

BCSS Board of Trustees Meeting 5th December 2020, 2pm-5pm (COVID-19 zoom meeting)

Officers Present:

- Ian Thwaites - Chairman
 - Jim Gibbs - Vice Chair
 - Al Laius – *CactusWorld* Editor
 - Graham Charles - International Ambassador • Stirling Baker – Annual Trustee
 - Alice Vanden Bon - Technical Editor
 - Bill Darbon - Shows Committee
 - John Arnold - Legal Advisor
 - Simon Snowdon - Membership Secretary .
 - Bill Hilyard - IT manager
 - Jo Adderley - Annual trustee
 - Vanessa Ridge - BCSS secretary co-opted • Richard Chantler - Treasurer
 - David Kirkbright - Retiring Treasurer
 - Barry Tibbetts - Trustee
- Guest
- Robin Arnott - New constitution

Apologies for absence

- 1 • No advance apologies.

Minutes of last meeting.

- 2 • Minutes of the Last Meeting 27th of September were briefly discussed with no comments. Agreed and signed off.

Outstanding action.

3 Vanessa Ridge co-opted as BCSS secretary as of the 1st of October 2020. To stand for members election in 2021.

4 Journal Binders are to remain the same size currently.

CITIES and Defra is an ongoing task with the conservation committee. New Car stickers to be sent to Simon Snowdon (membership secretary) to be included into the June 2021 *CactusWorld* Journal.

Jim Gibbs to action an overseas Rep for the BCSS.

To Approve the 2019/2020 accounts and Annual Report.

5. The accounts were presented and approved for 2019/2020. Ian Thwaites to sign off the accounts and forward to David Kirkbright via Jim Gibbs on Monday the 17th of December 2020.

5a. The report for 2020 accounts show that membership is down this year as well as publication sales. BioOne electronic publications sales are up. Travel and meeting costs are down. Equity based investment fund is up.

COIF funds are still available for Branches. COIF needs the accounts to be approved by way of filling a form.

Action Plan Eddy Harris for information.

6. David Kirkbright has formally retired as treasurer and has completed the handover of the BCSS Treasurer to Richard Chantler. We are still trying to get the mandate for HSBC.

Acommodation Payments.

7. Having previously been circulated, this was accepted.

Review Constitution proposed changes {Guest Robin Arnott}

15hrs-16.00hrs

8. At the AGM John Arnold raised the question of reforming the current BCSS constitution and that it was in need of updating. Robin Anott advised the BoT that he had previously written charity constitutions and that also he was a chief executive of others. Robin has written the new constitution which was forwarded to all Trustees in October 2020 by Ian Thwaites.

One proposed change was made and no objections were noted. It was agreed that the updates as proposed would be made and the document recirculated for final comment by 31st December 2020 for the new constitution were raised. These have been agreed by all electronically. The New constitution is a total replacement but covers all matters as part of the BCSS requirements and has been modernized. The new constitution indicates that the whole board of trustees should be elected by the membership with a maximum of three terms of three years, to govern and management stream actions rather than holding positions to be an officer. The Chairman of the society has to stand alone on a mandate application and be elected members. Membership subscription to be annual rather than a calendar year. The new constitution will allow for sub committees to be appointed by the board rather than elected.

All standing orders are being re written and currently are still being reviewed and updated in line with the current Charities Commission's guidelines, before final approval by the Bot, to then be put before the members.

Robin Arnott to come back to the Chairman with the new Updated standing orders by the 31st December 2020 . The chairman will then circulate the amended new constitution to the BoT.

Electronic Decision Recording

9. Bill Hillyard has agreed the virtual show with Bill Darbon and Gareth Darbon to be the contact point.

Communications (including any Awards nominations)

10. CactusPro requested to scan old journals and Bradleya. As these will go onto the new website it was a greed that these are a members benefit. The Board declined the CactusPro proposal.

The following awards will be made at the AGM.

The G D Rowley lifetime achievement award to go to S. Robert Holt award to T. AOM to P.

The German Cactus & Succulent Society are hoping to further our friendship with us, and to cement this friendship they have offered one year's free membership. The BCSS will reciprocate with the same offer for one of their members. The German Society will be joining us at the 2020 Zoom Christmas party followed on by a bilingual Zoom talk in January 2021.

Joint meetings are being discussed with the American CSSA.

