

BCSS Board of Trustees Meeting

2pm – 23rd May 2020, conducted online over Zoom

People present:

- Ian Thwaites - Chairman
- Jim Gibbs - Vice Chair
- Al Lais - 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
- Joanne Adderley - Trustee
- Simon Snowdon - Membership Secretary elect.
- Steve Taylor – Secretary (Secondment)

Apologies:

Bill Hildyard could not be in attendance and sent on his apologies prior to the meeting.

Minutes of Last Meeting and Action Points

- Minutes of the Last Meeting were discussed with no updates.
- Multiple action points were discussed and were updated on the Action Points tracker.
- Electronic Action Log issues were addressed, including the finding of a supplier to create BCSS branded cactus / succulent seeds for public sale.

Communications and Awards

- JH has proposed a member for a Robert Holt Meritorious Award for his services to the society and Suzanne Mace will update this to reflect other aspects of this work. **Suzanne Mace - AP20/40**

Research Committee Report

- Andrew Gdaniec requested £4000 for research to be conducted in the West Indies for his PhD. The research committee thought it would be a good project, and after approval from the BoT this was approved.
- A discussion regarding allocation of funding for research occurred. It was decided that going forward for the upcoming 2020/2021 year, a budget should be allocated to both the Research Committee and the Conservation Committee of ten thousand pounds each for use on Cacti and Succulent research and conservation projects, as they see fit. Any money that is not spent that year will be returned to the BCSS and will not roll over to the next year. John will review the Conservation committee terms of reference and ensure that the two committees work to the same constraints. **John Arnold -AP20/41**

Other Topics

- A huge thank you was given to the journal team for their work on the June journal, which will be the biggest one to date.
- It was unanimously agreed upon that the Zoom meetings that have been held since March have been wonderful – and feedback from society members in attendance has been extremely well received – particularly from older members. It has been suggested that these meetings continue even after the lockdown restrictions have been fully lifted. It was agreed that we could do one “National” talk a month on Zoom to keep this going.
- The Alpine Society has approached the BCSS asking if their members can join these Zoom calls if there is any space. Whilst there is space based on numbers from previous talks, it was decided that the talks would be pushed at branch level first to ensure we receive the maximum amount of BCSS members each week. Additionally, branches will be reminded to tell their members about the eNews newsletter, as we still have members who do not receive this.
- Talks scheduled for June include Ian Woolnough with “Mainland Mexican Miscellany – Big and Small”, a Gardener’s Question Time-style panel with Gillian Evison, David Quail, and Peter Bint; Keith Green with “Whistlestop Lithops Land”, Roger Ferryman with “Copiapoa, Home and Away”, and Wiebe Bosma with “Socotra”. Dates, times, and login details of these talks can be found on the BCSS website.
- The Social Media team suggested that the BCSS hold a virtual national show, based on the RHS virtual Chelsea Flower Show. However, not many entries have been received yet. It is expected there may be more entries to come as the season continues and our plants begin to flower. Like the Virtual Chelsea flower show this offers us the opportunity to promote the BCSS.

A discussion was held on the topic of what else can be provided to BCSS members whilst branches continue to be closed due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

- It was mentioned that several branches have active WhatsApp groups which allow members to discuss plants outside branches.

- Several branches are having Zoom meetings at the moment which are well-received. Branches should be reminded that they can use the society Zoom account to host these meetings if they so wish and Ian will try and accommodate as many requests as possible.
- YouTube was mentioned as it is currently underutilised. It was suggested that garden tours and greenhouse tours could be filmed to share with members, either on Youtube or Facebook. It was decided that a few short videos will be put together for sharing on social media – though the details of these have yet to be decided. **Jo and Steve to look at producing short video clips AP 20/42**

Committee Reports:

Committee reports are contained in the addendum at the bottom of these minutes. Discussions on the reports were held where appropriate:

Membership Report Discussion

- Car stickers: As we now have a new logo, it was agreed that we should have a new and updated car sticker. This will be investigated and an update given at the next meeting. **Ian Thwaites to initiate the production AP 20/43**

