

BRITISH CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Saturday, 6th December 2008 at 11.30 am, at the Holiday Inn, Milton Keynes, Bucks.

<u>Present:</u>	Mr John Arnold (JA)	Chairman
	Dr Alisdair Glen (AG)	Vice Chairman
	Mr David Kirkbright (DK)	Treasurer
	Mr Eddy Harris (EH)	Secretary
	Mr David Slade (DS)	Membership Secretary
	Mr David Quail (DQ)	Advertising & Journal Production Officer
	Dr Colin Walker (CW)	Bradleya Editor
	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
	Mr Tony Morris (TM)	Committee
	Dr Roland Tebbenham (RT)	Committee
	Mr Bill Hildyard (BH)	Forum Moderator (Coopted)

AGREED VERSION

Before beginning the meeting Mr Arnold welcomed Messrs Hildyard & Tibbetts to the committee.

08/39 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr Roy Mottram (RM).

08/40 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2ND AUGUST 2008

These were formally ratified and signed

08/41 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

07/45 Society Logo – Joyce Coccozza had sent some sketches of her outline concepts for this and there was considerable discussion on which of these was felt to be the most suitable, during which a number of other ideas for changes were suggested. Subsequent to the meeting other outline designs were received and were also being considered. Mr Quail would contact Mrs Coccozza again once it had been decided what final form the logo design should take (**DQ**).

07/52 Society Robins – Mr Harris had contacted Juliette Hatt (the new organiser) who had assured him that she was keeping records as suggested and would give us adequate notice if she no longer wished to run the robins.

08/42 ELECTRONIC DECISION MAKING

It had been agreed that Anne Swithinbank be added to the free literature issue list for both the journal and Bradleya (starting with the December journal), so that she could get a better understanding of our activities. (*See minute 8/47*)

08/43 COMMUNICATIONS

1. R.H.S. – Mr Harris had recently received their Affiliated Societies package for the coming year. As part of this package it now contained an Affiliated Society's Newsletter in which there was an opportunity for Societies to give a profile report on their activities and aims. This could be a good publicity source and it was agreed that we should produce such a profile for inclusion, including contact details. Mr Mottram would be asked to compile this. (**DS**). The package also contained a form for publicising events which would be useful for publicising our Convention and National Show. Copies of this were distributed to the committee for information. It was also suggested that we ask if they could link to our web site where most of this information was already available.

2. Postal Literature – Mr Arnold had received various literature concerning shows and various offers. The latter were passed to Mr Quail to try to encourage them to advertise in the journal. (**DQ**).

3. Revised Membership Database – Mr Slade said that one branch had written to say that their branch members considered that the list of officials was a formal list and should remain so. Therefore, there was no need to change the list under their branch entry.

4. Awards – 1 A.O.M. and 1 R.H.M.A. were approved.

08/44 REPORTS OF OFFICERS

1. Vice-Chairman:

Dr Glen reported that he had passed the suggestions about splitting up Zone 14 that were made at the October Zone Reps. Meeting, to the branches in that zone. Following this, a Zone meeting had been held and a volunteer had come forward to become Zone 14 rep. If he was not able to do so, another volunteer was available. The meeting had also decided to distribute a proportion of their funds among the branches. Mr Kirkbright would check that these amounts appeared on the various branch balance sheets. Ralph Hewitt would stand down in April 2009 and if a replacement had not come forward, Graham Walker (Zone 1) might take on a caretaker role until one was found. Warrington branch had not met for some time and plans were now in hand for collaboration between Southport and the remnants of Warrington

to hold some joint meetings. Barrow branch was also struggling, but was holding one or two informal meetings. Branch secretaries had been reminded of the need to provide their speakers with adequate hospitality before and after meetings.

2. **Membership Secretary:**

Mr Slade reported that from 1st October to 29th November he had enrolled 37 new members compared with 25 for about the same period last year. These comprised 27 Full (+6), 9 Senior (+5), and 1 Associate (+1) a total increase of 12 (50%). As it was such a short period no pattern could be drawn. Of these, 24 joined via the internet and 9 were from overseas. Branch lists, a few Gift Aid forms, a Calendar of Events form and a letter from the Vice-Chairman had been sent out to branches in early November and subscription renewals were beginning to trickle in. He had circulated the current list of 'Free Literature' and it was agreed that Mr Hart-Dyke and Ms Matulova be removed.

