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MINUTES of the first Annual General Meeting of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (the successor body to the Botanical Society of the British Isles) held at 12.30 on 22 November 2014 in the Charles Wilson Building of the University of Leicester.

1. *Apologies for absence and quorum.*

Apologies for absence had been received from two Trustees, Antony Timmins and Sarah Whild. Approximately 125 members were present and the meeting was therefore quorate.

2. *President's welcome and opening remarks.*

The members approved the appointment of the President as Chair for the AGM. The President stated that no specific questions had been notified to the Company Secretary in advance of the meeting but drew attention to an open questions and answers session about BSBI's activities which would be held after the conclusion of the scientific business of the day.

The President outlined the 3-stage process of renewal which the Society was undertaking. He thanked the Company Secretary for his technical work in the conversion of the Society from an unincorporated association to the company limited by guarantee, whose first AGM was now in progress (stage 1). The Head of Operations had been charged with the development of a 5-year Strategic Plan and a detailed rolling Action Plan. These were approved by the Board of Trustees in July 2014 and the Action Plan is currently being refined at committee level before these guiding documents are made available to the membership as a whole (stage 2). We are developing two key projects (BSBI's Atlas 2020) and the collaborative National Plant Monitoring Scheme. We hope soon to be able to report the new funding for these projects and other BSBI activities which BSBI needs to meet its charitable objectives (stage 3).

3. *Annual Report.*

The President explained that the first Annual Report (previously Annual Review) of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland covered the 15-month period of activities from January 2013 to March 2014. These activities were pursued by the Botanical Society of the British Isles until 31 October 2013 and the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland thereafter. The Annual Report had been distributed to members and is also available online. The Members unanimously adopted the Annual Report.

4. *Audited Annual Report and Accounts.*

The Company Secretary explained that the first Annual Report and Accounts of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (incorporated 3 June 2013) covered the 5-month period of operations from November 2013 to March 2014 and had been audited to meet statutory requirements. The audit report is unqualified and the balance sheet is as previously made available to members in the financial section of the Annual Report 2013. Next year the accounts will show the outcome of a full year of operations and will therefore be more readily comparable to the accounts of the predecessor Society.

The 31 March 2014 Report and Accounts had been approved by the Board of Trustees and posted online on the BSBI website and were now being formally laid before the members. The Members present unanimously adopted the Report and Accounts.

5. *Election of Trustees.*

- a. The President explained that Mr D. Pearman and Ms. L. Farrell, together one third in number of the initial Trustees of the Society retired by rotation in accordance with the Society's Articles of Association. The Board of Trustees had asked Mr Pearman to attend the December 2014 Board Meeting as a co-opted member before retirement whereas Ms L. Farrell, being eligible, offers herself for re-election.
- b. Professor M. Crawley, Ms D. Williams and Mr C. Metherell have served as co-opted Trustees since 24 July 2013. All three, being eligible, were proposed for election as Trustees.
- c. The members unanimously approved the President's proposal that the re-election of Miss Farrell and the election of Professor Crawley, Ms Williams and Mr Metherell be considered together and upon being invited to vote, unanimously approved their re-election/ election as Trustees (also being Company Directors).
- d. Dr C. Cheffings was proposed for election as a new Trustee. The President briefly summarised her credentials, noting that she will bring supplementary skills and experience to the BSBI Board. Dr Cheffings was approved as a Trustee and Director by unanimous vote of those present.

6. *Election of members of Council.*

- a. The President explained that Mr D. Broughton, Dr R. Carter, Mr P. Gateley, Mr T. James and Dr J. Sutcliffe retired from Council, now an advisory body to the Board of Trustees, by rotation. A. R. Vickery, a Vice-President and Council member also retired. Being eligible, Dr R. Carter and Mr T. James had offered themselves for re-election as Council members. The members unanimously approved their re-election. A vote of thanks to outgoing members of Council was proposed and unanimously approved with applause.
- b. Mr R. Payne, Mr. J. Woodman and Mr J. Faulkner have served during 2014 as co-opted members of Council, representing the National Committees. The AGM was asked to approve their continuing co-option under Article 10.6, in order to ensure continuing representation from each National Committee. The Members present unanimously approved their continuing co-option as members of Council.

7. *Honorary General Secretary.*

The President explained that under Article 5.2 the Trustees may appoint an Honorary General Secretary. The meeting was therefore asked to note with approval the Trustees' proposal to appoint Mr. C. Metherell as Honorary General Secretary, in succession to Ms L. Farrell, who has retired. The members present offered their applause to Ms Farrell by way of thanks for her five years of service as HGS and unanimously approved the Trustees' appointment of Mr Metherell as HGS. Mr Metherell thanked the members for their support.

8. *Election of Honorary members.*

The President read short citations for Lynne Farrell, and Ian Bonner, the immediate past HGS and President.

The newly appointed HGS read citations for Simon Leach, who had recently retired as a Vascular Plant Specialist with Natural England, indicating that throughout his career he had continuously promoted and supported the work of the Society, and David Streeter MBE, botanist, influential botanical author, ecologist and conservationist.

The members present unanimously approved the election of these four botanists as Honorary Members of the Society.

9. *Vote of thanks for Committee members, Journal and Newsletter editors, editorial boards and contributors, and the Society's Vice-County Recorders and Referees.*

A vote of thanks was proposed for: retiring and continuing members of the four Permanent Working Committees and the three National Committees; the Editor and Editorial Board of the *New Journal of Botany*; the editors and contributors of *BSBI News*, the *Irish Botanical News*, *BSBI Scottish Newsletter*, and the *Welsh Bulletin*; and the Society's Vice-County Recorders and Referees, whose volunteer activities underpin the Society's every activity. The members provided their sincere thanks with loud applause.

10. *Subscription Rates.*

The President indicated that the Trustees have, on this occasion, delegated their power to set subscription rates to the members in general meeting. As described in the September 2014 issue of *BSBI News* (127; pages 2-3), there having been no increase since 2009, the Trustees had proposed an increase in subscriptions for 2015 averaging 20%. As a result, membership rates would increase to: Ordinary £30 / €38; Family (additional in household) £4 / €5; Junior £12 / €15; Overseas (other than Ireland) £32 / €40; Senior £22 / €28; and Institutional (*BSBI News* only) £12 / €15.

The President explained that it was important to set the subscriptions so that they cover the costs of membership, and that there was no plan to raise the subscriptions again next year.

The members were invited to comment or raise questions. The members present unanimously accepted the proposal with the result that the subscription structure comes into force for 2015 subscriptions at the earliest practicable date.

11. Independent Examiners / Auditors.

The Trustees propose the re-appointment of WMT LLP, in St Albans, acting through Elizabeth Irvine FCA, as Independent Examiner or Auditors. The Board further proposed to have the 31 March 2015 accounts examined rather than audited, subject to eligibility under the £500,000 gross income threshold.

The members unanimously supported the proposal and approved the re-appointment of WMT in the relevant capacity, according to the gross income to be reported in the 31 March 2015 accounts.

12. Any Other Business.

Gwynn Ellis, BSBI Membership Secretary, speaking from the floor asked that two recently deceased Honorary Members of the Society, Mary Briggs MBE and Dr Clive Jermy, should be remembered. The Company Secretary apologised for the omission from the agenda, adding that BSBI had been well represented at their funerals.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 1.00 pm.

Prepared by

Clive Lovatt, Company Secretary
26 November 2014

Approved by



Dr Ian Denholm
Chair of the Board of Trustees
28 November 2015