

# BRITISH CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, held on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2017 at 11.00 a.m.  
at the Holiday Inn, Milton Keynes, Bucks.

<u>Present:</u>	Dr Jim Gibbs (JG)	Vice Chairman (Meeting 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
	Dr Tony Mace (TMa)	Publications Officer
	Mr Bill Hildyard (BH)	Forum & Website Administrator
	Mr John Arnold (JA)	Legal Advisor
	Dr Alan Bromley (AB)	Marketing Officer
	Mrs Suzanne Mace (SM)	Committee
	Dr Roland Tebbenham (RT)	Committee

Also present were Brian Coleman of Pedalo and Alan Vanden Bon for item 17/08(b)

## AGREED VERSION

- 17/01 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Dr Alasdair Glen and Mr Barry Tibbetts. It was agreed that flowers and a card be sent to Dr Glen's wife whose health was currently not good, hence his absence.
- 17/02 **MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER 2016**  
There were two minor corrections identified and a copy of the corrected minutes were formally signed by Dr Gibbs.
- 17/03 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**
- 16/44/1 **Branch Innovation Award** – Mr Harris would write to Bradford branch to officially let them know our decision on this (EH).
- 16/44/1 **Dr Bromley** – He said that he had decided not to become a Trustee of the Society at present.
- 16/45/4(c) **Shows Committee Request for Funding of Outside Events** – Mr Harris said that this was still to be discussed by the Shows Committee at their March meeting and an application had yet to be made. It was said that a section of the Sheffield branch members were intending to partake in the 2018 Chatsworth House event and would welcome help (Start date: 7th June).
- 16/50 **Discussion on the Sale and Showing of Illegal Mexican Plants** – Mr Harris had received an email from Dr Terry Smale saying that he was yet to be contacted by the Nagoya Protocol committee set up by the R.H.S., but had received a document from the Horticultural Board on this topic in which it was said that offering seed as 'wild collected' could be considered a dangerous statement by a Society. It was suggested that a paragraph be included in the seed list stating that "The ----- Society. had sought assurances that all wild collected seed offered in its list had been collected in accordance with the laws of the source countries and that its distribution was allowed under the terms of any permits to collect the seed." The document also said that there needed to be guidance to contributors and that a statement along the lines of the following: "The reputation of the ----- Society was at risk if it offered seed that had been collected illegally, or that did not have permission for distribution. This could do harm to future attempts to people who wanted to collect legitimately. The ----- Society. was not able to check every seed submission, so please do not submit seed that would put our reputation at risk. Please also retain documentation giving any relevant permission for as long as possible." He also said that a statement outlining the Nagoya Protocol could also be included in the seed list, which would then be in compliance with the legal restraints that applied in the U.K. In the discussion of this it was said that little was known of the legality of our seed sources. Mr Arnold would therefore contact Mr Rushforth, our seed purchaser, to discuss this and see if he was willing to contact our seed sources along these lines (JA). Replies should be sent to Mr Harris and the subject would be discussed at our next meeting.
- 16/52/1 **Apology to John Ede** – Mr Harris had done this and read out his apology letter and Mr Ede's reply. In it Mr Ede had accepted the apology, but said that he would not be renewing his membership. However, it was said that he had renewed and was now a member of Brighton branch. It was agreed that the incident was now closed.
- 17/04 **ELECTRONIC DECISION MAKING**  
None that needed reporting to this meeting.
- 17/05 **COMMUNICATIONS**
1. **Jim Earle** – A letter had been received from him stating that he was unhappy with the way that Bromley branch had treated the amalgamation of the Bromley with Eltham branch (his original branch), especially with respect to the money received from Eltham branch (no thanks had been offered) and would not be renewing his Society membership or supporting Society events.
2. **Awards** – None had been received since the last meeting.
- 17/06 **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**
1. **Vice-Chairman:**
- a) **Zone Reps** – Dr Gibbs said that he had asked them if they could find any information on branch libraries. Replies had been sparse and slow and the replies had separated neatly, as might have been expected, into those that were housed at the branch meeting venue or were housed at a member's home. Interestingly, in all cases the insurance cover, either by house contents or

public liability, appeared to be more assumed rather than any real knowledge and might be more driven by a lack of usage or real interest in the libraries. It was also said that insurance companies were not prepared to insure such libraries.