Show Committee Report Discussion

- Background was provided on the issue of Milton Keynes Arena and the cancellation of the National Show, details of which can be read in Addendum 2 below. A decision was made to delay the National Show by another two years, until 2022, to give members the confidence they may need to attend a crowded event so soon after the current pandemic. Barry Tibbets offered his resignation which Ian was reluctant to accept and counter proposed that perhaps Barry could Manage the next National Show if assisted by a dedicated team working with the existing Shows Committee. This appealed to Barry and he will discuss the option of using the MK Arena with David Kirkbright after the meeting. The BoT will work with Barry to start to publicise the event in 2021, to give sufficient time for promotion. Barry was asked to produce a ne Shows Committee report and perhaps withdraw his resignation

AGM for 2020

It was decided that 2020 AGM should be held on July 4th 2020. This has subsequently been promoted in June's eNews (with 3100 subscribers), and in a letter sent to members through the Branch network. It should be noted that this is a delayed meeting and not an extraordinary one. This meeting will be held over Zoom, and will be a stripped-back, business-only meeting with no speakers etc. Legal advice has been sought and there are no issues with this; indeed, efforts conducted to inform members have gone above and beyond the promotion of ordinary AGMs.

Website update:

The Project Manager is working with Pedalo, the website design company, to get the website up and running. Steps have been taken to streamline and speed up the development process, and it is hoped that the website will launch soon. It was clarified that the website would not incur any ongoing costs once up and running apart from an annual maintenance contract that will be put in place to address any fixes or upgrades. Any future development costs would only be required if the society wanted to enhance or modify the website

AOB

- Graham Charles mentioned that the probate had been approved on Gordon Rowley's estate, so the property can now be sold.
- Alice suggested that the upcoming convention should / could be free, paid for by plant sales. It was mentioned that we kept Cactus world Live! minimally priced and this was well received. It was suggested too that CWL move further up the country to be more centralised to the memberbase, as Kent is a long way to travel for members in the north of England and Scotland. Ian Thwaites mentioned that we can use RHS buildings for free to host events, and indeed there is a new gardens opening in 2021 in the north of England which may be suitable venues. We need to decide soon whether we will try and hold a Northern CWL in 2021. **Ian Thwaites / Jo Adderley AP20/44**
- Suzanne Mace mentioned that there are issues with sending large parcels overseas. It was suggested that something be added to the journal to state that large overseas orders will not be processed, or will experience significant delays, until this situation can be alleviated. It was stated that it was too late to add anything to the June journal, but this will be added to eNews and on the website.
- Suzanne also brought up BCSS calendars for this year. It was decided not to publish them this year due to perceived difficulties in selling them whilst branches are not meeting. This will be reviewed again for next year's calendar.
- Tony Mace mentioned that shipments are still being sent by Mailing House and the Post Office, but pointed out that there are stringent requirements with sending by Mailing House at the moment which may lead to problems.

Next Board of Trustees Meeting

The next BoT meeting was arranged provisionally for August 15th 2020, to be held on Zoom.

Addendums (Reports)

Chairman's report

Issued by: Ian Thwaites

Its been an interesting year to date. I returned from a Holiday in Venice just before they shut off Northern Italy and since that day the global situation has changed almost on a daily basis.

Unfortunately the Branches have had to close, the National Show has been cancelled and we wonder when life will return to normal.

However, life has a habit of compensating for the bad things and we have had probably the best springs that anyone can remember. We have started the On-Line talks which have been such a success that Societies all over the world are now citing us as their inspiration for starting their own. I have met some lovely inspirational members on line like Lisa who grows the prettiest Echeverias that I have ever seen all under lights and in her spare room.

We need to decide how we will structure the society to capitalise on the changes that we have seen and how we can progress in the future.

Vice Chairman's Report

Issued by: Jim Gibbs

There was a very good response from branches to the distribution of an example of Graham Charles' booklet. 34 branches responded and requested a total of 48 boxes, each with 200 booklets. These requests were all made before the current lockdown and, after discussing the situation with Graham, we decided that it was sensible to postpone the distribution of the booklets, probably until next Spring, as there would be little or no events this year for their use and potentially very few branch meetings for any new members to attend.

BCSS Membership Secretary Report

Issued by :Tony Morris

I have enrolled 125 new members of whom 97 were full, 19 senior, 4 associate and 5 junior. There were 10 new overseas members; 3 from Italy, 2 from Canada, 1 each from Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, Spain and France.

