

# BRITISH CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, held on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at 11.00 a.m.  
at the Holiday Inn, Milton Keynes, Bucks.

<b>Present:</b>	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
	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
	Dr Alan Bromley (AB)	Potential Marketing Officer

## AGREED VERSION

Before starting the meeting Dr Glen welcomed Dr Bromley to the meeting and hoped that he would find it useful and help him decide whether to join this committee.

### 16/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr Al Laius

### 16/02 MINUTES OF THE B.O.T. MEETING HELD ON 5<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2015

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

### 16/03 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None that would not be dealt with under other items on the agenda.

### 16/04 ELECTRONIC DECISION MAKING

Mr Harris said that he had received an email from the Charity Commission stating that he was the email contact for them and also had received a copy of the most recent statement that Mr Arnold had submitted.

### 16/05 COMMUNICATIONS

1. Manchester Branch – It had been learnt that this branch was organising a Succulent Explorers' Day on the same day as the Society A.G.M. and despite criticisms from members of this committee and elsewhere, it's secretary had indicated that it did not wish to change the day for various reasons. There was some discussion on the possible effect this might have on attendance, and also its effect on achieving a quorum to make the A.G.M. legal, but it was said that there was nothing that could be done about it and we would see what effect this did have. We should also publicise the date of the 2017 A.G.M. well in advance (*see also minute 16/08*).
2. Publishers Licensing Society – Mrs Mace said that she had been contacted by somebody from this organisation stating that we were due some £1,600 in fees from them and had then been sent a 28 page document on this which she had passed to Mr Kirkbright. He had in turn passed it on to Mr Arnold, our legal advisor, to check both its authenticity and legal implications. It was said that it posed no restrictions on the Society, was non-exclusive and in effect was a document asking us to state that we were the legal publishers of the documents concerned. Dr Bromley said that if anybody wished to photocopy a document or part of a magazine then a fee was chargeable, this then being legally due to the document publisher under copyright law. He also suggested that we should include a copying cost statement in all of our publications but this was felt to be excessive. It was agreed that subject to further checks on what parameters we required we would sign up to the document.
3. Awards – No further outside recommendations for awards had been received and the one of the previously agreed R.H.M.A.s and one of the D.O.M.s had been presented by Mr Harris. The other agreed R.H.M.A. was to be presented soon. A citation for the outstanding and agreed 2 D.O.M.s had been compiled and their presentation would be arranged. A further R.H.M.A. and a D.O.M. were proposed and agreed at this meeting and suitable citations would be compiled (**AVB/EH**).

### 16/06 REPORTS OF OFFICERS

#### 1. Vice-Chairman:

- a) Branches – Dr Gibbs said that he had been in touch with Ralph Hewitt about Lancaster branch's future and had had a brief word with Mr Morris prior to this meeting. It had been decided that the current members of Lancaster branch would be given the option of merging with another branch, being individually re-allocated to another branch or staying with the current situation. He had only had a couple of communications with branches, one concerning a potential problem with the Cornwall branch website which Mr Hildyard had resolved and one from Wiltshire branch requesting an updated Secretary's Pack.
- b) Zones – Mr Harris suggested that if the new Zone 19 Rep. was willing, he should be asked to take on Zone 5 as well, as this was very adjacent to him and had not had a Zone Rep. since Albert Pritchard's death some 4 years ago. It would involve taking on an additional 4 branches. Dr Gibbs would ask at the next Zone Reps meeting.
- c) Secretary's Pack – He had produced a first draft of an updated Secretary's Pack which was attached to his report and asked that this committee review this and let him have any updates, revisions or corrections of this (**All Board Members**).

2.

### **Membership Secretary:**

Mr Morris stated that since December 2015 he had enrolled 54 new members, 7 of whom had also subscribed to Bradleya. This compared with 54 at this time last year. These comprised 34 Full, 14 Senior, 3 Associate and 3 Junior. Of these, 6 were from overseas (3 from the U.S.A. and 1 each from Denmark, Indonesia and Switzerland). Nobody had joined using the Welcome Pack reduced price offer (currently a total of 64). He had also reinstated 5 former members 1 of which was returning after 25 years. He said that he was still receiving payments for seed orders and quite a number of members had returned renewal forms that were not filled in, making his job very problematic. He currently had 2 cheque payments which he was still trying to sort out.

3.