- b) He said that he had just started to compile information prior to sending out requests to update the branch contacts and venues information. The other project for later this year would be a full update for the Speakers List and splitting off a separate Digital Presentations List. It was 5 years since the last full refresh, so it was due this year, although it would not probably happen until after July, as discussions at his workplace following notifying them of his intention to retire at the end of that month, had led him to believe that he wouldn't have too much free time until then.

## 2. **Membership Secretary:**

Mr Morris stated that since the beginning of December 2016 he had enrolled 67 new members, 3 of whom had also subscribed to Bradleya. This compared with 53 at this time last year. These comprised 39 Full, 14 Senior, 8 Associate and 6 Junior. Of these only 2 were from overseas (1 each from Denmark and the Netherlands). 4 persons had joined using the Welcome Pack reduced price offer (currently a total of 87). He had also reinstated 2 former members. He said that on an 8 day period in January he had enrolled 17 new members (only 2 from Sheffield) and said that this had been the most productive period of his tenure in office. He said that there had been a greater number of members completing their renewals correctly this year and had received a more than usual number of unsigned, undated and practically illegible cheques and credit cards. .

## 3. **Treasurer:**

- a) Membership – Mr Kirkbright said that current membership compared with last year was: Full 1,023 (-50), Senior 828 (+12), Junior 17 (+4), which when added together, the Journal taking membership total was 1,868 (-34). Associate membership was 153 (-11) and 66 Full members had switched to Senior and 45 the other way. Bradleya takers were 382 (-10). He said that the figures were encouraging as we had started compiling the figures some 10 days later than last year.

- b) 2017 Calendar – Costs and postage up to the end of January had been £1,684 whilst sales net of VAT up to the end of January had been £1,351, a loss of £333. It was agreed that the calendar price could now be reduced to £4 including postage and that despite the loss we would continue the project. As there was no photographic competition this year, we would request suitable photographs or earmark suitable photographs and get permission, if needed, for them to be used in future calendars.

- c) Accommodation Payments – These had now all been made.

- d) Payment of Subs. by Website – The percentage of these for membership and Bradleya being paid via PayPal had risen from 37.5% in the first full year in 2012 to reach 45.9% in 2016. However, this included payments being paid in by Mr Morris for members paying by credit card. In 2016/17 the percentage was 38.4% to the end of January. He had managed to strip out Mr Morris' transactions, which then left us with only 22% being paid directly on line. He felt these figures were worth highlighting.

## 4. **Shows Committee:**

Mr Tibbetts in a written report said that there was nothing new to report as the Shows Committee had decided to only meet 3 times per year and their next meeting was in March 2017.

## 5. **Conservation and Research Committees:**

Alan Hill in a written report said that there was nothing to report from either committee. There had been a query from Cuba just before Xmas about a project submission, but no indication as to the subject. The project had yet to be received.

## 6. **Advertising Officer:**

- a) Advertising – Mr Quail's written report said that the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter advertising income was £457 (£656 last year).

- b) CactusWorld Production Trainees – He said that training of the recently mentioned member could not proceed due to the member's health problems and that efforts would now be made to attract other trainees.

- c) Layout and Printing – He said that a front page of the Information Sheet sets for overseas members had now been printed. He also said that following successful bids, Warners would now print the March and September journals and Swallowtail the other two. He said that members needed to be reminded that the receipt date for March journal finalised copy was **10th January**. He complained that some of the material for the new A.G.M. agenda had been late, incomplete and using text of a low standard which made his workload more time consuming and would be dealt with in a more timely manner next year.

