

BRITISH CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, held on Saturday 7th February 2015 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 Laius (AL)	Journal 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 Roland Tebbenham (RT)	Committee
	Mr Peter Arthurs (PA)	Committee

AGREED VERSION

15/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

15/02 MINUTES OF THE B.O.T. MEETING HELD ON 6TH DECEMBER 2014

There were no additional corrections and the minutes were formally signed. As it had been agreed that the minutes had already been approved by this committee, this item would no longer appear on the agenda.

15/03 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

14/40/1 Wisley Affiliated Society Meeting – Mr Harris had contacted the Wisley coordinator reminding her that he was the Society's contact point, asking for copies of the meeting minutes and also complaining about the incorrectness of the poster information they had produced. He had also contacted the Woking branch secretary asking for copies of any information that had been sent to him and had just been sent copies of the posters, so it would appear no minutes had been produced.

14/47/1 Yvonne Tree's Books – Mr Harris gave the latest situation on this item. The Society Library and that of Gordon Rowley had taken half of the books and a list of the remaining 50 odd titles had been distributed to all branch secretaries and Zone reps together with bidding forms and rules, these showing a very modest reserve price against certain books. The bid process would end at the beginning of April when the bids received would be assessed and successful bidders informed what books they had won. To date 4 bid forms had been received covering 9 of the titles, and it was agreed that we would try to sell all the remaining books at the A.G.M.

15/04 ELECTRONIC DECISION MAKING

Two R.H.M.A. awards were approved by this method.

15/05 COMMUNICATIONS

1. Society Copyright – Mr Harris had received a letter from the Manchester branch secretary asking if it was true that the Society owned the sole copyright of all slide/digital talks donated to the Society as it was felt that if this was so, it may discourage speakers from donating their programmes. After consultation with other Trustees, Mr Harris had replied assuring him that this was not true and that this was also stated in the Speakers Guide. He had also enquired about when the late Bill Maddams' article would be published and was told that the article was yet to be received and could not be obtained until after his funeral (*see also minute 15/06/5*).

2. Society Web Site – A communication from the Shows Committee expressing their dissatisfaction with the lack of progress on keeping the information shown about the National Show and Judges Course up to date and general lack of progress on changing to the new website and asking if it would be quicker to employ an outside agency to do the latter. Both Messrs. Arthurs and Hildyard and Dr Mace refuted this latter point, stating that if we did so the agency would have to familiarise itself with the system before this could be done and Mr Hildyard said that if he was given the information he could update the information both on the old and the new system. He also said that he would provide Facebook and Twitter site access to a Shows committee member so that he could update these himself (*see also minutes 15/06/11(b) and 15/09*). Mr Harris would write to the Shows Committee secretary informing him of this (EH).

3. Bill Maddams – Dr Terry Smale had written notifying us of the death of Dr Bill Maddams, our Vice President, and giving details of his funeral. It had also been learnt that his widow was happy to maintain his collection until the weather was more favourable for them to be moved to other greenhouses, prior to disposal. In subsequent discussion, a suitable means of honouring his memory was agreed subject to the Conservation Committee's agreement.

4. Awards – Three A.O.M.s were agreed subject to suitable cvs. being compiled (AG/DK/AM).

15/06 REPORTS OF OFFICERS

1. Vice-Chairman:

a) Branches – Dr Gibbs said that Grimsby branch had now officially closed and its members offered the choice of being attached to Lincoln or Hull branches. Ilford branch had also closed and its members transferred to Havering branch.

b) Zone 3 – He thanked Peter Burton for his stewardship of the Zone and wished Dorothy Minors well for the future in taking over from Peter.

- c) Speaker's List – He said there had been the usual requests for an updated list, a list that also include updates from three of the speakers and he was also to contact a suggested new speaker.
- d) Secretary's Pack – He had at last been able to spend some time on this, helped greatly by being sent a more recent version by the Chairman. He hoped to soon be able to distribute portions of the basic pack to individuals for confirmation or updating and following that, to distribute a first draft to the trustees for comments. He had also had a request for information about a digital version of the Membership leaflet for self-printing by branches. Whilst this could be included in the Secretary's Pack and used in an emergency, he had some reservations about the widespread use if this when we had a professionally printed version that should better reflect on the Society.

