

# BRITISH CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, held on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2012 at 11.00 a.m.  
at the Holiday Inn, Milton Keynes, Bucks.

<u>Present:</u>	Dr Alasdair Glen (AG)	Chairman
	Dr Jim Gibbs (JG)	Vice Chairman
	Mr David Kirkbright (DK)	Treasurer
	Mr Eddy Harris (EH)	Secretary
	Mr Tony Morris (TM)	Membership Secretary
	Mr Al Larius AL)	CactusWorld Editor
	Dr Tony Mace (AM)	Publications & Internet Officer
	Mr Barry Tibbetts (BT)	Shows Committee Representative
	Mr John Arnold (JA)	Legal Advisor
	Mrs Suzanne Mace (SM)	Committee
	Mrs Alice Vanden Bon (AVB)	Committee/Journal Production
	Mr Bill Hildyard (BH)	Committee/Forum Moderator
	Dr Roland Tebbenham (RT)	Committee

## AGREED VERSION

### 12/39 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

### 12/40 MINUTES OF THE B.O.T. MEETINGS HELD ON 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2012

These were formally ratified and signed.

### 12/41 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- 12/14/1 R.H.S. Shows – Information received from Birmingham branch. Mr Harris had written to the R.H.S. and received a reply hopefully suggesting that an improvement would be made in the organisation for next year's Gardener's World Live show.
- 12/27/2 BBC Garden Online – Our website was still to be modified and once this was done Mr Harris would direct the BBC to this for the information they wanted.
- 12/29/3 Adeline for Leaves – Mr Hildyard had received a copy of the script which contained a number of errors. Nothing further had been heard and monitoring of the appeal for funding site showed little response (only 10% of funding achieved).
- 12/33 Ex-Situ Conservation – Terry Smale had been asked if he would act as liaison with Dr Maddams but had declined.

### 12/42 ELECTRONIC DECISION MAKING

None.

### 12/43 COMMUNICATIONS

1. Avonia News – A request had been received from them for permission to reproduce the *Gibbaeum* article in their on-line magazine. This was agreed subject to the source being quoted. There was also some discussion on possible copyright issues which might arise.
2. Awards – 1 A.O.M award was agreed.

### 12/44 REPORTS OF OFFICERS

#### 1. Vice-Chairman:

Dr Gibbs reported on the Zone Reps meeting at Birmingham, stating that all present had told of a slight fall in branch attendance, but that there had been an increase in participation in local and national events. Some Zones were collecting information on availability of digital projection equipment within their branches and it was suggested that the Society might be able to source bulk ex-council equipment at reasonable prices and make these available to branches. The proposed rule changes were discussed and accepted, but it was suggested that any branch/Zone dissolution should be in the remit of the B.o.T. rather than wait for an A.G.M. It was also made clear that Zones had a number of different organisational structures but that all should have a published constitution. Existing ones would be circulated among the other Zones to assist with this. It was also agreed to be unnecessary for Zone meeting minutes to appear on the Society website, but that members within each zone should have access to them, the method of achieving this to be the individual Zone's responsibility. Ex-situ conservation was also discussed and the increasing instances and disposal problems involved. Collections needed to be categorised and it was felt that it would be helpful if the Society had a list of National Collections or members willing to be offered appropriate plants. Other subjects touched on included Zone geography, members knowing who their Zone rep. was, branch committees where individuals held multiple posts, branches without meetings, branches leaving Zones and disbursement of Zone funds. On this point it was reported that the funds of Zone 5 had now been shared equally between the current branches in that Zone. There was discussion on branches which looked vulnerable and it was said that Leeds branch had enquired about amalgamating with their local horticultural society. They had been given details of Crawley branch which had done this, the need to keep their funds separate and the Crawley chairman's contact details so that they could check on possible pitfalls involved. The next Zone reps meeting had been arranged for 6<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