## 7. **Bradleya Editor:**

Mr Charles had said that he currently had nothing to report. He had had a few papers to progress, but he felt it would be better if he reported in more detail to our next meeting.

## 8. **Journal Editor:**

- a) CactusWorld – Mr Laius reported that there were 20 articles that were ready, 16 were with the production team awaiting design and layout and 6 were work in progress. Of the 20 articles which were ready, 10 would go in the March issue. Many of these were short ones (1 or 2 pages long), so although it sounded as if we had a lot this was not the case. However, there were enough articles for the next 2 issues. The March journal was on schedule and would contain 4 cactus articles, 2 new descriptions and a substantial succulent article covering a little known area of South Africa. Cultivation also featured as well as all the regular items such as 'In My Greenhouse', 'CactusTalk' and 'Lit. review'. He also expressed concern at the current lack of trained layout people and said that we were becoming very dependent on Mrs Vanden Bon and Mr Quail. It was agreed that we would try to attract further trainees from within the Society, but their effectiveness would not be felt for at least 8 months.

- b) BioOne – He also said that the updated contract with BioOne regarding hosting Bradleya had now been signed recently and uploading of PDF files would begin in the late Spring, so that all material would be ready for the start of 2018. He said that he had been putting off signing this in case JSTOR came back to him to say that they were commencing a new programme, but this was not the case, so he felt it was vital to sign-up with BioOne right away in case they applied a maximum number of participants, as they did last year. To lose another year would have been detrimental to Bradleya, especially in terms of attracting new authors.

9. **Technical Editor:**  
Mrs Vanden Bon reported that layout of the March was almost complete with 8 additional pages to the journal and an additional page in the Newsletter. There would be 4 inserts – an advertising flyer for 'Succulents in Cultivation – Breeding New Cultivars' by Gordon Rowley, the 2017 Calendar of Events, the index to Vol. 34 and the A.G.M. Leaflet. It would be printed by Warners. She also said that the printing of the new Membership Leaflet was still to be arranged.
10. **Publications/Internet Server Officers:**  
a) Publications – Dr Mace reported that publication sales were still fairly routine. Small numbers of calendar sales continue to come in and a couple of large dealer orders from the U.S.A. would boost the quarter's sales.  
b) Website/Internet/Forum – Dr Mace said that along with Dr Bromley and Mr Hildyard he had met with the representatives of Pedalo in early January to discuss the way forward for the Society's website, forum and membership database. A meeting had been arranged for this afternoon for a presentation to this meeting (*see minute 17/08(b)*). Dr Mace said that he continued to be concerned about the fragility of our current systems and the extreme difficulty of maintaining the website in particular. He also said that no offers of help with server management had been received to date.
11. **Update on the Society Digital Programmes:**  
David Lambie began his report by stating that we should recognise the efforts of Dr Tebbenham who had led this project since its inception and although the latter is reducing his involvement, his input would still be welcome in the future. His report then stated that 4 new programmes had been added in January and gave details of other work in progress by members of the team. These dealt with the work currently in progress on the slide bequests from Tom Lavender, Bill Christie, Ron Iles and the work in progress on material from Sonia Barker–Fricker and John Hughes. Mr Lambie had also