

BRITISH CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, held on Saturday 25th June 2011 at 10.30 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 Roy Mottram (RM)	CactusWorld Editor
	Dr Colin Walker (CW)	Bradleya Editor
	Mr David Quail (DQ)	Advertising Officer & Editorial Team Coordinator
	Dr Tony Mace (AM)	Publications & Internet Officer
	Mr Barry Tibbetts (BT)	Shows Committee Representative
	Mrs Suzanne Mace (SM)	Committee
	Mrs Alice Vanden Bon(AVB)	Committee/Editorial Team
	Dr Roland Tebbenham (RT)	Committee
	Mr Bill Hildyard (BH)	Committee/Forum Moderator
	Mr John Arnold (JA)	Co-opted Member

AGREED VERSION

Dr Glen welcomed Dr Gibbs, our new Vice-Chairman, to his first meeting and also welcomed the return of John Arnold, who had been co-opted to the committee as our Legal Advisor. He will continue to act as our official correspondent to the Charity Commissioners.

11/10 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
None.

11/11 **MINUTES OF THE B.O.T. MEETINGS HELD ON 5TH FEBRUARY 2011**
These were formally ratified and signed after correcting 1 minor error (minute 11/06/9(b) bottom line – should be ‘...refer to it in an item...’.

11/12 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

11/6/1(d) **Better Society Exhibition Guidelines** – Mr Harris, after consultation with members who have staged major Society displays, had comprehensively expanded the relevant section of the Society Guide to Exhibitions and sent a copy to all branch secretaries.

11/7 **Conservation/Research Grants** – Mrs Vanden Bon had contacted Professor Andy Young on how this could be better publicised on outside websites. He had felt that with the relatively small amounts involved per grant, our current process was probably the best way. He had suggested that we decide on and publicise a line of research/conservation each year which might help attract applications and also suggested that we might fund an author who wished to write a book but was unable to afford the time to do so. This latter idea was thought to be beyond our current means.

11/11(b) **Marketing Manager** – Mr Quail had revised the job description, dividing it into 4 distinct responsibilities so that it could be aimed at four potential applicants. He had reissued this in the further appeal for volunteers in the June Journal (BCSS News).

11/13 **COMMUNICATIONS**

1. **Keith Larkin** – Mr Harris along with Dr Glen and Mr Kirkbright had received an email complaining of a book review in the June journal in which Mr Larkin felt that free publicity had been given to Tesco and W.H. Smith as a cheaper source for the book. Mr Quail explained that the review had been compiled and submitted prior to Mr Larkin’s usual book advert being received and after considerable discussion, it was agreed that in future book reviews, only the recommended retail price, I.S.B.N. number and publisher would be quoted and possible retail sources would not be suggested unless there was only one known source. Mr Quail would contact Mr Larkin to explain this and offer his own apologies (DQ).

2. **Awards** – A request for an Award of Merit was agreed. Mr Arnold had produced a list of other possible award candidates from the database, but whose branches had not submitted an application. Mr Kirkbright had added further qualifying information to this. These were reviewed by this committee and a shortlist of some 14 members was compiled. Mr Arnold would now contact the branches concerned to ascertain that they were happy with our suggestions and ask that they make an official request together with a comprehensive cv of the candidate(s), this to be sent to the Society Secretary for processing (JA/EH).

11/14 **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

1. **Vice-Chairman:**

a) Dr Gibbs reported that there had been no branch closures or changes to Zone Reps since the A.G.M. and a vacancy in Zone 5 still needed to be filled. A Zone Rep’s meeting had been arranged in conjunction with the Birmingham branch Autumn Show, to which he would invite somebody from Zone 5 to attend, but not necessarily commit to becoming the Zone Rep. It was intended to review the current Zonal system at that meeting.

- b) As a result of his introductory letter to branches it had become apparent that a new version of the Speaker's List was needed and this would be his next priority. He had heard of a potential new addition, this yet to be finalised. It was suggested it be made available by April next year.
- c) He reported that Birmingham branch had won a Silver medal at the Gardener's World Show and York branch a Gold medal at the Harrogate Spring Show. Both were commended for their success.