### **Treasurer:**

a)

**Membership** – Mr Kirkbright reported that current membership compared with last year was: Full 1,073 (+68), Senior 816 (+34), Junior 13 (+2), which when added together, the Journal taking membership total was 1,902 (+104). Associate membership was 164 (+8) and 75 Full members had switched to Senior and 40 the other way. Bradleya takers were 392 (+22). He said that he had already emailed all Juniors and members identified as Branch Officers who had yet to renew and would wait a few weeks before emailing others. PayPal and credit card subscriptions, including Bradleya, accounted for 35.9% of receipts compared to 45.1% in total last year and donations as a percentage of subscriptions received by PayPal amounted to only 2.8% (2.7% last year), whilst those paid by cheque/cash amounted to 10.7% (15.2% last year). Receipts direct to the bank continue to cause problems as senders do not follow explicit instructions and do not adequately identify the purpose or at times not even the original sender. This, and other weird receipts via Tony Morris, had led to them both spending a lot of time trying to identify where to apply a payment. He did not know how we could educate them better, but it was very wasteful of their time. At the moment he only had 1 bounced cheque awaiting replacement.

b)

**2016 Calendar** – He said that income from sales had improved although it was still slightly disappointing. For each one sold at £7 via the website we lost 30p in PayPal charges and £1.17 in VAT. It also cost us £1.19 in postage so the net revenue was only £4.34. So far we had sold £1,435 and with a total outlay of £1,588 we needed to sell a further 35 to break even. He said that it was now time to reduce the price (*see also minute 16/06/11(a)*)

c)

**Books** – Income from direct sales of the **Baja** book was now moving very slowly and he cannot see it breaking even within the foreseeable future.

d)

**CactusWorld Mailing** – The new system for mailing overseas journals had worked well for the December edition, although the mailing house had used the wrong Royal Mail code which resulted in an increased cost.

e)

**Seeds** – He said that our income for the year to date was currently reduced as Peter Lewis held all the seed payments unbanked until he received the seed to meet the orders. By this time last year we had banked approx. £3,780. This could result in a number of bounced cheques due to the long delay (almost 2 months) between issue and banking as members move bank accounts before all cheques had cleared. The seed had arrived very late (2<sup>nd</sup> February) with Mr Lewis. This led to a heated discussion between Messrs Arthurs and Kirkbright on the reasons for this, which eventually led to Dr Glen acting as arbitrator. Mr Arthurs said that this delay was due to Royal Mail losing a large parcel of seed which then took many months to be delivered. Mr Arthurs had made the decision to keep these items on the list, but it meant a delay whilst the seed counter team prepared the packets, the alternative being to produce a much shorter list. It was agreed that in future and to be fair to Peter Lewis, any problems, potential or actual, should be highlighted, more care be taken with compiling the list and more seed counters should be sought. Hopefully these measures would prevent any repetition of this year's problems. Dr Tebbenham said he would circulate the process flow on this produced in 2008 for review, this to be marked up with key dates (RT).

4.

### **Shows Committee:**

**2016 National Show** – Mr Tibbetts reported that their last meeting had been taken up with ensuring that the many aspects of organising this were in hand and at that stage they were. Mr Kirkbright had attended the meeting to ensure that all the financial details were in place, with no problems envisaged. The only issue to be resolved was inviting our Patrons to the show and then deciding how their day would be managed. Colin Walker was aware of this, but needed to know what his duties would be in this respect as none of the Shows Committee would be able to help, including taking them to lunch, due to their workload, but would like one or both of the Patrons to stay to present the awards and trophies (*see also minute 16/10*).

5.

### **Conservation Committee:**

Alan Hill in a written report said that no new request for financial support had been received for a proposed project. He said that with reference to the project at Pichidangui mentioned in December, he was glad to report that Roger Ferryman had now sent a completed article to Mr Arnold for onward transmission to Mr Laius and that Roger had also informed Mr Arnold that the Chilean local authority planned to hold a ceremony to thank Roger and the B.C.S.S. for the support we had given to the project and which Roger planned to attend. He would be asked to give maximum publicity to our Society's offer to support further conservation. Paul Klaassen had sent in a report on recent expedition to Chile and had stated that he would now prepare an article for CactusWorld.

6.

### **Research Committee:**

Alan Hill in a written report said that a request for financial assistance of £2,000 for a genetics project on *Maihuenia poeppigii* in Chile had been received. A number of queries had already been identified and these would be discussed with the applicants. An application had just been received for financial assistance of £1,190 for research into bat pollination of *Stenocereus queretaroensis*, which was a species whose fruit was an important food crop for some Mexican communities. John Carr had provided a 36 page report on his work so far on the *Echeverias* of Bolivia as a progress report to the B.C.S.S. and the R.H.S. who were financially supporting the project. He was to return to Bolivia in November to finish off his project. John had told him that he had already sent an article to Al Laius on plants (not *Echeverias*) found on the trip and expected to send him another shortly. He had already shown Al Laius the progress report to keep him informed.