embarked on contacting other English-speaking Societies to see if there were opportunities to get material from them or exchange presentations. Other aspects of the report included fixing errors that had been discovered in 3 programmes, the need for somebody to manage an 'Image Gallery' for material which although good was not usable for talks, the need to monitor the condition of existing slide talks and an update of the current branch orders of slide talks and digital talks. Mrs Vanden Bon provisionally volunteered to manage the Image Gallery (**AVB**), but the post would be advertised later this year.
12. **2018 Convention:**  
Mr Arnold reported that he was having trouble contacting Adam Harrower as he had had no reply from him despite several emails. It was suggested that perhaps he might respond to emails from Chris Rogerson and Mrs Vanden Bon would arrange this (**AVB**). He was also looking for a possible alternative to John Ellis should this prove to be necessary and it was suggested that Brian McDonough might be suitable. Mr Arnold would contact Brian and also let John Ellis know of this. Mr Kirkbright said that he needed to know the various speakers' travel arrangements/costs fairly soon. Mr Arnold was also compiling the details of the other booked speakers as Mr Quail had said that he needed this information as soon as possible as the convention needed to be advertised in the June journal. He had thought about whether a limited auction should be part of the event and it was agreed that we would make our usual plea for donations of reasonable prizes and the best of these would be used for an auction and the rest for the raffles. He was currently organising the programme for the event but was yet in a position to present it due to the problems already alluded to. However he hoped to go to the other team members fairly soon and establish that they could cope with this as well as they had done on previous occasions. He said that ideas on how to enhance the event would be welcome as these measures needed to be in place by the end of this year.
13. **Marketing Officer:**  
Dr Bromley reported on the various aspects of his intended media coverage which included the following items:-  
a) R.H.S. Survey – He would be speaking at a Plant Society workshop on 20th February where some of the issues from the survey would be discussed in breakout groups. 3 members of Woking branch had also been invited because of their links with the annual Plant Society Show at Wisley, but it was felt that a member of this committee apart from himself should attend this and further workshops on the survey.  
b) Social Media – He said that there had been a poor response to his appeal for help in his December CactusWorld article. Alain Sutton of Bromley branch, Stuart Walker of Bradford branch and Stirling Baker (Zone 15 rep.) had expressed interest. Gynelle Leon had set up the B.C.S.S. Instagram account (@britishcactusucc) but had been too busy to do much with it, so he would follow up with her. He said that about 7 branches had their own Facebook pages, but these were not easy to find, one of the biggest being that of Manchester branch with some 69 members. He felt that the use of these Facebook sites for local branch recruitment might not be the best approach, although it was useful as a means of local communication.  
c) Helping Zones/Branches to benefit from Local Events – He had emailed 13 Zone reps. about the branch leaflet idea and received helpful responses from 3 of these and a request for further clarification from another. He had also had a request to update a branch leaflet that he'd provided last year. He said that despite this seeming lack of response he had yet to start chasing people again.  
d) E-mailing – The monthly emails using Mail Chimp had been generally well received and he would continue this for 2017.

