

BSBI AGM Thursday 21st November 2024

Biographies of individuals proposed for election

Nomination for Trustee (re-election): Dr Sandra Knapp OBE

Sandy Knapp specialises in taxonomy and evolution of the nightshade family, Solanaceae. She is the author of many peer-reviewed scientific papers, several books and has received numerous awards for outreach, biodiversity conservation, and botanical science. She is Past President of the Linnean Society of London. She holds honorary professorships at UCL and Stockholm University; she has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Argentine Academia Nacional de Ciencias, Academia Europea and is a Fellow of the Royal Society. She is an active promoter of the role and importance of taxonomy for conservation and sustainable development worldwide. Sandy was awarded an OBE in the 2023 New Year's Honours list for her superb work as an "internationally renowned scientific leader and communicator on nature and culture".

Nomination for Trustee (re-election): Dr Helena Jane Crouch

Helena has a life-long interest in plants and gardening, and joined BSBI as a student in 1983. She has a Botany degree and a PhD in plant succession. Since moving to Somerset in 1997, she has led weekly botany walks for her local Cam Valley Wildlife Group and been an active member of Somerset Rare Plants Group, Somerset Botany Group, Bristol Naturalists' Society and Bath Natural History Society, of which she is a trustee. In 2006 Helena was appointed BSBI County Recorder for North Somerset: since then, she has been working on a Rare Plant Register for Somerset and written articles and papers for BSBI News, New Journal of Botany and British & Irish Botany. She served on the Science & Data (formerly Recording & Research) Committee for 9 years and was a member of BSBI Council for 4 years, becoming Secretary to Council from 2013 until its dissolution in 2020.

Helena has been a Trustee of BSBI since 2021 and is Liaison Trustee to the Science & Data Committee. Whilst mostly involved in voluntary activities, Helena has also been employed as a university library cataloguer, botanical editor and proofreader and as a botanical surveyor for Natural England, Somerset Wildlife Trust and Plantlife. Any spare time is spent gardening.

Nomination for Trustee (re-election): Kylie Jones

Kylie Jones has extensive experience in corporate sustainability leadership roles in both water and energy utilities. With a background in ecology and corporate nature strategies, her remit has broadened to include carbon, circular economy, sustainable supply chains and social sustainability themes.

Kylie has a passion for plants and has previously taught a minor theme in botany to undergraduate zoology and wildlife conservation students at Anglia Ruskin University. In the past she used her

company volunteering scheme to spend time at the Cambridge University Herbarium mounting and incorporating specimens.

Her membership of the BSBI commenced in 2011 and she subsequently joined what was the Meetings & Communications Committee in 2015, serving as Secretary of the Events & Communications Committee from 2019 until finishing her full term in September 2024. She was elected to the BSBI Board in 2021 and is currently Chair of the Finance Committee. With a real enthusiasm for the BSBI she is keen to continue to support the Society in delivering its mission for plants and members alike.

Nomination for Trustee (currently co-opted): Richard Allanach

Richard is a beginner botanist but a somewhat more able accountant. An existing BSBI member, he was co-opted to the board in 2024 to strengthen its financial skills.

Born on Devonshire limestone his career brought him to live in the much less biodiverse English Midlands. He started work with British Gas but the last thirty-five years of his career were spent in the education sector including spells with Lambeth College, St Helens College and the University of Plymouth. However, except for a brief period being responsible for English as a Foreign Language at Harlow College, this has not involved helping students with their learning but rather looking after institutional finance. Nine years were spent working for the government on the oversight of further education corporations, bringing knowledge and experience of charity regulation.

Many BSBI biographies show eminent botanists in their natural habitats. Richard cannot emulate this. His photograph is of one of a campaign foray to highlight an area of green belt outside Rugby being proposed for housing. Richard completed the BSBI Identiplant course in 2024 and wants to advance his BSBI FISC rating from 2 to 3 in 2025

Nomination for Trustee (currently co-opted): Nicola Tainton

Originally from South Wales but a resident of the Forest of Dean for the past 20 years, Nicola has an MSc in Marketing and over 25 years of experience in the public and not-for-profit sector, including Marine Conservation Society and Cotswold Conservation Board, focusing on marketing strategy, individual giving fundraising, campaign planning, communications and PR. With a lifelong passion for nature and wildlife, she has a real desire to use her role of Trustee to champion the work of BSBI. With a blend of skills, experience, and genuine enthusiasm, Nicola is keen to support the charity's mission and help them achieve their goals, to make a real difference for wild plants and the wildlife they sustain.