#### 2. Membership Secretary:

Mr Morris stated that since September 2012 he had enrolled 53 new members, 8 of whom had also subscribed to Bradleya. These comprised 26 Full, 21 Senior, 3 Associate and 2 Junior. This compared with 50 in total for the same period last

year. Of these, 7 were overseas members (2 from the U.S.A., 1 each from Holland, S. Korea, Denmark, Finland and Malaysia) and 3 re-instated former members. To date 22 new members had joined using the reduced price offer when purchasing the Welcome Pack. He said that he had recently had computer problems, but these were now resolved. The free literature list was to be reviewed and reduced where necessary, including those organisations receiving them on a journal exchange basis where we no longer received their journal (TM).

3. **Treasurer:**

- a) **Membership** – Mr Kirkbright reported that membership to date compared with last year was: Full 1707 (-76), Senior 944 (+40), Junior 22 (+14), which when added together, the journal taking membership total was 2673 (-22). Associate membership was 235 (-16) whilst 2012 Bradleya subscriptions were 552 (-36). 91 Full members had switched to Senior, 36 the other way. It was said that despite the losses this was the best performance since 2000. *Post meeting update: the end of year figures were now known, being Full 1709 (-74), Seniors 946 (+42), Junior 22 (+14), journal taking membership 2677 (-18), Associates 235 (-18).*
- b) **National Show** – With all payments made, the final B.C.S.S. balance was £934 after payment of £311 to Cambridge branch.
- c) **Publication Sales** – The cost recovery on the new *Echinocereus* book had now reached 94%, needing to sell a further 72 copies to break even. Expenditure on ‘Succulents in Nature’ totalled £7,727 and sales to date had been disappointing with only 25% of costs recovered.
- d) **Bradleya** – All 2012 pre-subscriptions were carried forward into 2013 (being £9,133 of the £10,531 shown in the accounts) which after offsetting costs left a balance of £577 from this issue before back copy sales.
- e) **Accommodation Payments** – The current list and levels of these were reviewed and some suggested adjustments were made. There was some discussion on whether these should be index linked, but it was generally felt these should remain at current levels.
- f) **Accounts** – The 2011/12 accounts had been audited and the various Charity and Journal reports compiled. These showed a healthy state of affairs. He also provided explanations to questions raised from the advance circulation of the accounts to the Board. The accounts were then signed by the 3 delegated Trustees and would be published in the March journal.
- g) **Digital Presentations** – David Greenaway had now started sending out programmes to branches with a number already placing orders.
- h) **Aloes** – This had produced a surplus of £15,000 over our investment and he had informed the authors that this would be classed as a donation towards the Conservation Fund (in recognition of their input without royalty). Replies had been received from two of them thanking us for that approach. He had also received £3,100 from the sale of the late John Forsyte’s collection which had also been donated to the Conservation fund at the family’s request.

4. **Shows Committee:**

- a) **National Show** – Mr Tibbetts reported that reaction to the National Show had been very favourable, apart from the hall temperature on the day and the R.H.S. Ornamental Plant committee had expressed amazement at the variety and quality of the plant on display. There had been forum comment about holding a 2 day show, but rather than list the various reasons against this, all of this show’s exhibitors would be asked if they would support this concept if proposed for the future. Attendance had been slightly down on the 2008 show but more plants had been exhibited and the show had made a profit (*see minute 12/43/3(b)*). Ian Thwaites was liaising with Al Laius on the journal coverage of the show and the sale of the DVD of the show was planned for April 2013. *Post meeting update: the venue had been booked for 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> August 2016.*
- b) **2013 Judges Course** – This had been booked at Moulton College for Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August to Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September. Course cost had been increased slightly to £135 to cover Moulton’s increased hire charges. There had been extensive building changes/construction on site which had improved the logistics of the course, including lifts and disability access.
- c) **Proposed 10<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Handbook of Shows** – Ray Stephenson had been collating more ideas and views for this and had produced a draft set of notes for discussion by the committee. This would be the main task of the Shows Committee for the next 2 meetings with a discussion session planned for the 2013 Judges Course.