2. **Membership Secretary:**

- a) Mr Morris reported that since February 2011 he had enrolled 73 new members, comprising 51 Full, 16 Senior and 6 Associate, 12 of whom were from overseas, 5 were reinstated former members and of the 75, 49 had joined via our website. The total enrolment figure for the same period last year was 69. Two branches had officers yet to renew their membership and Mr Harris would contact both branches to inform them of this (EH). Mr Kirkbright's reminder mailing had had an excellent response; exact numbers were not known but had resulted in some £2,500 in renewal revenue. Membership numbering had now passed 50,000.
- b) He said that many new members asked where they might buy books and plants and after consultation with Keith Larkin, he proposed to include a copy of a book list, which Mr Larkin would produce, with the Welcome Pack. Mr Larkin would pay £20 for this service. He would try this for a year to see what the response was and if necessary could include other retailers. This was agreed and it was also suggested we included a few packets of seed as well.

3. **Treasurer:**

- a) Membership - Mr Kirkbright reported that membership to date for this year compared with the same period last year was: Full 1684 (-63), Senior 879 (+6), Junior 6 (-3). 72 had switched from Full to Senior and 40 to other way but current Journal taking membership loss was 60. Associate membership was 243 (-7), whilst Bradleya orders were the same at 557. We had maintained a membership loss of 2.3% to date and were on target for the lowest decline since 2002 (except 2005). He said it was interesting that in 1976 and 1977 with a membership of over 5000, the year on year change was -2.4% and -5.3% respectively.
- b) Journal Postage and Delivery – Responses from Royal Mail about the late journal delivery had been totally unsatisfactory and it would appear that there was no commercial alternative service available. Royal Mail had notified him that on our type of account, VAT would be charged on any mailing where the individual item weight exceeded 1kg, but as our journals were around 200gms, this would have no effect.
- c) Books – Echeveria book sales now needed 30 copies to break even.
- d) Aloe Monograph – The organisation of Kew Publishing left a lot to be desired, with poor response to our requests for invoices. Despite reminders, we were still to receive a request for our final payment, 'due' when the book had been published in April.
- e) Late Member Bequest – Mr Kirkbright had received the final payment making a total of £14,410. He said that there had not been any specified use attached so it had been added to our funds for general use.
- f) Speaker Expenses to Irish Branches – Despite the rules for this being agreed, the Northern Ireland branch still seemed to be confused on what had been agreed and certainly had not complied with the agreed terms. The Zone Rep, Mr Keoghan, was sorting this out with them and would also tell them that the grant only covered one subsidy per year.
- g) Phasing out of Cheques – He and Mr Morris had visited Dr & Mrs Mace to discuss various other methods of payment. We were now able to use PayPal to receive subscriptions and he was currently reviewing the use of PayPal's 'Virtual Terminal' to replace the traditional credit card input used by Mr Morris. He was also publicising the Society bank details both in the journal and renewal forms to encourage members to pay by direct transfer. He had had poor response from a partner company of Barclaycard about security procedures when handling card payments. Dr Tebbenham said that it might be worth investigating the possibility of using the Alpine Garden Society Direct Debit system and would give Mr Kirkbright the A.G.S. contact that he had recently spoken to, if he wished to investigate this possibility.

4. **Shows Committee:**

- a) Judges Course – Mr Tibbetts reported that due to Mr Weobley's recent ill-health, the current number of attendees was not known, the last known figure being 25. Mr Baker had agreed to take over management of the course if necessary. All speakers/lectures/judging tests and plant providers had been confirmed.
- b) 2012 National Show – A meeting had been held with Cambridge branch to agree procedures and responsibilities to avoid the minor problems at the last show. Entry would again be by wrist band. The show schedule had been agreed and a list of classes would appear in the September journal. All judges had been booked and branch secretaries would be circulated in December about class sponsorship. Mr Harris had invited Dr Smale to bring his team of R.H.S. judges to the show to provide possible R.H.S. awards, which he said he would try to arrange and Dr Smale had also suggested that a number of nurseries at the R.H.S. shows would be happy to distribute B.C.S.S. literature, if it was made available.
- c) Society Website – Mr Thwaites was liaising with Mr Hildyard to improve the Shows Committee section of the website, but he was waiting for cvs and photographs from committee members.
- d) Society Displays at Major Events – He said that further information on possible types of professional display material had yet to be suggested by Mr Thwaites.

5. **Conservation Committee:**

- a) Dr Maddams, in a written report, said that response to the articles on ex-situ conservation in the March journal had been disappointing. He was anxious to hear from branches who foresaw problems before he compiled advice to be added to the Secretary's Pack. He also felt that Zone Reps had a part to play in the process and would be writing to

them personally in the near future.