28 of the new members took Bradleya. For the same period last year the enrolment total was 161. I have reinstated 6 former members.

Technical Editor's report

Issued by: Alice Vanden Bon

The June Journal will be the largest Journal we have produced – a total of 100 pages including the NL and cover. This is the absolute maximum we can have with our present method of binding.

The Journal was compiled by Jane Snowling, our external member of the team, and it reached the Printers a few days prior to our deadline. The Printers are operating with a reduced workforce so we hope the early arrival of our files will help to ensure that the Journal reaches our Members on time.

Summary of Shows Committee Activities

Issued by: Barry Tibbetts

The National Show 2020:

The following is a summary of a large number of e-mails and telephone calls that took place relating to this subject during March and April.

A meeting was held with the venue at Arena MK on Friday 13th March. Various items were discussed requiring further action and clarification, but overall the meeting was very positive. The only unknown was what effect Covid 19 would have on the show actually taking place on 3rd and 4th July.

During w/c 16th March HMG was advising that many public activities would have to cease, which resulted in the lockdown from 23rd March. Ian Thwaites immediately instructed all members that all BCSS meetings and events should be cancelled until further notice. After discussion with myself, Ian and I agreed that the 2020 National Show should be cancelled as well, and hopefully postponed until 2021. David Kirkbright contacted Arena MK to advise of our decision, and they replied on 26th March that, although they understood our position, they would still be open for business (they are holding a major snooker tournament from 1st June) and that we would still have to pay £4500 for cancelling before 4th April as per the contract, and if after 4th April then the whole contract would be payable in full. After further discussions with Ian and David, they agreed to allow us to postpone the Show until the same weekend in 2021, but the full contract value would be payable in advance this year.

I was instructed by Ian on 11th April to ask the Shows Committee whether they wanted to go ahead with the offer of July 2021 at Arena MK, look for another venue in 2021, or postpone until 2022. I related their decision below to Ian and the BoT on 13th April:

1 vote – stay with Arena MK in 2021 at no extra cost (myself)

4 votes – look for another venue in 2021 or 2022, and ‘see Arena MK in court’

2 votes – look for another venue in 2021 or 2022, but take legal advice first

I also stated that any further decision-making or legal scenarios would have to be the responsibility of the BoT.

Since this last e-mail, other members of the Shows Committee have continued to research other possible venues (Stoneleigh and Newark) in 2021/2022, including dates and costs.

Subject: CactusWorld Editor's report

Issued by: Al Laius

The June journal is on schedule, and will contain 11 articles. Of these, 5 are on cacti and 6 are on succulents. CactusTalk and Lit Review with 3 new books reviewed feature as well, along with Presidential Potted Plants and ‘In my greenhouse’. Together with the inside Newsletter section this will be our biggest journal ever at 100 pages. Hopefully it will give our members something more to read during these difficult times.

Looking ahead, I have 13 articles which are already designed, plus another 13 which are with the production team awaiting design and layout, and 5 are currently work in progress. The pandemic lockdown has meant that authors have been busier than ever and it looks like there will be enough articles for both the September and December issues and even some left over for next year.

I also have a lengthy article (guessing between 20-30 pages) which is obviously too long for the journal. I propose that we publish this as a supplement (to be mailed out at the same time as the next journal – which will be kept to standard size). It has been many years since a supplement was published and now with the extra volume of material received, I feel it is time to manage this in such a manner. Extra printing and postage costs are easily covered by the large sums we receive each year from our JSTOR and BioOne royalties, which I have been instrumental (and which still takes up a fair amount of my time each year) in organising and processing.

Bradleya Editor's Report

Issued by: Graham Charles

Bradleya 38 was published on May 1st, the same date as last year. At 272 pages, it is 8 pages longer than the previous largest edition (2019). The pre-ordered copies were mailed by Lavenham Press during the last week of April using card envelopes for all addresses. The remaining copies have been delivered to Tony Mace and are now available for sale on the BCSS website.

It was again printed by Lavenham Press. Regrettably, a few copies had a binding error where the section of pages 65 to 80 is missing and the section from 81 to 96 is duplicated. They will compensate us for any costs we incur in replacing faulty copies.

Bradleya 39 will be edited and produced by George Thomson. He already has a number of papers that could not be accommodated in number 38.