

# BRITISH CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, held on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2016 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)	CactusWorld Editor
	Mrs Alice Vanden Bon (AVB)	Technical Editor
	Mr Barry Tibbetts (BT)	Shows Committee
	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

## AGREED VERSION

### 16/40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Dr Alan Bromley.

### 16/41 MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 30<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2016

As there were no further corrections the agreed minutes were formally signed by Dr Glen.

### 16/42 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from these.

### 16/43 ELECTRONIC DECISION MAKING

There had been some electronic correspondence concerning the forward planning of the revised A.G.M. and Mr Harris said that he had received 3 reports for this to date.

### 16/44 COMMUNICATIONS

1. Branch Innovation Award – two had been received from Bradford and Brighton branches. Of the two the one from Brighton was considered the more appropriate and would receive the award. This led to a discussion on whether Dr Bromley had decided to become a Trustee or not as the current board was not aware whether he had made his mind up on this. It was hoped that this would be decided by the February 2017 Trustees meeting.
2. Awards – None had been received since the last meeting.

### 16/45 REPORTS OF OFFICERS

#### 1. Vice-Chairman:

- a) Zone Reps Meeting – Dr Gibbs gave a brief resumé of their last meeting, which Dr Bromley also attended, saying that it had been reported that most branches were maintaining their membership, although there was some concern over three branches. The new Zone 19 rep., Ivor Crook, was welcomed to the meeting and thanks given for the work carried out by his predecessor Richard Meir. Sheffield branch was congratulated on achieving its 70th anniversary, although there was some disquiet voiced over the recent CactusWorld article concerning branch involvement with young children. There was some discussion by this committee on this topic and rather than have each branch requiring to have a D.B.S. registered member to look after them, a simpler solution would be to suggest that **a parent (or legal guardian) of any new junior member** should be invited to attend its meetings. Cambridge branch was congratulated for its contribution to the last National Show and there was interest in Zone 12's satellite meeting as a possibility for other zones. There was also interest in availability of other Society banners such as a half sized one to fit on a desktop, other banners suitable for outside use and 'feather' type banners. Mr Hildyard said that these would cost some £90 each and would redesign a suitable one. It was also said that the practice adopted by Manchester branch to appoint members to 'shadow' their secretary and treasurer was worth wider adoption and that there was also the need to help current Zone reps who were unable to visit the branches in their remit. The Zone reports included a fair number of reports of outside displays that various branches undertook, which led to discussion on how the Society should market itself to the general public. It was generally felt that important aspects were an improved branch leaflet which Mr Bromley was willing to help with, more use of the social media with somebody in each zone being appointed to coordinate this. The idea of virtual branches was discussed and thought to be a good idea and that perhaps the Society itself could help with this by providing lecture videos as well as slide programmes. There was general support for the attempt to provide a more attractive A.G.M., although there had been some disquiet expressed by Zone 3, but Dr Gibbs said that he would address this personally. It was also felt that the Society should address the problem of buying and showing illegal Mexican plants and advise its members and it was also said that entry to the National Shows should be free as part of the Society's service to members and a query as to how much this would cost the Society was raised. During discussion of this point it was said that the cost to the Society would be in the order of £3,000 and it raised the problem of how the entry table personnel could determine if the entrant was a member. It was also pointed out that any member could get in for nothing if they just entered 1 plant in the show. It was asked if the National Show accounts could be published on say the Shows Committee website section and this was agreed.
- b) Shrewsbury Branch – This had now officially closed and Mr Morris had circulated all branch members offering a relocation to either Stoke or Birmingham branches as the most convenient, or if they wished to become unattached members. Only a

handful of replies had been received, so it was likely that the majority would be allocated to Stoke.