Finalizing the revised 2021 A.G.M Program

11 AGM members questions half hour with Ian Thwathes Chairman.

Voting forms to be sent out to members and associates if needed AGM will be by Zoom.

John Arnold to be the returning officer if any voting is required as Vanessa Ridge standing for election.

David Kirkbright will need a slot for accounts as he is currently writing up the accounts for March 2021 journal.

Branches need not hold an AGM for 2020 due to COVID-19. Approved by CC.

Branches to produce unaudited accounts for 2020 but need not to be approved by Branch. Secretaries and Zone reps were sent a circulation asking about their use of Zoom and whether they can use one purchased by the society. No requests came back but Jim Gibbs requested permission to arrange for an extra Zoom licence if it became necessary. This was granted.

6 or 7 Branches do hold a zoom licence. Some Reps were unresponsive and branches were contacted directly.

Review Officers Reports

12 The Shows Committee have been active via email. They have not conducted any zoom meetings. The New handbook of shows 11th edition is complete with 500 in the process of being delivered in the new year to all judges and branches. Virtual flower show 17th/18th April 2021 externally organised to be discussed further but a must for the BCSS to be involved with.

Deposit paid for holding the judging course which is on the 10th and 11th of July 2021 at the Hilton Leicestershire. Sales tables available without commission.

Two virtual shows will be held in 2021 this will include members and non-members rules to be printed in the journal and online Show committee to run a zoom on how to display plants. National show two locations have been short listed. These are the Newark showground and Spalding convention centre.

All stationary held by shows committee including POS to be disposed of. The new BCSS public branding CWL to be used. POS to be replaced when shows commence. Medals can continue to be used as this is an internal award.

The Shows Committee proposal to help Branches financially to hold shows in central locations was noted and will be added to the agenda at the next meeting. This was not new as the Chairman had already committed to helping branches to do this. The Chairman stated that in the interim he was happy to support any request to stage shows in a central location.

The seed list is on its way in the journal. The seed distributor is ready and all seeds have been counted and are ready to dispatch.

Bradleya - A smaller special edition in 2022 is proposed to commemorate 40 years, covering conservation and to run alongside the annual Bradleya.

Congratulations to the journal team on becoming a finalist at the Garden Media Guild awards. This will promote the society and it is advised that all communications should carry the award banner.

Addressing members feedback (what members want from the society)

13. Members have given their feedback of what they want from the BCSS with 100s of responses. Barry Tibbetts will lead a small team together with Stirling Baker and

Jo Adderley to review the members feedback and report back to the board at the next meeting February 2021.

Roles and Responsibilities

As proposed in the constitution all trustees should have a formal role and this will be reviewed over the coming year. For example the membership secretary was asked if he would be the members champion and he agreed.

2021 will see that each officer will have a responsibility to roll out and manage positions.

Planning for 2021

14. Planning for 2021. Jo Adderley is in communication for a CWL to be held in Manchester with the date suggested as the August bank holiday.

At the next meeting to discuss budgets and how to apply.

Silver Ball, a PR company is to look at ways to help promote the BCSS and the first talks to take place in January 2021. Agreed to employ Silver Ball services at £280.00 exclusive of VAT per month for 8 hours a month work. Approved by the board. A proposal to Silver Ball and return report to the board.

New Society Web Site Update

15. Website final is 50% complete, and we are talking about delivery to go live with the website mid-January/February 2021. Bill Hildyard requires a team to run tests on the new website. A social Media Team is needed. Jo Adderley to join the SM team.

Dates for 2021 meeting.

Every two months on the first Saturday in the month with a new time of 11am till 1pm. Anything requiring an immediate response can be dealt with via email. Officers to respond promptly. Vanessa Ridge to record any responses to emails and record them.

Chairman Closing meeting

Ian Thwaites thanked Robin Arnott for his work on modernizing the BCSS constitution.

Thanks also to Tony Morris for his long standing service to the BCSS as membership secretary. Closed meeting at 17.15pm.

Officers reports

Chairman

This has been a rather strange year. We have lost a large number of members who didn't renew and we have not had events this year to help us replace the members.

This is such a shame as the BCSS has been doing as much as we can for members, Enews is in flight again under the control of Al, Jenny and Sheila and helps to keep members up to date. The

biggest journal ever has been produced each quarter and has been very well received by members. The Zoom meetings are still gaining popularity and last week we had 420 attendees.

Where we struggle is that we don't have anyone who can stand up and promote the society. We are losing so many opportunities to gain new members and otherwise promote the BCSS.

