



Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society
MEETING OF THE SANHS BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Held virtually on ZOOM on 12th January 2021 at 10:30

MINUTES

Present: Chris Jessop (Chair), Chris Chanter, David Dawson, Sue Goodman (minutes), Harriet Induni, Lizzie Induni, David Reid, Mark Lidster, Louisa Gillett (until 11.30), David Victor (until 11.30)

1. Apologies

John Page

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Minutes and matters arising from meeting of the Board on 5th November 2020

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record and adopted by the meeting.

- Harriet Induni is now in post as Web Manager, and has had training from LG.
- LG has updated the Donations button on the website, there is now a link to the fundraising page from the home page.
- Usage consent agreements, for webinar presenters & participants, have been updated; agreements received will be copied for the Office files.
- Policies – LG has added a review date to existing policies and will ensure this is part of any new ones drawn up.
- Strategic Plan rewrite is in progress; it should if possible include SANHS' charitable objects and promote discipline-specific county-wide research and recording strategies.

ACTION: ML to complete current Strategic Plan

4. Election of Mark Lidster as Vice Chairman

Mark having been proposed and sponsored correctly, the Board accepted him as the new Vice Chairman.

5. Reports

5.1. *Chairman's report.* CJ spoke to her report. Noted Lady Gass, a Holding Trustee (HT) is now too frail to deal with SANHS business. Jonathan Acland Hood, her adviser, will receive correspondence for her, for the time being.

ACTION: DV to forward Mr Acland Hood's contact details to SG, who will update the membership database to show Lady Gass' address is c/o Mr Acland Hood.

5.1.1. *Risk Register* Has not been updated. Risks to be incorporated into the new Business Plan being drawn up by ML

5.1.2. *Holding Trustees.* CJ's paper (paper 1c for this meeting) highlighted the current poor relationship between SANHS and its HTs. We need to agree a policy for appointing and working with the HTs. Our existing Constitution gives preliminary guidance.

ACTION All Trustees to familiarise themselves with the role of charity trustees; information is available on the Charity Commission website at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee>

5.1.3. *Summary of activities in 2020 / Outstanding actions* – see Appendix to these minutes for the outstanding actions, and subsequent updates.

5.2. *Treasurer's Report*

5.3. *Management accounts to Nov. 2020.*

5.4. *Grant report Nov. 2020*

[Items 5.2, 5.3 & 5.4 all deferred as the Treasurer had left the meeting. The financial situation remains of serious concern.]

5.5. *Report & accounts of Early Dunster project.* Accepted by the board, no comments.

5.6. *Report on the Castle Garden project.*

CJ clarified a couple of points in her report: SMC is Scheduled Monument Consent, would be needed in order to remove the raised beds. She has details from Mrs Chris Webster of a possible planting scheme, and will circulate these to the Trustees for information once they are in a usable document. A possible physic garden idea was mentioned, but not followed up

ACTION – CJ to edit planting scheme and circulate to Trustees.

ML spoke to the report – he has the overall situation and financial requirements under advisement. He also mentioned discoveries of historic remains and artefacts, which could be of significance and need further research.

5.7. *Estates report*

ACTION – CJ to check Japanese knotweed situation in the Northern Garden.

ACTION – CJ to circulate her recent photos of Wyndham Hall

ACTION – ML to undertake a dilapidations survey of Wyndham Hall

5.8. *Committee reports.*

Reports were received from the Historic Buildings Committee and the Museum Collections Panel. Local History Committee – see AOB below.

Following a recent planning application to redevelop the Debenhams store building after closure, DD and LI are taking the lead in formulating a response from SANHS via the National Planning Policy Framework. The Natural History, Archaeology and Historic Buildings committees have input to the response.

The Museum Collections Panel had two recommendations for the Trustees to ratify.

- 1) That the Panel devise a long-term strategy for developing the Museum Collections Fund so that its primary purpose of improving the condition of the collections can be further extended – APPROVED
- 2) That we proceed with the conservation of the Midsomer Norton Friendly Society Banner at £4,800.00 (including VAT) and the portrait of Hannah Ellis £4,620.00 (including VAT) (that of her brother, Edward, has been completed) – APPROVED

A third recommendation, relating to a long term loan to the Roman Museum at The Newt in Somerset, was withdrawn pending a separate board meeting for this proposal.

ACTION – CJ and LG to organise an ad hoc board meeting for this loan request.

5.9. *Proceedings and electronic Proceedings.*

Rob Webley's report was received. Electronic access to Proceedings vol 163 – due for publication within a month – was discussed. The Trustees decided that the time is now right to investigate setting up a Members Only area on the website. The new Proceedings volume will be the first item in it, but much more content is promised very soon. HI has started to investigate setting up such an area, and reported that costs could be around £75 a year. Previous discussions of such a feature have found the cost to be an obstacle, but this level was approved by the meeting. The URL already set up for the new volume should be used in the new area – HI confirms this is possible.

ACTION – HI to continue investigations into a Members Only area; this area to be within the cost level mentioned, and to be ready to receive the new volume of Proceedings when published. HI to circulate proposals to the board by email, before 25 January.

6. Proposals

6.1. *To form an Executive Committee.*

Exec as currently designated consists of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, with Office Manager as a non-voting member. Many of the officer posts are empty at present, or will shortly become vacant. Agreed that one or more extra members could be added from the general membership.