2. **Membership Secretary:**

Mr Morris stated that since July 2016 he had enrolled 116 new members, 16 of whom had also subscribed to Bradleya. This compared with 84 at this time last year. These comprised 68 Full, 32 Senior, 9 Associate, 6 Junior and 1 Bradleya only. Of these, 9 were from overseas (3 from the U.S.A. and 1 each from China, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, Poland and Thailand). 12 persons had joined using the Welcome Pack reduced price offer (currently a total of 83). He had also reinstated 7 former members and said that between November 2014 to November 2015 he had enrolled 279 new members and for same period 2015/2016 he had enrolled 342. He said that it had been the busiest summer in the 7 years he had done the job. He made mention that Sheffield branch had enrolled 25 new members (11 Full, 4 Seniors, 7 Associates and 3 Juniors), 8 of whom had used the reduced price offer. He also said that Glasgow had taken over from Birmingham as the branch with the highest membership and that the latter had slipped to third place behind South Wales. He ended by saying that there had been two items of interest this year in that a new member from China had such a long address that the database couldn't cope and he had had to mail him individually and similarly another member had such a long email address (45 characters) that it exceeded the database current limit of 40.

3. **Treasurer:**

- a) Membership – Mr Kirkbright said that current membership compared with last year was: Full 1,572 (+34), Senior 1066 (+25), Junior 32 (+5), which when added together, the Journal taking membership total was 2,670 (+54). Associate membership was 205 (-1) and 87 Full members had switched to Senior and 42 the other way. Bradleya takers were 542 (-3). He said that over the last 10 years loss of 'start of year' members had remained in a band of 8.9 to 10% (average of 9.9%) and this year it had been 10.2%, but that although it had gone up slightly, this had been more than offset by new members.
- b) 2017 Calendar – Costs and postage up to the end of September had been £1,659 whilst sales net of VAT up to November 20th had been £989, a loss of £670 (40%). He said that we needed to consider if this had a viable future and would be discussed at our next meeting.
- c) National Show – He had written to all the secretaries of branches that had not returned their raffle tickets and pointed out the legal requirement. A number had apologised and most had responded, but some had questioned the requirement and one branch had said that they did not see why they should spend branch money (return postage cost 55p) to send back un-requested tickets. The finances of the show had worked out well making a profit of £1,746 after payment to Cambridge and he also attached a copy of the accounts to his report.
- d) Annual Accounts – These were approved by this Board and copies of the audited accounts were signed by the required Trustees. A copy of these was attached to his report together with his report to the Charity Commissioners and these would be published in the A.G.M. notice together with supporting notes. There was a brief discussion on the fact that it was becoming increasingly difficult to attract projects requiring funding from the Conservation/Research fund without a positive solution being found.
- e) Bradleya – This had been finally posted out on November 15th 2016.
- f) Accommodation Payments – The current schedule of payments for 2016 was reviewed at this meeting and agreed.

4. **Shows Committee:**

- a) 2016 National Show – Mr Tibbetts reported that much of the last meeting of the Shows Committee had been taken up with a review of the show and that it had been agreed by the whole committee that it had been a great success with more exhibitors and entries than the previous two shows at this venue. There had been a few minor grumbles from some people about things beyond our control, but we had taken on board areas where changes or improvements could be made in four years time, in particular the presentation of prizes, which had been poorly managed by the committee. It had been agreed that for future shows this aspect would be the responsibility of a particular Shows Committee member. Financially the show had made a good contribution to B.C.S.S. funds, although this had not been its purpose, mainly due to having more sales tables in the annexe at no additional cost, the biggest success by far being the opening of plant sales on the Friday afternoon to all exhibitors who brought their show plants at the same time. The nurseries all agreed that it boosted their takings over previous years and we had about 80% of the plants on the show tables by the Friday evening.
- b) 2017 Judges Course – This was booked for 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> September at Moulton College. The cost had been increased by £5 to £145 for the weekend and we were currently contacting several potential speakers and hoped to have the programme finalised early next year.
- c) Future Shows, Exhibitions and Displays – The Shows Committee had wanted for some time to be more proactive in trying to help branches/zones to organise events at new venues where there would be far greater contact with the public. The Chelmsford branch secretary and two Shows Committee members had been involved in making great strides at R.H.S. Hyde Hall with Zone 15 events, with superb public exposure at no cost and with some new members enrolled already. The R.H.S. had already asked if they could attend on further event days at this location and it was known that a few other branches were also trying their best at events such as Gardeners World Live and Tatton, etc. but the committee believed that a lot more could be done. Enquiries about the new R.H.S. Show at Chatsworth revealed that the first show in 2017 was fully booked and 2018 would be the earliest we could participate. Since then it had been stated that Sheffield branch will "do something" and he asked if this was happening. It was thought that the current answer would possibly be in the negative. The Shows Committee felt that there should be a more concerted co-ordinated effort to target the 2018 show without relying on one local branch. It felt that we should be promoting the B.C.S.S. at this type of prestigious event, especially as we now had the expertise of a new Marketing Officer in Alan Bromley who appeared to share similar aims. Members of the Shows Committee would be more than willing to help branches local to the venue to design a stand and display that would promote the B.C.S.S. in a way which it was felt the Society should be presented to the horticultural public. Several would also be prepared to help man the stand for a day or two. He said that if the Trustees agree it would be a worthwhile project, the Shows Committee would first request that separate funds be allocated to the project and managed by the Shows Committee which currently had no funds of its own. They would also talk in more detail to the R.H.S. in the New Year.