- b) Gerhard Marx had provided a very good article for the journal on the *Haworthia magnifica v. splendens* project.
- c) Problems still delayed the submission of a proposal for the in-situ conservation of *Matucana oreodoxa v. roseiflora*, but hopefully there would soon be a positive outcome. Roberto Kiesling was to consider submission of a project on the propagation of *Pyrrhocactus umadeave*. This could be a Conservation or Research project.
- d) He said that the committee had yet to meet since the A.G.M. but had kept in contact informally. They all supported the comments made by Mr Hill at the A.G.M. on the separate roles of the Conservation and Research committees.

6. **Research Committee:**

- a) In a written report Mr Hill said that there had been one application for a grant since the A.G.M. this coming from a Briton studying in the U.S.A. This concerned various aspects of the status of the genus *Manfreda*. He said that the committee felt favourable, but awaited further information from referees before making a decision.
- b) He said that the committee saw no merit in combining the Conservation and Research committees; each had a separate focus and both had no problems with working in tandem.

7. **Advertising/Journal Production Officer:**

- a) Advertising – Mr Quail reported that the 2nd quarter advertising income had increased to a more acceptable level of £662 (£447 last year) due to two new series of four adverts.
- b) Journal Production – He said that Crowes Complete Print of Norwich had produced the June journal, following successful quality trials and price negotiation, without any quality or delivery problems. They would therefore be invited to print the December journal and Charlesworth would print the September issue. There was a new team member, Philip Blackman, who produced **Haworthiad**. He processed the Newsletter section with minimal guidance and would do so again and also some of the articles. Mr Quail had checked that this was agreeable with the *Haworthia* Society. There were some problems, now resolved, as Philip used the Mac version of Quark, but this would now give more confidence in bringing further Mac users onto the team. Mrs Vanden Bon had overseen the June journal production, including the allocation of articles to team members and would also be responsible for the September journal. Joel Robinson was now available to resume his training and would be allocated small articles for this purpose.
- c) Work on producing corrected PC based pdfs of the *Ariocarpus*, *Echeveria* and *Ferocactus* books for the e-library was now complete.
- d) He said initial response for a replacement Journal Editor(s) had been limited but this would be dealt with as a separate item on the agenda (*see minute 11/18*).

8. **Bradleya Editor:**

Dr Walker reported that due to being involved in the *Aloe* book, progress on *Bradleya* was behind on normal timing. There was also a problem in that now it would be printed by Charlesworth, rather than Castle Colour, there was an urgent need to appoint somebody to do the layout work, as layout trials with Charlesworth had proved unsatisfactory (*see minute 11/15 for resolution of this problem*). He gave a list of 10 manuscripts that had been edited for inclusion in *Bradleya* 29, with another 8 probable ones, but said that the treasurer had informed him that with the cheaper printing quote, size should not be a problem. The cover design was still to be decided.

9. **Journal Editor:**

- a) Mr Mottram reported that he had distributed the authors' journal copies in early June and currently had sufficient material to fill the September and December issues. He also gave a list of the 14 edited articles he had for inclusion. He said that the Gerhard Marx article on *Haworthia magifica v. splendens* had been especially important publicity for the Society and he had forwarded a copy to Alan Hill to distribute to the Conservation Committee. He had recently changed his computer which had given him a much enhanced system, but which he was still in the process of getting used to.
- b) He gave the current status of the e-library, it now being 43.2GB in size with 5029 articles, books and images. This included the first 17 volumes (of 44) of the GB journal digitised for us by Daniel Schweich of CactusPro.com, including the front wrapper of the first issue.

10. **Publications/Internet Officer:**

- a) Internet – Dr Mace said that considerable progress had been made with branch and zone websites with only a handful of branches which either had no webpage or one that was out of date. Most of this work was done by Sheila Cude, but the remainder of the team would be needed in early 2012 when all sites needed to be updated simultaneously. There were still a few problems that needed addressing. The B.C.S.S. now had a new system for accepting on-line membership via PayPal; this was being further refined to allow it to operate at full efficiency for the 2012 renewals and allow cover for Mr Morris when he was away. It also meant he would not have to process charges for book purchases, etc. (*see also minute 11/14/3(g)*). He said he was having many problems with ensuring correct delivery of emails to Microsoft controlled systems.
- b) Publications – Sales since February had been relatively slow but regular. Around 250 *Lithops* and 160 *Stapeliad* books remained although further copies of the latter could be bought back from John Pilbeam. He said that direct selling opportunities were significantly less this year, although this would hopefully improve and there would be a B.C.S.S. selling presence at the Italian Follies event and E.L.K.
The USA *Opuntia* booklet project was progressing very slowly due to his inability to get the authors to liaise with Mr Quail on the technical aspects of the possible project and Mr Kirkbright on the financial viability. Mrs Vanden Bon was currently working on John Pilbeam's *Echinocereus* book, estimated publication date was around December.