5. **Conservation Committee:**

- a) Dr Maddams in a written report said that no new conservation projects had been received.
- b) He said that he had previously written an article for the R.H.S. ‘The Plantsman’ magazine on our conservation work and had recently been asked to write an update which he had agreed to do. Dr Tebbenham mentioned an article that he had read in this publication concerning an important succulent plant collection housed on land leased by the Newcastle University which was threatened due to the University not renewing the lease. There were also a few inaccuracies in the article. This led to a discussion on whether the Conservation Committee should offer funding for this and perhaps succulent plant National Collections. It was suggested that a list of National Collections be compiled so that there was a record of these within the Society. It was also said that this had been tried in the past but some people were reluctant to give this information. It was also said that such a list should only cover recognised scientific collections. Members would need to be made aware of this intent. *Post meeting update: Graham Walker (Zone rep for the area) was aware of the Newcastle situation, but said that it was an unfortunate casualty of the current economic climate.* It was said that all the projects and the funding allocated to them by both the Conservation and Research Committees must appear on the Society website as a matter of urgency.
- c) **Ex-Situ Conservation** – The journal article on this had now been distributed to all branches for inclusion in their Secretary’s Pack and the committee intended to continue monitoring the situation. Southend-on-Sea branch had sent an update on their ex-situ conservation activities and had continued to make good use of spare greenhouse space to sell collections and raise money on a commission basis for branch funds.

6. **Research Committee:**

Mr Hill in a written report said that Zlatko Janeba had confirmed receipt of the B.C.S.S. grant to fund his exploration of the Mexican Yucatan Peninsula and intended to time his visit for the spring of 2013 to allow adequate preparation time.

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

- a) Advertising – Mr Quail in a written report said that the 4th quarter advertising income was £310, making a yearly total of £1,823. Again a number of advertisers had commented on show income reductions due to cancellation or reduced attendance because of the weather. The advertisement for his position had now appeared, but was yet to be filled. A few enquiries had been received, some of whom had expressed interest in other positions.
- b) Journal Production Trainees – 4 new trainees had volunteered all of whom were thought to offer very positive but diverse attributes. He had agreed to supervise their training and hoped that they would complete this successfully and join the team. They had been given copies of Quark Xpress and the Journal Technical Standards manual and once they were ready, training would commence, subject to his own commitments.
- c) B.C.S.S. Information Sheets – Mrs Vanden Bon & Mr Quail reported that the item on membership recruitment and the Information sheets had been compiled and would appear in the December journal. This would hopefully help guide branches on the best ways of promoting themselves and the Society and would also give a clear starting point for the new Marketing Officer to take over when appointed, hopefully soon, to ensure continuity.
- d) Journal Production – Mrs Vanden Bon reported that the December journal would be a bumper one with 24 extra pages. Files were uploaded to the Swallowtail/Crowes server and proofs received 1 day ahead of schedule and journal dispatch to members should be on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> December. Stephen Morris had visited her to see how the journal was put together and was confident that he can compile the journal, although he was still to purchase and install Quark Xpress 9. Until this was done, any inter-machine compatibility problems were unknown and might need to be solved. David Quail was investigating this incompatibility and seemed close to a solution.

8. **Bradleya Editor:**

Graham Charles, the new editor, started his written report by thanking Dr Walker and Mrs Vanden Bon for their help in the handover process. He had now loaded the Society bought Quark Xpress 9.2 onto his computers and updated them to version 9.3 and although they worked okay, there were occasional crashes, but nothing serious. He intended to purchase a new Windows 7 computer next year with a larger, higher resolution monitor to help layout double page spreads and optimise pictures. Space had been allocated on the new server to keep Bradleya files safe, although he intended to back them up locally as well, so authors should be able to upload their large picture files to the server for him to access (yet to be tried). He was also yet to contact the printer but would do so soon. He had advised regular authors that he planned to have Bradleya 31 ready to distribute in May/June 2013 and Urs Eggli had renewed his commitment to produce the German summaries. He currently had 6 articles in the review process with a promise of 5 more which would include descriptions of 2 really distinct new cacti (authored by him) plus hopefully more from others (including *Aloes*).