2. **Membership Secretary:**

Mr Morris stated that since December 2014 he had enrolled 51 new members, 4 of whom had also subscribed to Bradleya. This compared with 32 at this time last year. These comprised 26 Full, 19 Senior, 4 Associate and 2 Junior. Of these, 5 were from overseas (1 each from Australia, Austria, China, Netherlands and Switzerland) and 1 had joined using the Welcome Pack reduced price offer (currently a total of 47). He had also reinstated 4 former members. He said that the initial renewal response to the arrival of the December journal was very encouraging with daily deliveries in the first week in excess of 100. He had had the usual collection of unsigned, undated and unreadable cheques but only one had defeated him so far. He said that one noticeable item was the lack of early overseas renewals and it was not until the second week of January that his email box started to fill with complaints of non-delivery of overseas journals including those to Dublin branch members and very little to Europe. This had also increased his workload at his busiest time of the year. Mr Kirkbright had reported the slow deliveries to the mailing house to see if this could be improved. He also said that the lure of the freepost envelopes had proved irresistible and he had received a greater number of seed purchases than usual. It was agreed to produce another 2,000 copies of the Information Pack.

3. **Treasurer:**

- a) Membership – Mr Kirkbright reported that current membership compared with last year was: Full 1,057 (-84), Senior 817 (+23), Junior 11 (+4), which when added together, the Journal taking membership total was 1,885 (-57). Associate membership was 166 (-7) and 71 Full members had switched to Senior and 46 the other way. Bradleya takers were 389 (-24). He said that the year had started well, then stalled and although it had then picked up again, was still disappointing. Overseas renewals took a long time to get started as many December journals took a long time to arrive. Having looked at alternatives for overseas mailing the only alternative would be to offer an airmail option but this would be at twice the current membership price and considerably more complicated to administer. Of those who were members at December 2014 and received an invitation to renew, 1827 have so far renewed, an almost identical number to 12 months ago, which when broken down, only 200 (56.2%) of overseas members had renewed compared with 76.4% of UK members. PayPal and credit card subscriptions, including Bradleya, accounted for 35.5% of receipts compared to 42.6% in total last year and donations as a percentage of subscriptions received by PayPal amounted to only 2.6% whilst those paid by cheque/cash amounted to 11.2%
- b) 2015 Calendar – He said that sales were down on last year with a gross income to date of £1,249 compared to a gross income of £1,598 at the same date for the 2014 calendar. Excluding the reprint costs of £885 the net loss was likely to be around £615 (£1,500 in total).
- c) Books – Income from direct sales of the *Agave* and *Stapeliads* books had slowed since the New Year, but sales to dealers were reducing the deficit.
- d) Seeds – He said that sales of these were 11% down in number and 20% in value on last year and that 83 species were sold out.

4. **Shows Committee:**

- a) Judges Course – Mr Tibbetts reported difficulty with obtaining speakers for the subjects we wanted for the 2015 course with 8 target speakers refusing for one reason or another and 3 accepting. We were currently seeking another 3 speakers.
- b) 2016 National Show – He said that the final choice of judges had been agreed and that Mr Stansbie was sending out the invitations. Mr Darbon was writing to all nurseries and traders who had had sales tables at the last show and also to some new contacts who had expressed interest at E.L.K. He was also writing to the *Sedum* Society, *Haworthia* Society, *Mammillaria* Society, M.S.G. and T.S.G. to ascertain if they all required a publicity table and it was assumed that the Forum would require a table next to the B.C.S.S. Publicity Stand.
- c) He said that the committee had expressed grave concern that the Board of Trustees had not been able to progress the switch to the new website, which had now been delayed for over a year. He said that we were unable to promote the Judges Course, or more importantly, the National Show, which was the Society's most prestigious event and that if it cannot be progressed by B.C.S.S. volunteers, the committee suggested that serious consideration be given to paying for a professional solution as soon as possible (*see also minute 15/05/2*).

5. **Conservation Committee:**

This report was supplied by Alan Hill following the death of Dr Maddams.

He said that the Conservation Committee were deeply saddened by the death of their Chairman Dr Maddams, who had been a very hard working, courteous, thoughtful and realistic man. He said that the committee intended to make every effort to ensure that the article he had been working on for CactusWorld was published. Hopefully the revised penultimate draft would be found among his papers. He said that the committee had no new projects in hand and that advertising for the Student Scholarship would be conducted on various websites which students log on to rather than printed publications. There would also be direct contact with Kew and some other educational institutes to publicise the competitive grant. Mr Arnold said that the committee needed to elect a new chairman and possibly recruit another committee member.

6. **Research Committee:**

Mr Hill said that with reference to the Bolivian *Echeveria* project, John Carr had sent further information. In addition to the £2,000 donated by the B.C.S.S., Mr Carr had now received an offer of a further £2,000 from the R.H.S. to carry out the D.N.A. studies. On Mr Carr's recent trip to Bolivia he had contacted the Herbarium in Sucre and they had been very helpful in completing the paperwork for this study to go ahead.