7.

### **Advertising Officer:**

a)

**Advertising** – Mr Quail's written report said that the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter advertising income was £625 (£494 last year). Another series

of four advertiser was in the process of retiring but we had a new advertiser this quarter, a large advert. from Southfields, plus an increased number of adverts. from occasional advertisers.

- b) CactusWorld Production Trainees – He said that the potential new trainee had still not progressed and now looked to be an increasingly doubtful prospect.
- c) Journal Printing – He also said that as anticipated, Warners would print our March and September journals and Swallowtail our June and December journals. A page plan for the March journal had been agreed and plans for the compilation of the journal were well in hand.

8. **Bradleya Editor:**

Mr Charles in a written report said that he currently had nothing to report apart from having a couple of articles out for review.

9. **Journal Editor:**

Mr Laius in a written report said that articles were coming in steadily and that it had been good to receive more cacti articles. It had been particularly heartening to receive articles from professionals such as his new correspondent from Peru. There were currently 8 articles which were ready, 8 were with the production team awaiting design and layout and 9 were work in progress. There were therefore enough articles for the next 2 issues. The March issue was on schedule and most articles were currently with proof readers. Communications regarding the National Show article which would appear in the December journal were in hand and discussions with Ian Thwaites, regarding photographic requirements, had already taken place.

10. **Technical Editor:**

Mrs Vanden Bon said that the March journal was being compiled by David Quail. Article layout was almost finalised and he had prepared the 3 inserts for printing i.e. Index, Calendar of Events and the A.G.M. notice. She said that both would like to thank John Foster for his efficient work in assembling the data for the Calendar. She said that Jim Mercer, a member of the Production Team, was currently unavailable for personal reasons.

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

- a) Publications – Dr Mace reported that following a moderately busy period over the Xmas holiday period, sales were now few and far between. He said that there were lots of calendars left and queried if their price should be reduced. Mr Kirkbright agreed that these be reduced to £3 for face to face sales and £4.50 if posted and it was also agreed not to distribute any to new members. Mrs Mace expressed doubt on increasing the number printed for the 2017 calendar, to gain a reduced cost and it was agreed that a final decision would be made at our next meeting. It was also said that Graham Evans had volunteered to speak to all the nurseries at the National Show about the 2017 calendar, give them an application form and take orders for it.
- b) Internet/Forum – Mr Hildyard said that everything was fine on the operational side of the Forum. Dr Mace said that in the next 6 months it was very likely that he would have to make major changes to the server hosting due to the following reasons:
  - i) Hostgator service had deteriorated markedly over the last few months, culminating in a total mess-up over renewing SSL security certificates. This had now taken well over a month and was badly impacting on some customers businesses. Service ticket queries were taking up to 3 days to get a reply.
  - ii) The number of accounts on the server was declining due to nursery and club closures.
  - iii) Advertising revenue which subsidised the cost of the server was declining.
  - iv) The £/US\$ rate had moved in an unfavourable direction.
  - v) The small number of IP addresses available on the server meant that successful hacking attempts on poorly managed accounts led to the B.C.S.S. email system being put on blacklists.
  - vi) The number of bad debts was increasing.
  - vii) He needed to provide a more secure server availability in the event of something happening to him.As the transition would be very complicated and need careful planning, he intended to present options at our May 7<sup>th</sup> meeting and asked that this item appeared on the next agenda.

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

Dr Tebbenham said that he had no progress to report, but that he had received one response to the December journal advert appealing for his replacement. He was following this up with the person who contacted him, but had nothing further to report. In response to the Chairman's question, he also said that that he would be prepared to stand as an annual Trustee for 2016/17. He also offered his apologies in advance for missing the next Board meeting on May 7<sup>th</sup>.

13. **2018 Convention:**

Mr Arnold said that he now had the promise for 3 speakers, namely Joel Lode giving 2 talks on cacti or 1 on cacti and 1 on other succulents, Ricarda Rijna, who spoke more scientifically on other succulents and Phillip Corman who would give 2 talks on cacti. He intended to keep the time allowed for these to 75 minutes each and also said that he intended to increase the time for the short talks to an hour each, but reduce the number of these to 3. Suggestions were made on possible speakers to give these, of which he took note and said that this would allow delegates time to do other things as we were always pressed for time. He would review what had been suggested and make further arrangements.