5. **Conservation and Research Committees:**

- a) Conservation Committee – Alan Hill in a written report said that Pablo Weisser had contacted the committee to say that due to a visit he had to make to South Africa, the article he was writing for CactusWorld had unfortunately been delayed. Mr Laius had agreed that the committee should see this before publication. An extensive report had also been received from Andrew Gdaniec, Curator of Gibraltar Botanic Gardens, on work carried out on his project in the British Virgin Islands. With help from Peter Berresford, he was writing an article on the project for CactusWorld. Roy Earle had submitted a request for financial support of £1,420 to re-introduce *Lithops schwantesii* subsp. *gebseri* in its original habitat on the farm Estorffdank in southern Namibia, from which it has become extinct. The committee felt it was a worthy project having received a detailed programme of what work was involved, including subsequent protection and support of the landowner and his staff, and had agreed the funding. He said that the committee felt that ex-situ conservation continued to be an important method of conservation and should continue to be emphasised within the Society. It was hoped that the holders of Plant Heritage Succulent collections could play a part in this and that more National Heritage Succulent collections established. He ended by stating that details of the Bill Maddams' B.C.S.S. Travel Award had been sent out with the last date for receipt of entries being the 31st December 2016.
- b) Research Committee – He said that no applications for financial help for a proposed project had been received since our last report to the B.o.T in July. He said that there had been some details of pro-activity in finding subjects for research, but no firm agreement had yet been made.

6. **Advertising Officer:**

- a) Advertising – Mr Quail's written report said that the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter advertising income was £408 (£347 last year) making a yearly total of £1,906 (£1,705 last year).
- b) CactusWorld Production Trainees – He said that the training of the recently mentioned interested member had been delayed due to the member's health problems.
- c) Layout and Printing – He said that a front page of the Information Sheet sets was being developed specifically for overseas members. He also said that tenders for 2017 CactusWorld printing had been sent out and one tender reply had already been received. It was hoped that all would be received before Christmas and subject to satisfactory price quotations it was hoped that our current printers would be chosen again. There had been no significant printing problems with the September journal.

7. **Bradleya Editor:**

Mr Charles in a written report said that despite few papers being submitted in the first half of the year, as a result of his subsequent plea, material started to arrive in quantity, such that its pagination reached a final figure of 240 pages spread over 23 articles, the largest Bradleya ever. These articles included one featuring a new *Echinopsis (Trichocereus)*, 2 new succulent species and a *Tylecodon*. It had been printed by Lavenham Press, who also faultlessly printed the previous Bradleya and provided a competitive quote for this one. The print files had been ready by the beginning of October so their estimate of producing it in 8 days, for an October publication date, seemed secure. However, after a period of inactivity and lack of communication, it became obvious that production would be longer and the issue was finally sent to the mailing house on November 10th. He ended his report with a tribute to two regular contributors to Bradleya, viz. Heidi Hartmann and Darrel Plowes, who had both recently passed away.