Nicole was co-opted to the board in 2024.

Nomination for Trustee: Susan Edwards

Susan is a beginner botanist and an amateur botanical artist. She likes to sketch and paint a wide variety of plants and is looking forward to expanding her scientific knowledge of all things botanical.

Qualified as a solicitor and a professional international human resources practitioner with experience of governance and charity law requirements, Susan was appointed to the Board to broaden our expertise in employment and compliance as BSBI grows from strength to strength.

Brought up in rural Hertfordshire having attended a small village primary school where classes included nature study and visits to a local farm, Susan has retained an interest in the natural environment and has been involved in several ecological campaigns. Now a Londoner, Susan's professional career has included work as a Solicitor and a Human Resources Director in many sectors - commercial, charitable and public. She has previously held trustee positions in small and mid-size charities and is involved in a variety of volunteering activities.

Nomination for trustee - Dr Andrew Lack

Andrew Lack has been a keen field naturalist all his life with particular interest in plants. Born in Oxford he returned there as a lecturer in Biology at Oxford Brookes University in 1987, having studied at the universities of Aberdeen and Cambridge and working at Swansea University. Now working half-time his remit includes much teaching about plants, the diversity of life generally and our relationship with the natural world. He has a particular interest in pollination and published *The Natural History of Pollination* with Michael Proctor and Peter Yeo in Collins New Naturalist series. He has also studied plant ecological genetics and written some other books and chapters on plants and birds, especially about our cultural relationships. Having been a member of the BSBI since 1976 he feels it is time to play a more active role in the Society.

Nomination for Award of Honorary Member: Dr Brenda Harold

Brenda has been a BSBI member for 57 years and served on Council 2007-2011 and Training Committee 2008-2017. She created and delivered *Identiplant* which has now become a key BSBI training offer for developing botanists.

Brenda grew up in London with no access to the countryside but with a fascination for plants. Her botanical career began with a superb, traditional Botany course at UCL which gave her a background that is sadly lacking these days. She stayed on to do a PhD: 'Cytogenetic Studies in the Genus *Potentilla*', which gave great scope. The British members of the genus are small, attractive and easy to grow but demonstrate almost every trick: self-incompatibility, vegetative reproduction, apomixis, hybridisation and polyploidy. Her general field skills were poor but she became the national expert on the tricky *P. erecta* – reptans group. She still has the letter dated Dec. 1969 inviting her to become Referee for *Potentilla* which she accepted in Jan. 1970. She has therefore been in this role for nearly 55 years and counting. As part of the role she produced two training videos for *Potentilla* which are available on the Youtube channel.

Brenda didn't have time to develop decent field skills until the 1990s, when her daughters had grown up and she took early retirement from her university job. Then she took field courses first as student then as tutor and built up a photo library. She also tutored numerous adult courses on Botany and Genetics, mostly for the WEA (Workers Educational Association).

Brenda's theoretical background made it easy for her but she knew how it feels to be a beginner. So having joined Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust's team of volunteer Wildlife Site surveyors she honed her identification skills, learned survey techniques, and helped beginners in the group. In 2011 she wrote the *Identiplant* course for them and delivered it by email. Two friends then enabled the course to go online: Sue Dancey persuaded the Field Studies Council to take on the administration and a retired Maths teacher, Sue Green, built the website and learning platform. The BSBI approved the course and permitted us to display their logo as well as advertising it on their website. It was launched nationally in 2013. *Identiplant* spread rapidly and developed a life of its own with students from N Scotland to Jersey and N and S Ireland.

Brenda very generously offered BSBI ownership of *Identiplant* and was delighted when the BSBI took it on in 2022. Brenda remained on the *Identiplant* Management Team to help the transition.

Brenda said "I see it as a bridge to take beginners across the difficult divide between learning plant names one by one to proper systematic identification. The best reward is seeing how much the students who complete the course enjoy it."

Nominated by the Board of Trustees.