable comments from some authors on the treatment of their material in the journal, but he said that he had little control over the content of each issue, being dependant on material supplied, and gave various reasons for this predominance. However, the September issue should rebalance this point. In support of the Futures initiative, he had produced one of his occasional editorials, this analysing its effect on journal policy and building on the goodwill already generated from it. He indicated the content of the September journal and said that he had enough material to fill a further 2 issues. He was proposing to include an article on the history of humour in cacti in the December issue and had tried to persuade Gerhard Marx to produce a caricature for this article, possibly to appear on the cover. Gerhard was currently too busy with other things but Mr Mottram would keep trying. He had also obtained permission to reproduce a couple of Desperate Dan cartoons, one of which he thought might also be suitable for the cover, but in view of the comments on the June 2006 cover, sought the thoughts of this committee before doing so. Some committee expressed reservations on this proposal and a final decision was left until all committee had seen the cartoon. **Post Meeting Update:** After further email discussion an acceptable compromise was reached.

10. **Publications/Internet Officer:**

- a) Internet – Dr Mace reported no major problems, the minor ones being fixed during maintenance work. He had been chasing some branches to update their web sites and said that email was still a problem, with far too many messages disappearing into 'black holes'.
- b) Publications – Bradleya 26 had been received and added into publication sales. It had taken the remaining outside storage shed space, so the *Echeveria* book would initially be stored indoors. Orders for this had been arriving steadily (currently around 140), but this did not include an unspecified number that Keith Larkin would collect at the National Show or what orders Mr Kirkbright had received directly. U.K. cheques were banked on 1st August and a list of credit cards sent to Mr Slade on the same date. Hopefully most of these orders would be sent out before the National Show except where people had indicated that they would collect them there.

08/31 **TO RATIFY THE APPOINTMENT OF MR D. KIRKBRIGHT AS SOCIETY TREASURER FOR 2008/9**

This was agreed unanimously.

08/32 **UPDATE ON THE SOCIETY FUTURE WORKING TEAM**

Dr Tebbenham had provided a summary of progress to date and ran through the main points. All salient data received had been sent to all journal receiving members via the June CactusWorld and a pdf of the A.G.M. Powerpoint presentation would appear on our website. Draft recommendations on the returns on Zones, Society Structure and Governance had been or were being prepared for discussion by the team and all files were being stored on the Society server. He said that 3 volunteers had come forward to help with projects identified to date, i.e. effective marketing and promotion of the Society and digitisation of both the slide and book libraries. Most of these were biased towards the digitising process. However before this was done he needed to provide a set of criteria to ensure effectiveness and Dr

Glen agreed to provide members of this committee with copies of the digitisation work carried out on Society journals by the chairman of the Stoke-on-Trent branch, this to be for their own information only. It was also suggested that the U.S. Society be asked the cost and method used for their recent digitising exercise on journals (**Dr Mace**). He gave a series of future proposals, i.e. member appointment of teams to cover the projects identified in CactusWorld, their terms of reference and the projects' time scales (decided by this committee), the futures team to produce a summary report integrating the feedback from Members, Branches, Zones and Officials, this to be available for our November meeting to which all the Futures Team would be invited. He also provided a detailed reporting schedule for the team and a series of recommendations on how Zones should be organised and function, these being based on the returns from 10 of the 19 zones. In the discussion that followed, it was suggested that the forum moderators should be officers of the Society and it was agreed that one of the two current moderators should be co-opted to this committee to ensure awareness of Society dealings and reduction of the misinformation that often appeared there (**Mr Kirkbright**). We also needed to appoint a third moderator. It was also said that the Futures team needed to demonstrate positive progress soon in order to maintain credibility with the general membership. **Post Meeting Update:** Both current moderators had been consulted and they had agreed that Mr Hildyard be the one to be co-opted. Mr Hildyard would be invited to our December meeting. (**Mr Harris**)

08/33 **SOCIETY LIBRARIES**

There was currently nothing further to report on this.

08/34 **SOCIETY PATRONS**

Mr Quail said that Ann Swithinbank's agent had received the second invitation but that as she had been travelling since then, was yet to reply. The approach to Michel Lacoste was still to be made. (**Mr Quail & Dr Mace**)

08/35 **SOCIETY CONVENTION**

Mrs Mace reported that Tok Schoeman had also been booked as a speaker and there was further discussion on other possible speakers such as Ralf Hillmann and Marlon Machado, but both spoke on South American topics and a Mexican theme was required. It was suggested that Nigel Taylor be asked to provide this, which would allow one of these (preferably Marlon) to be invited. Advertising of the event would continue to appear in future journals. A booking form would be included once all speakers were booked but Mr Kirkbright expressed concern that he had yet to see any costing for the event. This would be addressed. Mrs Mace again appealed for items for the auction and raffle.

08/36 **SOCIETY/BRANCH ADVERTISING**

All branches had been circulated over this and of those that had replied (some 36), most had expressed an interest in having such a CD. Information supplied so far had been generally very good and a coordinator was now required to review this material and assess its suitability for inclusion. Mr Arnold volunteered to do this. The topic of Society advertising was left until our December meeting.

08/37 **DATES FOR 2009 F. & G.P.C. MEETINGS**

These were decided as February 7th, May 9th, August 1st, December 5th subject to confirmation. **Post meeting update:** all dates now confirmed.

08/38 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

There being no other business the meeting closed at 4.25pm.

NEXT MEETINGS: Special meeting of the Futures Team and the Finance & General Purposes Committee on **8th November 2008** at the Holiday Inn, London Road, Newport Pagnell, MK16 0JA (just off junction 14 of M1). It would start at 11.30am and light refreshments would be served at 1.30/1.45 p.m. Next normal Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting would be on **6th December 2008** at the same venue and start time.