8. **Journal Editor:**

- a) CactusWorld – Mr Laius reported that there were 5 articles that were ready, 15 were with the production team awaiting design and layout and 9 were work in progress, i.e. sufficient for the next 2 or 3 issues. The December journal was on schedule and would contain a major feature on the National Show as well as a selection of cactus, other succulent, cultivation and other general interest articles. He said that interestingly there had been a surge of articles in October and 7 new ones were received, all on succulents, and he was working hard to obtain more cactus articles. He had already been received 1 with another 2 in the pipeline. He said that he was concerned at the distinct lack of people volunteering to undergo training in Quark and therefore most of the journal layout was being undertaken by Mrs Vanden Bon. Mrs Vanden Bon said that Mr Quail was helping where possible and Mr Laius said that we needed to appeal for more volunteers.
- b) Journal Librarian – He also said that he had spoken to Dr Saorsa, who now ran the journals library, and she had told him that the library had now been moved downstairs into a private room of its own and had spent £180 of her own money on proper library boxes in which to store loose journals. She had also arranged for a fellow student, a professional librarian, to start cataloguing the collection properly (free of charge). He showed photographs of the new location and Mr Kirkbright said that he had reimbursed the £180.

9. **Technical Editor:**

Mrs Vanden Bon reported that proofs for the December journal had been approved and its printing, by Swallowtail Print, was on schedule. She showed a draft of a new Membership form which was being designed in collaboration with Dr Bromley and Mr Morris and several additional modifications were suggested by this committee.

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

- a) Publications – Dr Mace reported that calendar sales continue to trickle in, but that we still had a lot left despite having a fairly good start at the National Show. It was hoped that this would improve when the December journal was published. Sales of other publications were pretty slow and those of the **Baja California** book of which they had a garage full were more or less non-existent. As Dr Bromley had suggested, we might need to try a discounted offer, but we would need to know the financial implications of this. Mr Kirkbright said that he would be very opposed to this due to problems this would raise with other sellers. Dr Mace said that a couple of reports of mis-bound Bradleya copies had been received (1 section duplicated and another missed), but that it was too early to establish how widespread this was.
- b) Website/Internet/Forum – Dr Mace said that earlier this month he had supplied Mr Hildyard with B.C.S.S. internet server and B.C.S.S. database specs. for his talks with website developers. He was extremely concerned that there had been absolutely zero response to his request for assistance in monitoring and managing the B.C.S.S. website systems. Mr Hildyard said that if necessary he would help where possible, but would also make enquiries of people who also might help. This was an

absolutely vital function for the B.C.S.S. and it was imperative that we had some backup in this area. The request would appear again in the December journal, but he was not optimistic. He said that this month there had been a number of website hackings on the servers that he ran, the worst of which was on the Cactus and Co. website which put them out of operation for some 10 days due to vulnerability of a not up-to-date version of Joomla. He said that the B.C.S.S. website could easily be vulnerable to such an attack and he was not sure that Mr Hildyard and himself would be in position to fix this. He said that email services continue to have problems with black-listings. Although he had a monitoring system for these, this only covered public black-listings. Many I.S.P.s had private black-listings and the first indication of these was that emails start bouncing. These were forcing users to move to paid email services and we might need to submit to this. He ended by reporting that the move away from the old cactus-mall server was still proceeding very slowly and causing him many headaches. However, he was now down to 3 domains on that server and was moderately hopeful that it would be gone by the end of the year, 5 months later than planned.