16/07 **BRANCH INNOVATION AWARD**

No submissions for this had been received by the January closing date and a reminder would appear in the journal reminding branches of its existence and asking for submissions for 2016. The conditions and arrangements for 2016 remained unchanged.

16/08 **SOCIETY A.G.M.**

Mr Harris reported that no additional nominations had been received for the Main Officer positions due for re-election (President, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and 3 annual Trustees), so all current officers would be re-elected unopposed. The same was true for the Shows Committee positions. He also said that the Hampshire/Dunn lecture would be given by Martin Lowry, subject 'Bolivia'. There then followed a discussion on how future A.G.M.s could be made more

attractive to improve attendance and suggestions made included making it shorter by reducing the number of reports or specifying a time limit per report, having Ancillary Officers' reports distributed in advance of the meeting (and/or making them shorter)), confining the A.G.M. to the morning session, providing free refreshments to attendees during the lunch break and having the Hampshire/Dunn lecture in the afternoon with an overseas speaker giving two 40 minute lectures, or having two speakers giving a lecture each. It was said that we needed to decide on a speaker much earlier in advance of the A.G.M. A high profile overseas speaker was suggested and agreed as the speaker for next year's A.G.M. (due date 8<sup>th</sup> April 2017) and the committee urged to review the options raised and any others and give their opinions at the next meeting.

16/09 **MARKETING OFFICER**

Dr Bromley was present at the meeting, having expressed an interest in considering the position. He said that his work background was in Medical Communication and involved both marketing and publicising, He was now retired and said that he felt it seemed similar to what we were looking for. However, he did ask what this committee felt the marketing job entailed and various members of the committee then gave their thoughts on what was hoped to be achieved: e.g. raising the awareness of the Society in the eyes of the general public and gardening press, making it user friendly and increasing our membership. Dr Tebbenham said that a lot of these ideas had been raised as part of the Futures Team project and would pass a copy of their report to him for information. At the end of the session Dr Bromley said that he would contact branches and Zones within the Society and outside Societies to discover how they went about undertaking any publicity events as a first step to producing an effective strategy and also said that he was willing to take on the role of Marketing Manager and was therefore appointed to the position by the committee, but would decide later if he wanted to be a Trustee as well.

16/10 **PLANS FOR THE USE OF OUR PATRONS**

As we wanted our Patrons to attend the National Show and possibly present the trophies and awards, Dr Glen would write to invite them to attend. It was agreed that if necessary we would provide overnight accommodation and also take them to lunch. Our President would host them for lunch and it was suggested that other Trustees also attend the lunch so that we could encourage them to publicise the Society and the show. Before he wrote the invitation to attend Dr Glen would ascertain what was expected of them so that he could include this in the letter (AG).

16/11 **SOCIETY WEBSITE UPDATE**

Dr Glen said that we needed to establish a completion date at this meeting and Mr Arthurs said that the major hurdles having now been cleared, he now had the time to devote to the task and promised to get it completed over the next four weekends, certainly by the A.G.M. Mr Arthurs was also urged to keep this committee aware of any problems and his progress in the updating. Dr Mace said that the server problems could complicate the update process but he should have a plan formulated by our May meeting. (PA/TMa/BH).

16/12 **FUTURE PUBLICATIONS**

Mrs Vanden Bon said that she had made a start on the layout of Part 2 of the G.D.R. book but had made little progress to date. She said, however, that her journal workload was currently less, so that she could concentrate on the book. Mr Tibbetts had kindly provided some pictures of *Echinopsis* hybrids, but she had a long list of pictures that would be needed for Part 2. John Arnold had spoken to Southfields who were also willing to provide pictures of their hybrid *Rebutias*. It was suggested that she provide to this committee a list of what pictures were wanted so that they could make this known to our members. It was generally thought that our aim to have it available for the National Show might be a little ambitious, but that we should certainly publicise it at that event. Hopefully it should be published before Christmas. Mr Arthurs said that Part 1 was the technical section, but would probably need some additional pictures.

There was also discussion on the possibility of producing an English edition of the book on *Matucana* that Graham Charles was producing for the German Society. Mr Arnold would speak to him (JA).

16/13 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 4.15 pm.

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**NEXT MEETING: 7<sup>th</sup> May 2016** at the Holiday Inn, London Road, Newport Pagnell, MK16 0JA (just off junction 14 of M1). It would start at 11 a.m. and a buffet lunch would be served at 1 to 1.30 p.m.