7. **Advertising Officer:**

- a) Advertising – Mr Quail’s written report said that the 1st quarter advertising income was £494 (£531 last year). One previous advertiser had resumed advertising but two occasional advertisers were not advertising this quarter, which accounted for the quarter’s shortfall.
- b) CactusWorld Production Trainees – He said that Christian Bohm had successfully completed his training, had been welcomed to the team and was laying out his third article.
- c) Journal Printing – He also said that following receipt and evaluation of quotes for printing in 2015, Swallowtail would continue to print for us and had agreed to produce and distribute the March and December journals. Our new printer (Warners) would print and distribute our June journal and we would then review their quality and performance and if appropriate, would then invite them to print and distribute our September journal. All quotations have been made on the basis of a revised standard journal size of 64 inside pages rather than the previous 56 pages.

8. **Bradleya Editor:**

Mr Charles in a written report said that he had already had 4 articles submitted for Bradleya 33 with more promised. He also said there had been less faulty copies of Bradleya 32 than first feared, most of the copies with incorrect pagination ending up in those sent to Dr and Mrs Mace and himself. Fisherprint had been sending replacements at their expense (about 25 so far) and although the incident created extra work for some of the B.C.S.S. team there had been no financial loss to the Society and we would end up with many more copies than we had ordered. He said he had been encouraged by the many positive comments from readers and authors about Bradleya 32 and hoped that the articles submitted for Bradleya 33 would enable it to be similarly received.

9. **Journal Editor:**

Mr Laius reported that he had recently received a large number of articles, both long and short, and currently had 19 articles in hand, of which 9 were already laid out, 2 are with the production team, currently 8 were in progress and a further 8 promised. Consequently he had sufficient for the June 2015 journal and beyond. He said that Christian Bohm, our new addition to the production team, was producing excellent work and had already laid out 3 shorter articles and he looked forward to him designing and laying out longer articles in the future. Jim Mercer was still producing top quality work and had shown his expertise with Photoshop as well. He said that thanks must go to David Quail for his time and effort in training Christian and to Alice Vanden Bon for her technical expertise in advising all members of the production team. He also said that his appeal in the last journal for volunteers to compile the index was very encouraging with 4 people coming forward. Chris Oldman had taken on the task and of the others, at least one had the potential to become involved in journal layout in the future. He would contact the remaining 3 volunteers to see if they were prepared to undertake other Society positions.

10. **Technical Editor:**

Mrs Vanden Bon said that the March journal would consist of 72 inner pages plus an 8 page Newsletter. The revised standard was now 64 pages (up from 56) and would be printed by Swallowtail. This was on schedule to be printed as per our arranged schedule. She said that she would be unable to compile the September journal and David Quail had provisionally agreed to take this on. She also said that the March 2016 journal would also be a problem but Mrs Vanden Bon did think that if work on the March journal was started and finished earlier, this might help. However, she said that it was getting that she was unable to cope and wanted, if possible, to reduce her future workload so that she could do other things once her husband retired early next year. She was still willing to do the work and still enjoyed it, but needed one or two more people on the team competent to take over some of the journal compilation work. She said the size of the journal had grown significantly since she started in 2004 and the team currently consisted of 2 members who did article layout, but only herself doing the compilation work and liaison with the printers, with occasional help from David Quail. David Quail had said that he was unwilling to do 2 journals/year due to his own circumstances and she wanted to get away from compiling up to 4 journal/year, hence the requirement for more help. In the discussion that followed, various points were raised, including who might be able to help (it was suggested that we advertise for suitable people on Announce or the Forum), how we might overcome some of the problems such as restricting the journal size to 64 pages except the December one and did we need to move from Quark to In Design (the new industrial standard)? However, it was felt this latter move may not be the way to go, but she would consult with David Quail on all these points to see what he felt (**AVB**).

11. **Publications/Internet Server Officers:**

- a) Publications – Dr Mace reported that sales had been slow since Christmas although there had been a few bulk orders from dealers. There was a problem with slow or delayed parcel deliveries to the U.S.A. and some European countries and this was affecting our mailing house as well with respect to journal deliveries (*see minute 14/06/2*). Queries arising from non-delivery create almost as much work as the original order processing and frequently the queries did not say what was ordered or when, involving more work to track the details down. This was made worse by some people emailing every address they can find, creating a deluge of messages about a single problem. He said that that orders from China were no longer accepted due to the number of claimed lost parcels and a note to this effect had been posted on the website. As parcels were only taken to the mailing house on a weekly basis, due to distance, this could add to the delay and he would have to note this on the website too.
- b) Internet/Forum – Mr Hildyard said that he had little to report on the day to day running side of the Forum although he was getting requests for features that were just not available in the software we used. Some might seem trivial such as a ‘like’ button, but it did allow people to ‘contribute’, even if they had nothing to say. He would speak with Mr Arthurs on this, although better software would cost (his preferred software (Xenoforo) would cost some £400 for branding free set up and ongoing costs of around £50 p.a. for support and upgrades). He had transferred some more of the fixed pages to the new website and was reserving time to concentrate on this with a self-imposed deadline of the A.G.M. to have all the content in place. He said he would continue to update the current site, so if anybody had any new content, please let him have it and he would add it to the new site at the same time, so that it was there ready to go live when it was up and running.