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

Dr Tebbenham said that the B.C.S.S. laptop, original software discs, scanner, auto-feeder and various programme materials had now been passed over to David Lambie at a meeting held in Birmingham with Dr Gibbs also in attendance. Dr Gibbs had suggested that the it would be beneficial to separate the Speakers' list programme from the Slide Library programme and suggested that this be done with the next issue in 2017 when more digital programmes would be available. Various aspects concerning the running of the library were discussed and agreed and various questions were posed to this committee which required an answer. These included the previous suggestion which was agreed by this committee, exchanging items from our digital library to other English speaking countries which was also agreed, whether the last 3 National Shows should be included, also agreed, and the need for a volunteer to set up an image gallery based on suitable images from the bequests of Vic Morris and others. This was also agreed if possible at some point in the future if a volunteer could be found and this would be discussed at our next meeting. A suggestion had also been received that digital programmes be stored in 'the cloud' for direct download by users rather than the current process of the librarian writing and dispatching discs to requesting branches. It was said that it would be a good long-term strategy but many of our branches might currently have problems accessing these. It was also said that many branches were still requesting slide sets and that we needed to keep the slide condition under review and withdraw them as soon as they showed excessive damage or bleaching. He also included a table showing the latest status of the current digital library.

12. **2018 Convention:**

Mr Arnold reported that he had now finalised the list of speakers which were Aymeric de Barmon, Phillipe Corman, John Ellis, Adam Harrower, Wolter ten Hoeve, Joël Lodé and Ricarda Rina. He said that he although he had tried to provide a lecture balance between cacti and other succulents and also cultivation and photography, he was still unsure of the subjects of some of the speakers, but had sufficient photographs and biographies to provide more specific publicity of the event. He hoped to provide a draft of the programme in the near future and finalise the rest of the team's workload. It was said that it might be possible to hold a limited auction with better planning.

13. **Marketing Officer:**

Dr Bromley had submitted a report which covered his work with the R.H.S., and his ideas on Media and Social Media coverage, Marketing strategy and what he saw as how the Society could support Branches and Zones and establishing and fulfilling their needs. To this end he had included a copy of the RHS Survey Meeting report held at Wisley in which he had participated and the items discussed, including which of the participating Societies used the internet and how they ran their Societies. He also included a sample email that he had sent around the Society, outlining what he saw as his job aims and how he could help those branches/Zones who wished to participate and also his observations on the Website and Marketing Materials. He outlined 4 proposals which he would like discussed by this committee which were:-

1. The B.C.S.S. should have a policy with regard to members who act on behalf of the Society in dealing with young people (D.B.S. checks). This had been discussed and a possible solution to the problem suggested (*see minute 16/45/1(a)*).
2. He had previously suggested an alternative list of benefits to go on the website which was clearer than the current one shown there but was yet to be actioned. These would also appear in the revised Membership Leaflet which was currently being compiled.
3. He was currently working on some new designs for branch leaflets which would give 3 different design options. He said that there appeared to be a Marketing budget, so he proposed that branches be offered 500 leaflets (less than £60) based on one of the designs and that in order to promote consistency (as requested by the B.o.T.), the proviso would be that he prepared their layout or the branch did so without 'modifying' it beyond recognition. This was also agreed so long as the idea was branch specific.
4. He would like to send a test Mail Chimp email to all members for whom he had email addresses to ask if regular (e.g. monthly) bulletins – either from their own Zone or from the Society – would be of interest. The aim would be to keep communicating with members between the quarterly issues of CactusWorld and maintain enthusiasm and interest. These could provide snippets of news, growing tips (aimed more at beginners), things for sale (the calendar) and anything that complements the News section of CactusWorld. This was agreed (*see also minute 16/49*).

16/46 **REVIEW OF THE VOTING FELLOWS PANEL**

With the death of Dr Maddams, who was a member of this panel, the membership of the panel and who should replace Dr Maddams was discussed. The procedure, which had been set up by Dr Maddams some 30 years ago, was that the name of a member nominated for Fellowship was first submitted to the Society Secretary, discussed by the B.o.T. and if they agreed, then sent out to the Panel members for final approval. During subsequent discussion it was agreed that the process was somewhat archaic and that the final decision could be made by the B.o.T. as they would be more aware of the candidate's achievements. As the process was not covered by Society rules, it was agreed that the current Panel be disbanded and that future Fellowships be within the remit of the B.o.T. Mr Harris would write to the current members of the panel thanking them for their past work (EAH).

