

BCSS Board of Trustees Meeting

2pm – 15th August 2020, conducted online over Zoom

People present:

- Ian Thwaites - Chairman
- Jim Gibbs - Vice Chair
- Al Larius - Editor
- Graham Charles - International Ambassador
- Suzanne Mace - Trustee
- Tony Mace - Publications Manager
- Stirling Baker - Trustee
- Alice Vanden-Bon - Technical Editor
- Barry Tibbetts - Shows Committee Chairman
- John Arnold - Legal advisor
- Simon Snowdon - Membership Secretary elect.
- Steve Taylor – Secretary (Secondment)

Apologies:

- Joanne Adderley sent apologies for not being able to attend in advance.

Minutes of Last Meeting and Action Points

- Multiple action points were discussed and were updated on the Action Points tracker.
- Minutes of the Last Meeting were briefly discussed with no comments.

Communications and Awards

- It was mentioned that Kew are undertaking a research project about trading CITES plants. The BCSS has been invited to take part in a research survey, and it was suggested that we make ourselves known to Kew as an interested party who could assist. **Action JA re conservation Committee**
- An email received from Nigel Taylor was discussed about how the BCSS could be active in conservation and support of the various seed banks. It was suggested that funding be provided to individual people to collect bankable qualities of seed from plants in endangered habitats. These could be sent on to Kew and to the Millennium Seed Bank. It was suggested that we as a society should be more involved in opposition to things like mining practices which are damaging plant habitats, as well as collecting seed. **Action JA and the Conservation Committee**

- An email from Avery Hill Gardens was briefly discussed but parked for further discussion at a later point. The email pertains to the development of an arid garden that would have a high foot fall and be good to promote the BCSS.

Other Topics

- It was discussed whether we should have a central BCSS address instead of putting member addresses online as this has caused privacy issues in the past. This could take the shape of a PO Box address, but this may have problems with registering the society. It was agreed to investigate this further.
- The society Zoom talks were discussed and it was unanimously agreed that these have been very successful. They allow people to attend meetings who normally would not, and they allow speakers from abroad to give talks. It also allowed people to attend the AGM from across the UK, including overseas members and people from the Highlands and Islands who had never been able to attend an AGM before. This brought up the point that, in normal circumstances, we are not treating all members equally based on geography.
 - Ian Thwaites suggested that we could have a specific European branch, or a virtual branch, which would allow members from across Europe and beyond to participate in branch activities. A European coordinator role could also be created who would distribute materials and email updates to members across Europe.
 - The point was raised that we also have members in North America, Singapore, and beyond.
 - It was proposed that we could have regional representatives that could help promote and support the overseas members. **Action ITH and JG to progress**
- Discussion occurred on what we can do for members for the rest of the year and going in 2021.
 - Two separate virtual shows were proposed for next year, one for cacti and one for succulents. **Action BH and BD to progress**
 - Talks for the rest of the year and into next were discussed – these have been a huge success, especially talks from people who would not usually be available to attend (such as foreign speakers), so there will be more regular talks for the foreseeable future.
 - The National Show was suggested to be pushed back to 2022. The issue of a venue was brought up – where could this be held and for what cost? Brexit does also create an issue for the National Show as EU sellers would be required to have a phytosanitary certificate. It is not clear at this stage additionally whether such a large gathering of people would be permitted in 2021 or even 2022.
 - It was brought up that we should also be thinking about what we can do for members who do not have access or ability to use electronic means of communication. A significant percentage (20%) of membership does not have an email address registered with the society; whether that means they have access or not is unknown.
- We had 100 people attending the virtual AGM this year. It was agreed that we should have another virtual AGM next year (2021). This would solely be a “business call” with no

accompanying talks, because it is thought that members could get fatigued the longer they look at a screen. The 24th April 2021 was decided as the preliminary date for next year's AGM, with a hope to resume face-to-face AGMs in 2022.

Society Website Update

- Pedalo believe that the website can be up and running by November 2020. In theory, this means we could have a test run starting in November and go officially live in January 2021.
- However, this comes with its own issues – largely due to membership renewals coming in around the same time as the proposed “going live” date. For this reason, a proposed “going live” date could be pushed back.
- It was discussed whether envelopes should be included in December's journal for people to post membership renewal forms back, or whether we should omit these this year to encourage people to pay for renewal via Direct Debit on the new website. Ultimately this requires more discussion.
- Further discussion is required and a separate meeting will be set up to pick a suitable go-live date and to decide on how to approach the issue of membership payment.

Constitution Changes

- A member in Scotland with experience of writing constitutions has offered to take a look at our society constitution to make it more contemporary. This was in response to the statement at the AGM that we need to review our constitution (and policies?).
- It was also highlighted that as part of the accounting review we were required to update the BCSS and branch constitution to reflect the decisions made.

Appointing ancillary officers

It was proposed that all the ancillary officers are reappointed on block. This was unanimously agreed.

Reports from officers

GT has proposed that Bradleya should be available to free of charge after say 3 years on line) because of its scientific content. It was highlighted that it is available on CactusPro and also BIOONE. When the new web site goes live we should look at putting this onto the new web site. There may be some conflict with the BIOONE contract. **AL will review the contract.** The formal publication date is agreed with DK and GT.

JG. Edenbridge Branch has asked to close and proposed that the branch funds be split between Croydon and Maidstone Branch.

There were several Officers reports missing and the trustees were asked to ensure that we do report on all officer roles.

Any other Business

Publications – We are nearly out of Stapeliad books and it was proposed that we should get another 500 copies as it is one of our best sellers.

Shows Commission – It was agreed that a we would print the next edition of the Handbook of shows. It will also be made available as a downloadable PDF. It was proposed to print 300 hard copies. ITH asked the shows committee to present this to the members using zoom as this is a tool that is now popular withing the society and we should exploit it to keep the membership fully informed.

Barry Tibbetts – He announced that he will be resigning from the shows committee and is therefore not a trustee representing the shows committee. Barry was thanked for all his hard work and support.

The meeting closed at 16.58