12. **Update on the Society Digital Programmes:**
Dr Tebbenham said that he had not completed any tasks since the last meeting as circumstances and other commitments had consumed all his time.
13. **2018 Convention:**
Mr Arnold said that he would shortly start the initial arrangements and should have something to report next meeting.
- 15/07 **BRANCH INNOVATION AWARD**
A further submission had been received just after the last meeting, making a total of 3 submissions. After careful evaluation of these, it was agreed that the one submitted by Manchester branch should be the winner. This detailed the use of modern technology to enable branches/zones to hear and interact with a distant speaker giving his lecture without any travel involved. The method and equipment required had been featured in the Newsletter section of the June 2014 CactusWorld. It was also agreed that the entry closing date for next and all subsequent years would be 30th November and a reminder of this would appear in the June journal. Mr Harris would contact the Manchester secretary to see if a representative could attend the A.G.M. to accept the award (EH).
- 15/08 **SOCIETY A.G.M.**
It was reported that there had been no additional nominations for the Main Officer positions due for re-election (President, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and annual Trustees), so all current officers would be re-elected unopposed. The same was true for the Shows Committee positions. There had been no amendments to the rule changes published in the December CactusWorld and the Hampshire/Dunn Memorial lecture would be given by Paul Hoxey speaking on 'Peru from the coast to the high Andes'. The P.A. system would be used and set up and controlled by Leicester members. As Mr Kirkbright would be absent his report would be given by Mr Morris. It was asked if the date of the 2016 A.G.M. should be changed as a branch planned to hold their Cactus Mart on that day, but it was felt this might set a precedent and was rejected. It was agreed that we would publish the next two year's A.G.M. dates in the journal and the advanced calendar of events each year to avoid any future clashes. (*Post meeting update: the branch had now changed the date of its Cactus Mart*).
- 15/09 **SOCIETY WEBSITE UPDATE**
Messrs. Arthurs and Hildyard and Dr Mace said that it was scheduled to complete the transfer to the new website over the Easter holiday period, the first and tricky stage being to transfer the email facilities over without interruption (PA/TMa/BH).
- 15/10 **DISPLAY TABARDS**
Mr Harris had circulated our intent to purchase a number of these to all branch secretaries and Zone Reps and to date had received requirements for some 40 tabards of various sizes from 10 returns. The closing date for orders was 10th March. It was agreed that as these would be worn over other clothing we should not consider sizes under medium. The main discussion was on what design should be used on the tabard. It was agreed that the tabards should be green in colour, preferably in a washable material with Velcro side ties and the lettering and logo in white monochrome. The front would feature the Society logo, the Society website address and 'BRITISH CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY' whilst the back would feature the same less the logo. Mr Kirkbright would now contact the manufacturer to get a finalised design and a cost so that once we knew the final required numbers, the tabards could be made in time for distribution at the A.G.M. An additional number would also be ordered and stored with Dr & Mrs Mace.
- 15/11 **FUTURE PUBLICATIONS**
Mrs Vanden Bon said that John Pilbeam had now finalised his book content and that she had approached three printing companies for quotations which she passed to Mr Kirkbright for evaluation. It was said that it would probably be more expensive than originally planned and be available in time for E.L.K. It was agreed that we would like to publish Gordon Rowley's forthcoming book and he would be informed of this and told no additional financing would be necessary (EH). It was felt that a more attractive title might improve sales and alternative titles were currently being considered. Size would be some 300 pages with some 400 pictures and 20 diagrams and although most of this had been digitised there might be some of this needing replacement. It was felt that we should try to get it ready as soon as possible, hopefully by the end of this year.
- 15/12 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
1. **Display Banners** – Mr Tibbetts said that the Shows Committee wanted to purchase a couple of these and this was agreed. Mr Hildyard volunteered to liaise on this. It was said that the banner had a life of some 5 years before requiring replacement but only the banner part would require to be replaced.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 3.40 pm.

NEXT MEETING: 23rd May 2015 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 1.30 p.m.