The web site is getting rather close to delivery and I am hoping that in the 1st qtr of 2021 we will have a web site available to the members.

Being a member of the Garden Media Guild I nominated CactusWorld in the annual awards for two categories and I was delighted when they shortlisted both entries. Unfortunately we did not win but when you consider the competition and the budgets that they have available getting as far as we did was a tremendous achievement for journal team.

Shows Committee

Change in Officers of the Committee - At our meeting in September, we elected Bill Darbon as our Chairman and Hazel Taylor as Secretary. All other officer roles remain the same as before.

Adapting to lockdown restrictions which have not permitted face-to-face meetings - as some members of the Committee do not use Zoom, we have continued to do nearly all the business of the Committee and decision-making by e-mail, supplemented by two Zoom meetings, one in September and one in November, for which non-attendees provided their comments on the agenda items ahead of the meeting and endorsed the decisions made after the meeting.

Handbook of Shows - The Committee has successfully finalised the updated Handbook of Shows, 11th Edition, which is on track for printing and publication in January 2021.

Showing and Judging Weekend – This new format, two-day weekend is to be held at the Hilton Hotel on 10th-11th July 2021. Following approval by the BoT, the deposit has now been paid and the contract with the Hilton signed. The Committee is now continuing its planning of the detailed programme.

National Show – the Committee has arrived at a short list of three alternative venues for a National Show to be held in 2022. An in-person visit was made to one of these venues in October, but it was not possible to visit the other two because COVID restrictions came into place, putting one of them into tier 3 just before our visit was to take place and then the second lockdown began. The committee discussed the three alternatives at the November Committee meeting and on the basis of one in-person visit and for the other venues, photographs and email correspondence, decided that *a proposal be put to One of the selected venues together with an outline of our requirements for a date in 2022*. Key to the decision was our assessment of the number of people who are likely to attend the National in 2022,

being a balance between continued nervousness in the wake of post COVID, difficult economic circumstances for many people arising from the pandemic, partly offset by pent-up demand because of the few shows that have been able to be held in 2020-2021.

Seed buyers report

You'll be pleased to know I should have sourced pretty much all the seeds needed for next years list and the vast majority are already out for counting. These lockdowns do have one advantage in that people seem even more keen to count than normal :0) I reckon I will get approx. 6 months ahead of last years list, which was a little too close to the deadline for my liking

I'm expecting quite a lot of assorted Lithops seed pods from XX next week. He has fairly recently got his hands on a collection of approx. 900 Lithops with no guarantee as to what pollinated what.

I was thinking of the following

Some for the new members packs

Some to be distributed to garden centres with growing instruction and BCSS membership details

Some to be distributed to schools/Gardening colleges with growing instruction and BCSS membership details

Vice Chairman

At the end of September I emailed all the 45 speakers on the Speakers' List asking about their availability for providing talks to branches via Zoom. I also included a link to the Alpine Garden Society's website where they could also sign up to be included in their list of speakers. The same request and information was included in the next ENews. Of the 23 replies 13 were willing to be included in any list for Zoom presentations and also 1 volunteer not included in the current Speakers' List. I shall distribute this list to Branch secretaries with detailed instructions on using Zoom produced by Derek Tribble.

With the cancellation of all BCSS events, it wasn't possible to hold the Zone Reps meeting at Birmingham's Autumn Show this year. I emailed all reps to gather their reports with particular emphasis on their branches' health, whether the branches were using Zoom and/or any other methods of communication to keep in touch with their members and if there was any help that the Society could offer that would help them. Where the Zone had no Zone Rep I emailed the branch secretaries and I am in the process of gradually following up the Zones where the rep did not respond by emailing the Branches directly. As expected none of the branches were holding indoor meetings although one or two had managed outdoor gatherings while observing strict distancing. 16 have held at least one Zoom meeting and most hold regular ones, either with a license bought by the branch or using one of their member's personal license, with 7 other branches mentioning that they officially join one of these by invitation. The Zoom meetings included both branch and committee meetings. Many branches are using occasional emails to keep in contact while a

few are issuing newsletters. Facebook was mentioned by a few and at least one is running a WhatsApp group. A number commented how much they are enjoying the weekly BCSS talks. None of the responses indicated any specific ways that the Society could help them although a few expressed their concern about members returning after such a long layoff.