16/47 **SECRETARY'S PACK**  
Dr Gibbs apologised that it was taking so long but hoped that it would be completed fairly soon.

16/48 **WEBSITE**  
Mr Hildyard said that he had currently approached 4 companies for quotes. One had declined to quote, one had said that it was too complex to provide a quote, one had provided an incomplete quote and one had provided a quote for things we did not need. He said that the incomplete quote company sounded promising. He was waiting to hear from a couple of other companies that he had approached, but had reservations over some of the software these companies employed, which was fairly basic. He said that he was willing to talk to any other firms that were suggested and had various other options available which were to contact other companies himself, talk to the companies further to establish their expertise and if they could undertake the work required, or to buy in the appropriate software and then get an outside company to configure it to what was required. It was said that our current system was fairly complex. It was said that it would appear that the process would cost about some £4,000 to implement.

16/49 **SOCIETY A.G.M.**  
It was suggested that the procedure be provisionally altered to start at 10am with free coffee and plant sales, with the first lecture starting at 11am, followed by a break for lunch and plant sales at 12.30pm. The A.G.M. would then run from 1.30pm to 3pm, followed by a ½ hour coffee break and then the second lecture start at 3.30pm, with the event finishing at 5pm. This would allow adequate time for clearing up. It was understood that one of the lecturers had been arranged and an acceptance from the other was awaited. If the latter did not happen then alternative speakers were suggested by board members. Mr Harris had written to all persons who gave a report to the A.G.M. and had received 3 written reports to date. Once he had received all of them, they would be sent to Mr Laius and Mrs Vanden Bon for inclusion in a larger A.G.M. insert. This would be increased both in number of pages and probably to journal size overall. It was said that this information should be sent out to all Zone reps for them to distribute to their branches and it was also said that Dr Bromley had proposed in his report that he would email news information to those members whose email address he had via Mail Chimp and that this would be a suitable item to include in these emails.

16/50 **DISCUSSION ON THE SALE AND SHOWING OF ILLEGAL MEXICAN PLANTS**  
It was said that the subject was a potential nightmare in that it was possible to produce a list of plants which could be considered illegal, but it was not known if such a list could be considered comprehensive or binding and that we could only currently advise our members in general terms. It was also said that the law currently only applied to the country of origin although it had support from CITES. Mr Tibbetts said that the R.H.S. had set up a working group representing a range of organisations across the horticultural sector and had developed a joint statement on the Nagoya Protocol and its implementation in the U.K. In the statement the Working Group outlined the issues facing the sector that arose from the regulation and the work they were doing to enable the sector to comply. It was suggested that we have a representative on that working group and Dr Terry Smale was suggested as a suitable candidate as he already had links to the R.H.S. Although the aims of the working group were not quite the same as this subject, it was felt that the working group would hopefully in time produce a specific list of names and a workable ruling. In general terms we could advise judges to ignore any plants they felt were covered by this ruling, but it was said that this would place them in an impossible position. *Post meeting update: Dr Smale had been approached and was agreeable to be our representative on the Working Group.*

16/51 **FUTURE PUBLICATIONS**  
Mrs Vanden Bon said that Gordon Rowley's book was nearing completion but that Gordon Rowley had wanted it reviewed. Both Dr Walker and Roy Mottram were doing this and Roy had also undertaken its indexing. She said that hopefully it should be ready for an end of year printing and hoped that a proof could be run off for Gordon's final approval once a printer had been chosen. The economics of variable print runs would also be investigated.

16/52 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**  
1. **John Ede** – It was agreed that Mr Harris would write him a letter of apology on behalf of the Trustees about the Forum incident (**EAH**).  
2. **Annual Trustee Nominations** – There would be 2 vacancies for these positions at the April A.G.M. Several names were suggested and if these were interested, their nominations needed to be with Mr Harris by 10th January. It was pointed out that there was a 15 person limit on the current room's legal capacity and finding a larger room might be problematic.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 4.54pm.

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**NEXT MEETING: 4<sup>th</sup> February 2017** 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.