11. **Forum/Website:**
- a) **Forum** – Mr Hildyard said the forum had recently passed 10,000 topics in the main forum and since the May 2010 software upgrade, gained over 400 members (40%). A new version of the forum software was now available but Mr Hildyard needed to rewrite the ‘Theme’ before installing this. An average of 128 people logged in every day with as many viewing as guests. 254 Society members belonged to the forum.
 - b) **Website** – There had been a problem with the BCSS–Announce signup page which had now been resolved and a contact point added to all pages. Work on the Shows Committee pages was still waiting Mr Thwaites’ input and nothing had been heard from Mr Hill about a Conservation web presence. He felt that the improved branch/zone web pages and the main site needed a commonality in colour and he proposed to tweak the colours of the main website to bring things closer. He complained that there had been no response to his suggestion for Trustees to each provide a cv and portrait to put on the website but agreed to provide an example of what was required (**BH**).

12. **Update on the Society Future Projects:**

- a) **Slide Library** – Dr Tebbenham reported on progress to date and gave a list of the 18 sets being progressed. One had been unusable and Mike Gilbert had offered a replacement set, complete with habitat updates and taxonomic corrections. He needed to sort out a fault in the equipment loaned to Mike Stansbie and had reminded Peter Arthurs that 4 sets were now available for creation of the digital presentation files. He said we needed to agree when the list of digital talks and rules would be published. We also needed to encourage contributions from current speakers and to manage the transition from spoken to integrated presentations. Mr & Mrs Darbon had passed to him more of the late Sonia Barker–Fricker’s slide sets which he would start reviewing this winter. Mrs Mace also reminded him that she had Daphne and Albert Pritchard’s slides for him to take in due course.
- b) **Society Promotion Volunteers** – He had had 1 volunteer to date. He had sent a list of 4 themes and asked which one was felt to match their aptitude/experience. A positive reply was still awaited.

13. **Charity Commissioners:**

Mr Arnold said that the latest information was yet to appear on the website. He would also send them a copy of the latest rules (**DK/JA**).

11/15 **BRADLEYA PREPARATION**

The advert in the June journal asking for a member with layout experience to undertake the layout of future Bradleyas, now that it was to be printed by Charlesworth, had resulted in 6 applicants, one of which was Mrs Vanden Bon, who left the meeting whilst this list was discussed. Mr Quail, who had undertaken the preliminary vetting, stayed to answer any queries but took no part in the subsequent choice/voting. He was thanked for all the work he had undertaken on our behalf. The chosen applicant would be paid for this work, just as we had paid for Castle Colour to do the work in the past and the choice criteria points were that the person must be able to liaise closely with Dr Walker, possess a high degree of the necessary skills, literacy and botanic knowledge and be able to start immediately. After much discussion, the list was reduced to 3 and it was finally unanimously agreed that Mrs Vanden Bon be offered the position, as she fulfilled all the criteria and had a proven track record with her journal layout work. Mrs Vanden Bon was recalled to the meeting and offered the position. She saw no problem with containing this extra work additional to her journal work and she and Dr Walker expected the issue to be in print by late October/November. Charlesworth would be informed of our decision and who the layout contact point would be (**DK**) and Dr Walker would produce a suitable advert. for the journal (**CW**).

11/16 **MEMBERS WELCOME PACK**

1. Advanced preliminary copies of this had been circulated via email, these being produced by Mr Quail and Mrs Vanden Bon and based on material suggested for the branch information CD. Mr Quail said that it was intended to act as both a Welcome Pack and a general Information Pack for use by branches at displays, depending on content included. It was envisaged to comprise of up to 40 fact sheet pages complete with lots of small colour pictures of commonly available plants to improve its interest, some of which needed example pictures adding and he asked this committee to help with this if possible. There was also a welcome sheet which would be included as part of the Welcome Pack. It was estimated that it would cost in the order of a £1/set to print them in a quantity to cover both Welcome Pack use and to provide samples to send to each branch. Branches could sell them at up to £3/set. There was some discussion on how they should be marketed but permission was asked to progress the idea. This was agreed and Mr Morris asked that if possible they be made available as soon as possible as his stock of the old Welcome Pack was now very low.
2. It was asked when a revised membership form would be available, but it was estimated this would be not be until next year.