3. **Treasurer:**

- a) **Membership** - Mr Kirkbright reported that membership to date for this year compared with the same period last year was: Full 2066 (-106), Senior 866 (+37), Junior 7 (-5), making a journal taking total of 2939 (-74), and Associates 272 (-18). Adjusting for the 90 Full members who renewed as Senior members this year, the Full member total would have been 2156 (-16) and Seniors 698 (-53). Bradleya subscriptions were 648 (-61).
- b) **Branch Assets** – He said that of the 20 branches that had sent their balance sheet for the last year, 11 showed a positive trend and 9 a negative one. He was also aware that 2 branches had assets of over £10,000, 6 with between £5,000 and £10,000, 19 with between £2,000 and £5,000 and 14 with less than £400. He said that he had had no requests for financial assistance from these latter branches.
- c) **Gift Aid** – He had received the form for next year's claim the rules for which had become more complicated. The claim would now comprise a standard 25% based on current tax rate of 20% plus a further 3.2% transitional relief to make it up to the 28.2% previously available, this arrangement to last for 3 years.
- d) **Books** – The *Ferocactus* book sales were steady and now had a positive cash flow to date of £3,400, whilst the *Ariocarpus* book sales have picked up slightly but still needed £400 to break even. If combined, then we were £3,000 in surplus. The *Echeveria* book sales started well and gross sales in the first 4 months had been just over £22,000 which was a net 61% of the production costs after postage, royalty, etc were deducted and £8,000 short of the break even point. If the book had been its original size the shortfall would have been some £5,000, but we were currently only £2,000 short of the budgeted first full year net sales. If £3,000 worth were sold in the next 8 months, we would beat the set target.
- e) **Accommodation Payments** – It was agreed that, apart from removing Mr Neville from the list, these would remain unchanged for 2008.
- f) **National Show** – He distributed copies of the National Show balance sheet which showed an overall profit to the Society of £1,176.
- g) **Society Accounts** – Copies of the fully audited accounts were also distributed, which showed Society assets of £248,543 as at 30th September 2008. The accounts had now been signed by the Trustees. The accounts also included a copy of the Trustees' annual report required by the Charity Commissioners.

4. **Shows Committee:**

- a) **National Show** – Mr Tibbetts reported that this had been very successful with some minor problems, the only major one being the non-availability of the restaurant on the day, something neither the Shows Committee or Cambridge branch had known about. Wood Green had apologised for this. Following the wind-up meeting with Cambridge branch, they had agreed to host the 2012 show which had now been booked at the same venue for 17th/18th August 2012. These dates would not clash with the Olympic Games. The known problems from this show would be addressed, including better car park control and it was planned to rearrange the timings to allow an extra hour for viewing the show. Holding a 2 day show had been discussed but was not thought viable for a number of reasons. It was asked if and when a CD of the show would be produced and it was said that it was understood that Dr Gillian Evison and David Terrett were progressing this but that an availability date was not known. They would be contacted to ascertain this and once known this could then be publicised (EH).
- b) **Judges Course** – The next course was booked for 4th–6th September 2009 as time was not available to consider other dates or venues. All current judges had had their qualifications extended by a year because of the 2008 cancellation. The Shows Committee felt that with the predominance of other events at that time, a biennial course would be more successful, alternating between the National Show and the Convention, i.e. 2009, 2011, 2013, etc, with the judges qualification period extended to 6 years from the current 5 years. The venue and time of year would also be considered, but no decisions had yet been made. Comments on the suitability of the current venue with regard to the tiring journey from the bedrooms/dining room to the lecture theatre for some of our more elderly members and the reduction of the evening social side were being addressed with Moulton College by Mr Weobley. The course would be strongly promoted in CactusWorld, including a special article from Graham Charles in the next one. Comment was made that making the course biennial could have a detrimental effect on the time needed for new judges to qualify and that perhaps annual mini-courses should be considered to address this.
- c) **Handbook of Shows** – Production of a 10th edition would be considered at the next Shows Committee meeting and various specialists consulted for their opinions following recent publications. A special session at the 2009 Judges Course would be held as an open discussion on the handbook.

5. **Conservation Committee:**

Dr Maddams in a written report detailed the following:-

- a) DEFRA/Animal Health – A statement had been issued that the implementation of the new import/export charges had been delayed until April 2009 to allow further investigation and assessment of their impact generally and on businesses in particular. They also wished to consider any options that might be available.
- b) Projects – At the next meeting of the Conservation Committee (March 2009) it was intended to consider ex-situ conservation in some detail including closer ties with the N.C.C.P.G. and botanical gardens although it was proving difficult to ascertain the views of the latter on what ways, if any, they should become involved in these wider activities.