ACTION: CJ to co-opt at least one further member to Exec.

6.2. *To relinquish the Strategic Plan 2019/2021 and adopt the Business Plan for 2021.*

Deferred – awaiting sight of new Business Plan, being drawn up by ML.

6.3. *To adopt the 2021 Budget.*

Deferred – until budget for Proceedings vol 164 (2020) agreed.

6.4. *To increase membership subscription fee*

Deferred to AGM.

6.5. *Annual budget for Proceedings to be agreed.*

Budget for vol 163 (for 2019) agreed and is covered by grant from Emily fund.

Budget for vol 164 (for 2020) has been calculated by DD as £4,500. This figure was accepted.

Board felt that they could not set a specific figure which would apply to every volume in future; each would have its own budgetary requirements.

7. AOB

7.1. John Page had circulated a paper – undated and unsigned – entitled Some Thoughts. This was accepted and treated as a report from the Local History Committee.

7.2. ML had submitted a paper dated 12 January 2021, covering finances, relations with Castle Hotel, Office Manager's job description, possibility of offering bursaries, need for more Trustees.

This was discussed, and highlighted the need for better communications within SANHS, the need for continuity of governance and improved employee management.

8. Date of next meeting

To be decided – possibly next week (18-22 January)

ACTION: CJ to investigate a pattern of more, but shorter, meetings; also to investigate possibility of evening or weekend meetings.

APPENDIX – see item 5.1.3. above.

Board 12 Jan 2021 Paper 1d

30/12/20 - Outstanding actions and other activities from 2020

Adopt minutes of all emergency meetings held in 2020.

- 21 March 2020
- 5 & 24 November 2020
- 2 December 2020

ACTION – LG to circulate minutes of these three meetings to Trustees for adoption; following that, the adopted minutes can be sent to Trustees and others who may need to see them.

Action: clarification is needed on terms for insuring the Castle Garden from renewal in May 2021

Current development work is already covered; insurance needs will change as usage expands; we must keep our insurance brokers up to date; outside users must have public liability insurance.

Action: The trustees will hold an extraordinary meeting with committee members to exchange ideas on strategies for the society for adapting to post COVID-19 ways of working.

Webinar and Zoom events and meetings are becoming commonplace and will continue for the foreseeable future. Other Coronavirus-safe ways of working will be incorporated into the Business Plan being developed.

Action: Fundraise for the production costs of Proceedings 163, including an application for £10,000 to EDF. Proceedings 163 is covered. CJ has applied for further grants for later volumes, from a variety of sources, with no success so far. Plans are in hand to recruit a fundraiser for SANHS.

Action: Commander Williams slide collection

LI reported she has recovered the Williams slides from the member who held them, and they are now in the care of the Historic Buildings Committee; she further confirmed that the collection was originally given specifically to the HBC. She expects the collection will eventually be housed and curated by SHC, as they do other SANHS collections; and maybe could be held in an environment-controlled strongroom as the Library collections are. Long term plans would include displaying a selection of the slides on SANHS' website.

Action: DV to advise the Holding Trustees of the financial situation of the Society after the AGM. This has not yet happened.

ACTION – DV to advise as specified.

Action: LG to inform the Holding Trustees of the decision to approach SCC on the matter of insurance of the collections.

This has not yet happened. CJ has a joint meeting with SCC and SHC in the near future. These meetings should take place twice a year, but the last one was in 2019.

ACTION – LG to find the minutes of the latest joint meeting, in 2019, and forward to ML and CJ.

ACTION – LG to inform HTs (as specified above) after the forthcoming joint meeting.

Action: David Dawson to write to Somerset County Council seeking assurances that the council is bound by the 2008 loan agreement and all items in the collection are insured to their value. David Dawson is asked to do this, and report back to the Trustees.

DD referred the trustees to the Museum Collections Panel report presented to this meeting.

Action: MCP proposes that the Trustees note the transfer of 1979 and request the addition of the condition that ownership of the specimen [i.e. the Watchet Ichthyosaur] would revert to the Society in the remote event of the demise of the Watchet Market House Museum. David Dawson to write to WMHM and send the office a copy of the letter.

DD referred the trustees to the MCP report presented to this meeting. Confirmation from Watchet is still awaited.

Action: The trustees will meet to discuss all matters associated with the appointment of Holding Trustees. See item 5.1.2. above

Action: SANHS webinar training to be added to the agenda of the next meeting of the trustees. Necessary training has been given on an individual basis so far.

ACTION – LI to contact chairs of committees by phone, to discuss possible webinar/Zoom events, and to outline necessary training, including reassurance that it is easy to learn.

Action: LI & ML to update usage consent and share agreements with the SANHS office. Has now been done.

Action: SG to advertise on the e-bulletin for an IT literate volunteer to set up and run webinars.

ACTION – SG to put relevant details into the February edition of the e-bulletin with HI, as web manager, as primary point of contact.

Action: ML to create an information sharing template to make it easier for SANHS groups to post on Facebook.

ACTION – ML and HI to progress this.

Action: Holding Trustees will be sent a letter advising them of their role and responsibilities for SANHS.

ACTION – CJ to contact HTs after the joint meeting outlined earlier in this list.

Action: LI will ask Vicky Dawson for information about transferring the society's assets to a CIO.

LI reports that Vicky is working on this, to outline both pros and cons of a CIO.

ACTION – LI to chase Vicky up.