11/17 **TO ELECT A TREASURER FOR 2011/12**

Mr Kirkbright was proposed by Mr Harris, seconded Mrs Mace and agreed by the meeting unanimously.

11/18 **CACTUSWORLD EDITOR**

Following Mr Mottram’s decision that he wished to resign as CactusWorld Editor by the end of 2012 at the latest, it was agreed to advertise for a possible replacement via BCSS–Announce and the journal. To assist in the process it was agreed that an Editor and Deputy Editor be sought. There had been little response at first but eventually 2 members with suitable backgrounds responded and these were reviewed by this meeting. It was agreed that after further consultation with them by Mr Quail, they would be invited to take over from the end of this year (**DQ/EH**). (*Post Meeting Update*: Both had now been officially invited and had accepted. They were Al Laius (Editor) and Peter

Berresford (Deputy Editor)). Mr Mottram would continue to run the e-library.

11/19 **BRANCH PROMOTIONAL CD**

Some of this had been covered in minute 11/16 but there were other areas that that needed somebody to work on them. Various people including the volunteer mentioned in minute 11/14/12(b) were suggested and would be contacted to see if they were interested in helping in specific areas.

11/20 **BETTER PROMOTION OF AFFILIATED SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP**

Mrs Mace had suggested that Society Affiliated membership should be better publicised and made more attractive. It was agreed that this be done, for if a Society joined as an affiliate, then perhaps members within that Society might join as individual members. It was suggested that possibly John Foster might be suitable to contact overseas societies and Dr Glen would contact him (AG). It was agreed that we charge the current affiliation fee (extra with Bradleya) and they would also be offered access to our digital presentations.

11/21 **WAYS OF IMPROVING JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP.**

Following a suggestion from Mrs Mace, it was agreed that we reduce the Junior membership to £5 (£6 for the first year including a badge). It was also necessary to improve the junior website as this had not changed since it was set up and an administrator was required to monitor and provide material to update/add to its content on a regular basis. A possible candidate was suggested and Mr Harris would speak to her when he saw her next weekend (EH).

11/22 **SOCIETY MINUTES**

Mr Kirkbright had produced electronic pdfs of all N.C.S.S. A.G.M., E.C. and F. & G.P.C. minutes from 1945 to 1983 from the records obtained from John Cox. Mr Harris had also been producing electronic pdfs of all the minutes that he had and said that he now had pdfs of all A.G.M. and E.C. meetings from 1966 to date, all F. & G.P.C./B.O.T. meetings since 1983 to date, all Zone Rep meetings, all Shows Committee since 1987 to date, all Convention minutes apart from the first one in 1987, all Conservation Committee minutes apart from a few and all the Publication Committee and Computer committee meetings. He said he was looking for sources of the missing minutes and some were suggested. Once he had completed the sets as far as possible, they would be stored on the Society server as a permanent record. He would keep a set for his own use and dispose of the paper records. This was agreed.

11/23 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. **Rule Changes** – Mr Kirkbright had produced a number of suggested changes to cover existing anomalies in the current rules and these were discussed. A few possible misgivings were expressed that some aspects might lead to a backward step in the Society administration, but it was generally agreed that Mr Kirkbright produce an official version for submission to Mr Harris for the agenda of the 2012 A.G.M.(DK/EH).
2. **Publications** – Dr Walker suggested that this be a permanent item on future B.O.T. meeting agendas.
3. **Hardship Fund** – Mrs Mace suggested somebody who qualified for this and should have their subscription paid for this year. This was agreed.
4. **Future Election Protocol** – Dr Glen asked that this be discussed at the next meeting to address certain shortcomings that were apparent in the recent election. This could be done by a small group outside the meeting and their finding then circulated to this committee. As a rider to this, Mr Morris said that when an Associate member requested no mail, this meant just that, so that they should not be sent a voting form.
5. **Future Society Meetings** – As there was now only one meeting per year Dr Glen suggested that this be made as attractive as possible to attract more attendees.
6. **Convention Committee** – It was suggested that this be an item for the next meeting

There being no other business the meeting closed at 4.40pm.

NEXT MEETING: 3rd December 2011 at the Holiday Inn, London Road, Newport Pagnell, MK16 0JA (just off junction 14 of M1). It would start at 11a.m. and light refreshments would be served at 1p.m. Dr Walker gave advance apologies for absence due to a prior engagement.