9. **Journal Editor:**

- a) Mr Laius reported that he currently had 13 articles in hand, 5 of which had already been designed and laid out. Of these 7 were on cacti. He said that there had been some forum comments on the journal's name and although the general feeling was a 50/50 split, he wondered if this should be changed at some future date, especially as there seemed to be some confusion among possible contributors.
- b) He had obtained further information on JSTOR archiving our journal. They would fund all costs including shipping and he now needed a source of complete journal runs so that this could be undertaken.
- c) We had 4 volunteers who were willing to learn Quark Express and he had spoken to 3 of them. David Quail was setting up a training programme for them but he still had concerns for the June 2013 journal production when Alice Vanden Bon would be on holiday and trusted the issue would appear on time and up to the quality he expected.

10. **Publications/Internet Officer:**

- a) Internet – Dr Mace reported that he had had various serious computer problems over the last 2 months. However, he had started transferring internet accounts to our new server, thanks to help from Yann Cochard and Peter Arthurs and aimed to get this completed by year end. Currently all the BCSS sites were on the old server and their transfer would involve some downtime.
- b) Publications – He said that he had now taken delivery of Bradleya 30 and Succulents in Nature and continued to dispose of surplus publications. Sales had been reasonable, but sales of the most recent items (*Echinocereus* and Succulents in Nature) were disappointing, the latter due to its delayed publication. In order to provide sufficient storage space in the book store, he suggested the price of Bradleya 20 to 26 be dropped to £6 and that a large scale disposal exercise needed to be undertaken. This was arranged at this meeting for the latter part of February 2013 (AM/AVB/DK/TM/EH). However, we still needed to address the problem of large scale deliveries to his house. He said that a new supply of membership forms were to be ordered.

11. **Update on the Society Digital Programmes:**

Dr Tebbenham gave the current progress on this (22 of the 64 projected programmes currently ready for use). Orders had been received from 7 branches for 28 programmes plus 11 provided free to those involved in the digitising process and feedback had been received from 2 of the users. The librarian was keeping records of the usage. The hard drive had been passed to David Greenaway in October and all new file transfers were now done via the server. He expected to retrieve the Society scanner and laptop from Dorothy Minors in February. He gave the current status on other programmes in progress and to be undertaken and said that he and Dr Gibbs intended to contact speakers who had indicated that they would or might contribute their digital programmes. He was also experimenting with the best method of capturing live lectures commentaries and intended trying direct feeds from the Society P.A. system. He thanked all involved in the digitising process for their efforts

12. **Forum/Website:**

- a) Mr Hildyard reported that the Forum was working well, with some 450 B.C.S.S. members signed up, but this may reduce slightly once he had carried out some database cleansing. He needed to appoint another active moderator and would do so

in the near future. He gave the results of a poll that he had conducted on the closed forum, which although disappointingly low in responses, gave some food for thought. 5 questions were asked, namely 'Management of the Society was too closed' (67% disagreed), 'Management of the Society was too slow to react to changing circumstances' (55% agreed), 'Management of the Society does not take enough notice of its membership' (52% disagreed), 'The Society is controlled by a small clique' (59% disagreed) and 'This closed forum is an appropriate place to discuss Society management' (70% agreed). There was some discussion on this and also on the need to manage and answer forum questions, although board members who had done so in the past expressed their frustration at the negative responses to their answers. It was also said that most of the information required was available either in the journal or website. However, certain of the Board members expressed willingness to respond to future queries although it was also stated that any question needed to be clear and unambiguous. Mr Hildyard said that he would ensure this was done (BH).