I have received one enquiry from a branch about the legal necessity to hold a Branch AGM, particularly to endorse their accounts before submitting them to the Society. I replied that nobody could expect normal AGMs to be held under the current circumstances and I would ask about accounts submission without any approval. If required perhaps an email circulation and/or virtual meeting could be arranged.

From David Greenaway: Almost nothing to report. Harrow Branch had a speaker cancellation for their March 2nd meeting, so Derek Tribble bought a disk of Presentation 39 from me for the meeting. He then bought a disk of Sonias 'Dudleyas' for himself. He had a problem with the disk, so I let him a copy of the presentation using Dropbox.

Derek suggests that all BCSS presentations be supplied via email/DropBox in future. I used it again in April to send the National Show 2012 programme to another member of Oxford Branch who then used Zoom to show it virtually to the Branch.

No other requests this year.

Editors report

The December journal is on schedule, and will contain 16 articles. Of these, 5 are on cacti and 9 are on succulents (plus a couple of general topics). There will also be a special issue supplement on South American cacti. The regular features such as 'In my greenhouse', Lit Review, Cactus Talk and Presidential Potted Plants are also there. There is also the seed purchaser's article.

Looking ahead, I have 14 articles which are already designed, plus another 10 which are with the production team awaiting design and layout, and 15 are currently work in progress. It must be stated that of those 15, ten are by John Pilbeam who has been extremely busy sending me short articles on stapeliad genera, and these will slowly be published over the next 3 to 4 years. Consequently there enough articles for the next two issues and beyond. issues.

Technical Editors Report

For the second time this year our Journal has reached the maximum size we can produce (100 pages) with our present method of binding. Together with the 52-page Special Issue it has involved a lot of work both for our Editor and the layout team. The Journal is on schedule and due to be posted out to members on 7/8 December.

Greg Bulmer has successfully produced the new Handbook to Shows (11th edition). This has been printed and will be available from January for use in 2022.

We are considering the possibility of going back to two printers again at some point in 2021 but our plan at present is to retain just Swallowtail. This is subject to satisfactory contract negotiations (to commence shortly) for our 2021 requirements and printing prices.

Treasurers report

TREASURERS REPORT - TRUSTEES MEETING DECEMBER 5th 2020

The current membership numbers as at November 30th are as follows:

						% of Prev. Year end
FULL	1733	59	Members or	3.3%	Down	96.7%
SENIOR	1151	69	Members or	5.7%	Down	94.3%
JUNIOR	48	16	Members or	25.0%	Down	75.0%
Combined Journals	2932	144	Members or	4.7%	Down	95.3%
ASSOCIATES	200	22	Members or	9.9%	Down	90.1%
TOTAL MEMBERS	3132	166	Members or	5.0%	Down	95.0%
BRADLEYA	560	6	Members or	1.1%	Down	96.4%

All comparisons are with the same date last year and are the basis for the December Journal mailing. Following this count the databases have rolled over to 2021.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

I have attached a copy of our traditional accounts with this report and a copy of the annual report incorporated with the formal audited accounts. There was very little that could be said this year with all the uncertainties resulting from the pandemic. Results are affected by the lack of activity this year and any aspirations are affected by the future uncertainty.

It is very reassuring to note that despite the uncertainty in the financial markets due to the pandemic the value of our investments in the COIF funds actually increased by £10,674

The bequests and donations and the grants are both inflated by the MSG element of the joint grant which was processed through our accounts.

I am preparing the report and accounts for 2020 to go in the March Journal as usual with the AGM reports.

ACCOMODATION PAYMENTS

I have attached a copy of the proposals for the current year to be paid in January (by Richard).

TREASURER HANDOVER

We have tried to changeover as many accounts as possible but HSBC is, as usual, proving a hurdle and has so far rejected two versions of the mandate change. All other banks have been compliant. There will be some work to do as supplier invoices arrive which I will forward to

Richard and copy back to the supplier with a note of the new Treasurer as and when they occur.

Internet Manager

Not a lot to say really the new website will be covered in the meeting plus documents Ian has circulated previously.

The forum continues to do its thing under the able stewardship of Tony Roberts and Phil Crewe, despite the feelings of some that its days are numbered. I am still enrolling around 10 people a week, a fairly high proportion of which are BCSS members.

Social media still remains a great way to reach out the wider cacti and succulent society, our facebook page grows by over 250 members a month and is now at 10,245 and averaging over 3,000 member contacts a day.