6. **Research Committee:**

Alan Hill in a written report said that Darrell Plowes was asked to submit a detailed proposal concerning his initial enquiry and was preparing this. He said that the committee were aware of the recent *Stapeliad* publication by another authority but did not feel this should exclude another on the same subject but with a different view. It would examine his submission carefully with this in mind, including views sought from other authorities. At a recent Cactus Explorers Weekend, details were given of a Biodiversity & Macrodiversity Group, under the title Global Cactus Assessment and set up by Dr Barbara Goetsch, a Mexican national currently working at Sheffield University. She had personal contacts with various international conservation people, including Nigel Taylor (Kew). She had been given a Mexican government grant to study the conservation status of Mexican cacti, but had expanded this to cover all cacti. She was seeking B.C.S.S. support and been informed that the Conservation Committee would be interested in any conservation proposal she might submit. However, as she was currently in the preliminary stages of seeking information on the plants, it would be better if she submitted a detailed application for the Research Committee to consider.

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

- a) Advertising – Mr Quail reported that the 4th quarter advertising income was £653, making the year's total £2,701, marginally up on last year, possibly due to persuading advertisers to have special adverts related to the National Show and a last minute advert from the Plant Exchange for this coming journal. No series of 4 advertisers had been lost or gained. He was still to find somebody to take on seeking new journal advertisers. He had also circulated a report on advertiser relationships for discussion but due to lack of time this was deferred to the next meeting.
- b) Journal Production – He said that the December journal was with the printers a day early and was now being printed. However, despite the layout work on general articles being more advanced than ever, this was only achieved thanks to hard work by Mr Mottram, Mrs Vanden Bon and himself just prior to this, due to items specific to the December journal being sent either late, incomplete or containing inaccuracies, mainly concerning the National Show and the seed list. It would seem that the internal deadlines document he had previously recently distributed was being ignored and he reiterated that it **must** be adhered to and that all items **must** be checked and verified before submission. It was also said that the seed list inaccuracies had also had a serious knock on effect on the seed distribution listing. The prospective new editorial team member was making good progress and was nearly ready to lay out a real article. He had been in contact with two printers, interested in printing our journal, as possible standby printers. Both had quoted, based specifically on the September journal and these had proved to be considerably lower than Castle Colour's costs. He needed to continue the dialogue with them to resolve any quality issues and would also speak to some of their other customers. He said that one item that had come from this was that one had its own secure server and on contacting Castle Colour so did it, something not made known to us before. We were now set up for secure use of this which would save money posting C.D.s by Special Delivery and also save time. The other printers had also commented on the length of time currently needed from receiving the files and journal dispatch.

8. **Bradleya Editor:**

Dr Walker reported that in keeping with the intent to theme it to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth, he had received 4 articles for Bradleya 27 on this theme with 8 other articles with an evolutionary theme promised, details of which were given. It had also been intended to mark the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew but to date no articles on this theme had been received. He had designed the cover, which he showed, the front reflecting the Darwin theme, the back the Kew one, although the latter could be changed if necessary. He hoped that it would be another relatively bumper issue and did not anticipate problems filling it. He wished to publicise it in advance of issue, suggested sites being the March/April issue of the U.S. journal, March issue of CactusWorld, the B.C.S.S. website and possibly Kew Magazine and asked permission to spend some \$260 for a ½ page advert. in the U.S. journal. This was agreed.

9. **Journal Editor:**

Mr Mottram in a written report said that reactions to the September journal had been few but favourable. The December journal would be another bumper issue with 20 extra pages and he felt its theme of 'cactus humour' should appeal to our younger members and hopefully encourage recruitment. It was due for posting next Wednesday. It had been tricky to compile, a particular problem being that some material was late arriving, especially that concerned with the National Show and seed list, requiring considerable and stressful last minute work to achieve the planned publication date. He felt it was his best issue yet and felt that with the current world economic turndown, it might encourage most if not more people to renew or join. He gave details of its content and also listed the 17 articles he still had and their current editorial status.