17/07 **SOCIETY A.G.M.**

Mr Harris said that written reports from everybody he had asked had now been incorporated into a revised 12 page agenda. He also said that there was only 1 nominee for each of the main Officer positions, including the annual trustees, but that 1 of the current Shows Committee had recently resigned making an additional vacancy, so that there were now 5 nominees for the 4 Shows Committee vacancies. This meant that a secret ballot would have to be held, which Mr Harris would arrange. The agenda programme timing would be as discussed at our December meeting and Dr & Mrs Mace would contact both speakers and either arrange their transport, or the foreign speaker's accommodation. Mr Morris suggested and it was agreed that the top table arrangement on the stage would be scrapped and a single table be positioned on the floor in front of the stage for Dr Glen to run the meeting. He would also try to invite as many nurseries as there was space for and Mr Kirkright would liaise with him to ensure the use of the venue's digital projector was a viable proposition.

17/08

## WEBSITE

- a) Mr Hildyard had previously distributed a letter and process document from Brian Coleman of Pedalo, the website design firm that he and Drs Bromley and Mace had already had discussions with and Mr Coleman had been invited to the afternoon session of this meeting to expand on this document and get a wider understanding of what was wanted. Mr Vanden Bon, who had experience of website design would also be present at the meeting. Prior to the afternoon meeting there was a brief discussion in the morning on the subject among this committee. Dr Tebbenham said that he felt that the process described in the process document using the 'agile' technique, although it would lead to what we wanted, could lead to additional spend to cover help in future maintenance. Mr Hildyard said that he didn't envisage a product that led to additional maintenance spending, as he felt that this should be our responsibility. Dr Tebbenham said that he had also looked at the websites mentioned in the process document and these had looked good. It was also said that the company had researched our existing website and had come across at the previous meeting as a very competent company in their working practices. It was envisaged that our website would be restructured from new. It was also asked if our current membership database would be a problem and Mr Kirkbright said that it would need to be rewritten to provide the same functionality. This could be achieved fairly easily, but needed to be part of the specification.
- b) The afternoon meeting with Pedalo began after lunch with Brian Coleman and Alan Vanden Bon present. After introductions, Mr Coleman then ran through the process that would be used to establish what was required. The first requirement was to discover what was already in place, to establish what was required of it and also who it was seen to be its key users. This would result in an agreed functional layout of the website. Once these facts were understood Pedalo would design an agreed website which would cater for these requirements. Dr Tebbenham asked if the use of process mapping was part of this process and Mr Coleman replied that although it was not strictly process mapping, he personally would use this as part of his work pattern and thus ensure the website would cater with our requirements. Mr Vanden Bon asked if the new system would cope with the new membership requirements and Mr Kirkbright explained that there were other required features within the current database and these features were explained by both people. Mr Hildyard said that he did not want responsibility for doing this. Mr Coleman said that after agreement by us the newly designed website would be available for private assessment by us prior to going public and then once accepted the existing data could then be imported. It should then be able to cope with extracting these various features. He also said that our current house style would remain unchanged, but would be responsive with modern access tools like tablets and mobile phones as well as computer screens and also be membership responsive. He felt that the process could be completed in a matter of 2 months before the new website would be up and running correctly, subject to our input as to it running correctly. Pedalo would set up the new website on their own server and once running correctly would give us a copy to put on our server to ensure that it worked correctly there. There would be no additional costs apart from specific plug-ins which might cost us £15 each plug-in. He said that Pedalo would want about 40% of the total cost at the start to ensure our commitment.
- He said that the first important step would be one, maybe two workshops, each lasting a day and comprising of at least 3 or 4 of this committee and himself, the former to attend these armed with the fine detail of our requirements of the website, so that he was fully aware of these at their conclusion. He would provide an agenda on the important points required to be discussed, each one based on a 15 minute interrogation. He also said that a prime requirement was to make the site Google responsive to ensure it remained a prominent website and attractive to general public viewers.
- After Mr Coleman had left there was further discussion on what this committee had felt about what was discussed. It was generally felt that the discussion had proved the viability of Pedalo and that we should use this company although it was said that the cost quoted would be at the higher end of our planned budget and there might be additional costs or slippage. It was said that the participating members of this committee at the planned workshop(s) should be Messrs Hildyard and Kirkbright and Drs Bromley and Mace plus possibly a member that ran a good branch website. The opinions of the rest of the committee as to their expectations of the new website should be made known to these participants in a priority order, to ensure that a correct specification should be available after the workshop(s). Mr Vanden Bon had a few queries about the transfer and individual operation of the database and website and explained these to Messrs Hildyard, Kirkbright and Dr Gibbs, but would write to Mr Kirkbright about these. It was suggested the Zone Reps and branch secretaries also be consulted on what they wanted to see on the new website (JG).

17/09

## FUTURE PUBLICATIONS

Mrs Vanden Bon said that Gordon Rowley's book was very close to completion and showed proofs of the book. Initial reaction did raise a comment that the title 'Succulents in Cultivation - Breeding New Cultivars' might be too long, but this was the title that the author wanted. It was said that print run would be 750 units and the agreed price would be £35 or £38 including postage. She said that she had been very appreciative of the work undertaken on the book by other people. These would appear in the book's appreciation list and credits. There were 2 other possible future publications, but none that needed consideration at this time. It was said, however, that we needed another reprint of the *Lithops* book and this was agreed.

17/10

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. Mary Sellars – It was said that she would reach her 100th birthday in May and that perhaps she should receive a card and flowers from the Society to celebrate this event. This was agreed. Dr Gibbs would provide her latest address and also arrange the flowers (JG).

There being no other business the meeting closed at 4.30pm.

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**NEXT MEETING: 13<sup>th</sup> May 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.