- b) He said that there were still pages on the website needing to be filled and he was working on an action plan to deal with this. On the CMS project being worked on, Mr Hildyard said that he understood that Peter Arthurs had compiled a proposed system for this but was yet to explain this to him. This was also complicated by the latter's additional work load as Society Seed Purchaser. A discussion then ensued on future seed lists and various ways of helping the process, including compiling a list of possible sources of seed and passing this to Peter Arthurs for information on future purchases (AVB). Peter Arthurs had said that more seed counters local to him would be helpful.

### 13. **2014 Society Convention Update:**

Mr Arnold said that Dorothy Minors (and her husband) had agreed to join the team but more members were still required, although a significant number of people had pledged to give assistance and advice. He had undertaken a lot of the recent organisation himself and had now arranged 5 speakers to give 2 talks each, which should reduce costs over the last convention arrangement. These were Woody Minnich, Roger Ferryman, Dr Olwen Grace, Guillermo Rivera and Ernst van Jaarsveld and these would provide 5 cactus and 4 succulent talks. 5 mini-talks were required, 3 of which were currently arranged. Peripheral arrangements (plant/book sales, displays) now needed to be planned and he said that information on what was arranged for the last convention would be useful. It was stressed that Convention details and a booking form needed to appear in the March 2013 journal. Mr Morris passed over the plans of the venue which had now been significantly re-arranged and said that it should now be called the Stamford Court not the Gilbert Murray Centre. He would arrange for a team visit to the venue in the next few weeks so that layout planning could begin. There was some discussion on the 'goody bag' contents and what arrangements there were for slide/digital projection and he asked if another photographic competition would be run. This was agreed and Mr Hildyard was willing to arrange this. Mr Hildyard suggested that with the low cost of digital printing, the winning pictures be incorporated in a calendar to encourage people to participate and following on from this, was willing to produce one annually starting with one for 2014. He suggested that each be compiled on a theme. This was agreed.

### 12/45 **SOCIETY MARKETING OFFICER**

The revised job description would appear in the December journal but a possible candidate had already shown interest and been spoken to. However, it was early days and until the advertisement appeared the position could not be progressed significantly. It was suggested that applicants be given an aspect of the job to progress and see how they performed.

### 12/46 **FUTURE PUBLICATIONS**

The book on *Agaves* by John Pilbeam was currently being laid out and it was agreed that the Society would produce it. It was planned to make it available at the April 2013 A.G.M., dependent on Dr & Mrs Mace's personal circumstances. There was a serious problem with lack of space in the book store, but this was being addressed (see minute 12/44/10(b)), although Messrs Hildyard and Laius were willing to provide storage if necessary. However, Mr Kirkbright had received a quote from Lavenham Press which was significantly cheaper and who were also willing to store 400 copies for us, which would help the situation, but acceptance depended on whether their production quality proved to be acceptable. Whilst it was felt that we needed to carefully consider what future publications we undertook, it was thought that with their low production cost, perhaps the production of e-handbooks on individual genera could be a possible way forward. It was also said that Steve Hammer's *Titanopsis* book was being printed early next year and that a new book on *Lithops* was to be produced soon after by the same publisher.

### 12/47 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. **Nomination of Officers for the A.G.M.** – The board members were reminded that all members standing for office at the forthcoming A.G.M., including the annual Trustees, needed to provide Mr Harris with a nomination form suitably proposed, seconded and signed by the nominee before 10<sup>th</sup> January 2013. Completed forms for the annual Trustees were provided at this meeting, the outstanding ones being those for Chairman and Vice-Chairman.
2. **R.H.S. Meeting of Specialist Societies** – This had taken place recently but no contact with our Society had been made by the R.H.S. informing us of this. Mr Harris, as the Society contact point, would ask why we had not been informed.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 4.58pm.

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**NEXT MEETING: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2013** at the Holiday Inn, London Road, Newport Pagnell, MK16 0JA (just off junction 14 of M1). It would start at 11a.m. and light refreshments would be served at 1p.m.