10. **Publications/Internet Officer:**

- a) **Internet** – Dr Mace reported things were generally still running smoothly with one or two areas causing concern, notably the effect junk mail was having on server speed and a problem with the SSL certificate for internet credit card use. Our current supplier had not been helpful in sorting this, so a new certificate from another company had now been installed, hopefully without changeover problems. He recommended that the B.C.S.S. Google adverts. be continued as they generated 458 extra visitors in November despite the cost increasing by some 25–30%. He also said that the current economic downturn meant that the Cactus Mall costs had increased due to the cost being in \$U.S. but as most of his income was also in \$U.S., this had been balanced out. He had lost one or two personal customers but had now gained the C.S.S.A. account so he saw no reason to increase the charge to the B.C.S.S.
- b) **Publications** – Dr Mace reported that sales of these had been good, for as well as those for the *Echeveria* book, this seems to have had a knock on effect on sales of other publications, especially of other Pilbeam titles. This had been helped by the weakening £/\$ rate. He was now using a book consolidator for shipping books abroad as this reduced both costs and delivery times. He was currently setting up an agreement to sell books through Wisley and hoped to use this as a way to sell journals/Bradleya, perhaps through a form of ‘membership pack’. It was suggested that there was a market for a reprint of the Steve Hammer *Lithops* book and reprint costs and print run quantities would be ascertained before a final decision was taken (SM). The literature storage shed would need some roof work done next year which might need Society funding. However, if his intended house move goes ahead, this would not be necessary.

08/45 **UPDATE ON THE SOCIETY FUTURE WORKING TEAM**

Dr Tebbenham had provided a summary of proposals made at a recent meeting of the team, some of which required an input from members of this committee. These comprised:-

1. **Society Rules** – That a fourth objective be added clarifying our conservation focus, this to include both plants and seed, including in-situ and ex-situ actions (collections, documentation, exchange and collaboration with other organisations, etc.) This was agreed and a draft rule revision would be compiled for discussion at the February meeting (**Trustees**). There was some reservation expressed for wanting to include a specific non-discrimination rule as it was felt that the current rules were not discriminatory and this was not necessary. However, this would be considered further (**Trustees**) and guidelines for branches to consider when choosing a venue would be drafted for consideration at the February meeting (**DQ**). It was said that any rule change vote could not be processed until the 2010 A.G.M. at this point in time.
2. **Survey Data** – Work was in progress to provide all F.&G.P.C. members with a detailed analysis of the branch survey and produce a summary insert for the March 2009 CactusWorld. The Zone survey needed more work and Dr Glen agreed to coordinate returns of some specific questions set to Zone Reps. Timing was tight and was to be completed in time to report back to the April Executive Meeting. Actions from the Officials survey were now largely complete but Dr Tebbenham would ensure data had been used and adequately reported.
3. **Society Vision Critique** – In order to promote a wider area of influence for the hobby, it was suggested that our list of speakers be distributed to other organisations such as the N.C.C.P.G., A.G.S., Scottish R.G.S., R.H.S and W.I. This was agreed subject to agreement by our speakers and probable revision of its format to give fees charged to non-B.C.S.S. groups. (**AG and Ray Stephenson**). It was agreed that it would be desirable for the Society website to be made more attractive to general browsers and informative to more experienced visitors. It could also include a junior section, conservation and research activity reports (with photos) and a ‘members only’ section, although the latter would involve an upgrade to the membership database. These ideas would be added to Dr Mace’s list of planned future improvements. It had also been suggested that significant forum content, suitably reformatted, be added to the site for access by members and Mr Hildyard would consult with the other Forum moderator about this and holding further ‘Forum events’. Although the website contained a PayPal facility to purchase goods, the suggestion that this be extended for use as a new subscriptions and renewals facility was said to be problematic due to higher costs and known money transfer problems with PayPal. Possible alternatives might be sought in the medium term.
4. **Society Structure and Governance** – In order for the Society to react quickly to changing circumstances, several proposals on both of these topics had been provisionally suggested but were still presented in a finalised form. There was interest in who would serve on any proposed committees, their remits and operation and these points would be addressed in the final proposal, due early January 2009. There was also a suggestion that on-line voting be set up but this could only be a long term idea and needed expert advice due the complexity of setting up an eligibility validation system. There was also a question of whether it was economical to do so, as current postal voting normally produced an average return of 10%.
5. **Project progress** – Reports were given on the progress to date of various projects. The appeal for volunteers to undertake various tasks was ongoing and would be repeated in the December CactusWorld. Terms of reference were still needed for ways of promoting the Society (also for the guidance of this committee). Terms of reference and some equipment specifications were also needed for the digitising of the slide and journal libraries. Those for the former would be in two parts, one for those doing the digitising, the other for speakers using digital photography. It was also suggested that the Speakers List now list what digital presentation are in the library and in what form, and what current speakers talks were available digitally to obviate travelling to branches. Procedural information would be circulated to branches wishing to obtain digital equipment via lottery grants. The application rules for this were to change soon so Mr Kirkbright would ascertain these changes and report back. The project to digitise the C.S.S.G.B. & N.C.S.S. journals would be progressed by Dr Tebbenham, who would contact Chris Dean for specification details. Sufficient volunteers for this had come forward.

6. Branch Publicity Material CD – Mr Arnold was to complete the analysis of the material submitted to date and circulate his proposals for what should be included on the CD. He would liaise with Dr Tebbenham to discuss who would scan the raw data and who would work up the master files. The date for the CD demonstration was planned for the April 2009 E.C./A.G.M.
7. Reporting Plan – He gave a proposed overall action plan including dates for final reports, and to whom, on the various proposals by the Futures team.

Mr Arnold thanked the team for all their hard work.

08/46 **SOCIETY LIBRARIES**

Mr Harris said that some of the publications he had recently been given would be put into the journal library.

08/47 **SOCIETY PATRONS**

Mr Quail said that Anne Swithinbank had regretfully declined our invitation due to lack of time. We would maintain contact with her, both for our benefit and in the hope that at some future date she might be able to accept. Mr Quail would write to her on those lines and Mr Slade would send the publications (*see minute 08/42*). It was also agreed to leave any approach to Michel Lacoste until that a U.K. sponsor had been found. (DQ/DS).

08/48 **PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION UPDATE**

The results would be published in the December CactusWorld with a fuller report in the March one. One person had won two of the classes so the free membership prize would run for two years. It was agreed to make it a biennial event, starting next year, the results being displayed at the 2010 Convention. The rules needed some minor changes which Mr Mottram would undertake and Mr Tribble would be asked if he was prepared to run it again. It was understood that David Minnion, one of the Convention team, would be in contact with him and would be asked to ascertain this. Thanks were expressed to Messrs Tribble and McDonough (the judge) for their efforts.

08/49 **SOCIETY CONVENTION**

Mrs Mace reported that Jean–Marc Chalet had been invited as the last speaker, this still to be confirmed. The deposit for the venue had been paid and accommodation would be in the John Foster Halls, not the Gilbert Murray Halls as previously mentioned. It would run from Friday midday until late Sunday afternoon, the auction taking place on the Saturday evening. Package prices have been agreed, costings being budgeted on a target figure of 130 attendees and to encourage nurseries, they would get a special table rate if the full package was taken, this being on a ‘first come’ basis subject to availability. There would be a number of displays and a lockable room would be available for those containing valuable displays. An advert. for the event would appear in the next CactusWorld, as would a booking form. Mrs Mace again appealed for items for the auction and raffle.

08/50 **REAPPOINTMENT OF ANCILLARY OFFICERS AND SUB–COMMITTEES**

All existing officers and sub–committee members were willing to continue and were therefore reappointed. The suggestion that Mr Stansbie join the Conservation Committee and that Mr Lavender become a co–opted member was also agreed. Mr Rushforth had yet to give a take over date for his replacement (Peter Arthurs) and Mr Harris would try to get this decided for say next year. (EH)

08/51 **REAPPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY, EDITORS AND EDITORIAL TEAM**

All of these were reappointed for a further year with the exception of Mr Slade who would be replaced by Mr Morris in June 2009.

08/52 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Hampshire Memorial Lecture – It was agreed that Peter Arthurs be invited to talk on Digital Presentations. If he was unable to accept then Dr Barbara Goettsch and John Cox were suggested alternatives (EH).
2. Forum Copyright Issues – Mr Hildyard said that as far as he had been able to establish, there were no legal issues on the points raised about this. This was confirmed by Mr Arnold. It was also reiterated that we currently only had 2 Forum moderators and needed a third to spread the work load and cover holidays, etc. A possible candidate was suggested and would be asked (JA).

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

NEXT MEETING: 7th February 2009 at the Holiday Inn, London Road, Newport Pagnell, MK16 0JA (just off junction 14 of M1). It would start at 11.30 a.m. and light refreshments would be served at 1.30/1.45 p.m.