



Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society
AD-HOC MEETING OF THE SANHS BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Held virtually on ZOOM on 20th March 2021 at 10:30

MINUTES

Present: Chris Jessop (Chair), Chris Chanter, David Dawson (advisory capacity), Sue Goodman (minutes), Harriet Induni, Lizzie Induni, Mark Lidster, David Victor.

1. Apologies

Louisa Gillett, Rob Hutchings, Rob Webley

2. Declarations of interest

DD, for item 4.1, as President of AALHS.

3. Minutes and matters arising from meeting of the Board on 12th January 2021

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

Strategic Plan - to be collated by LI, with input from others as required.

The Japanese knotweed in the norther garden is under control and not spreading.

Dilapidations survey of Wyndham Hall not yet started.

ACTION: ML to commence work on Wyndham Hall survey

The proposed long-term loan to the new Roman museum at The Newt in Somerset (Hadspen Hall) is pending, awaiting a meeting between SANHS and the Hadspen representative.

ACTION: CJ and LI to finalise meeting date with Hadspen

Requests on various platforms for members to consider becoming a trustee or filling one of the vacant officer roles have brought no response so far.

Outstanding actions from 2020, as listed in Minutes of 12 January 2021:

Insurance of Castle Garden. Public liability insurance depends on specific users/hirers of the Garden and would be settled on ad-hoc basis for each event; Castle Hotel is currently closed and there is no barrier to prevent members of the public entering the Garden; the wall is now safe so monthly inspection is no longer needed.

ACTION: DV to keep insurance position under review; renewal is due in about a month's time.

ACTION: ML to check whether Duncan Hill (of DHD Structures) is up to date on insurance position.

Webinar release forms (usage consent, share agreements, copyright, &c.) and have been received from each speaker who has already presented, and are filed in the office. A system is in place for all future online events.

Information sharing template for use with social media still to be agreed, to be used by all members who wish to add details of SANHS' social media pages.

ACTION: ML and HI to progress this, including SANHS logo and standard contact information.

3.1 Minutes/notes and matters arising from intervening ad-hoc meetings:

21 January – notes circulated by Chair.

Bulk of the meeting was on the proposed loan to The Newt (see above). Other discussion centred on the proposed members' area on the website. Confirmed that the proposed members' area was agreed after discussion at this meeting, and would now go ahead.

ACTION: SG to amend notes to show accurate record.

4 February – notes circulated by Chair were accepted as accurate and adopted.

The main item was discussion of current holding trustees. Following a question raised at a previous meeting, SG reported that there is no legal bar to any individual being both a holding trustee and a charity trustee (board member) for the same charity but that such an arrangement could easily lead to a conflict of interests and should be avoided.

Agreed that Lady Gass remain as the Society's Patron and a holding trustee; her nephew Jonathan Acland Hood will be asked to take on the role of holding trustee. Mr Acland Hood currently acts for Lady Gass, who is in poor health. The Board felt it right to retain Lady Gass as a holding trustee in name, as she has long been a supporter of SANHS.

ACTION: DV to speak to Mr Acland Hood, explain our position and ask him to become a holding trustee.
Brian Murless has confirmed his wish to remain as a holding trustee.

Following reports of possible changes planned by SCC in the area around the Castle, CC volunteered to approach Cllr David Fothergill for a discussion. He is now awaiting a date for such a meeting.

Responsibility for signing SANHS' loan agreements was raised. Board agreed that legal advice was not needed at present; Chair and Secretary have signed in the past and no change is foreseen.

CJ is still to contact David Gwyther, Chair of the SWHT Board, with a view to discussing closer contacts between the two boards.

15 February – meeting was practical analysis of new members' area on website. HI circulated her proposal, which she is now implementing.

18 February – notes circulated by Chair.

The penultimate paragraph should read: "LI informed the meeting that she and David Dawson were working on an application to the NLHF for a grant to enable conversion from a charity to a CIO [Charitable Incorporated Organisation], and to fund an advisor to work with SANHS' trustees on their financial strategy."

With this amendment the notes were accepted as accurate and adopted.

ACTION: SG to amend notes to show accurate record.

Issues with online donations for webinars were raised; HI has the problem under advisement. She said that the membership application form could also be improved, with a view to seeking ways to allow people to join online, while also retaining the paper option.

ACTION: HI and SG to review and update the membership application form.

ACTION: HI to continue researching ways to pay for webinars and to make donations to SANHS

4 March – minutes circulated, accepted as accurate and adopted.

SG reported that there was no legal bar, according to the Charity Commission website, to an individual being both a charity trustee (board member) and a holding trustee, but this is not recommended as a conflict of interest could easily arise. The trustees will avoid this situation.

Other actions from this meeting are followed up on the current agenda.

4. Reports

4.1 *Chairman's report*

The report outlines the main points covered by recent meetings, and was accepted as such.

CJ had received a letter from Axbridge Archaeological and Local History Society, a SANHS associated society. They ask whether, once social gatherings are again possible, "SANHS will seek to re-invigorate its Associated Societies activities". AALHS is not the only associated society to start questioning the value and benefits of affiliation to SANHS. Active links have indeed declined, as there is now no single trustee with responsibility for such liaison. Associated societies can still publicise their events via SANHS website and other means, and will have access to material on the members' area of the website; they can benefit from SANHS members' growing expertise in webinars and other online activities. However, SANHS needs to be more pro-active with its affiliates. CJ has replied to AALHS' letter in this vein.

ACTION: CJ and HI to discuss improved interaction and support for associated societies.

4.2 *Treasurer's report* – given verbally by DV.

The 2020 accounts are being drawn up, the books are still with the auditor, who has not made contact recently.

A large but anonymous payment received recently has been identified as from Historic England; it has now been transferred to the Castle Garden account.

4.3 *Early Dunster report*

The report dated 10 March from Mary Ewing was accepted.

4.4 *Historic Buildings committee report*

The report dated March 2021 was accepted.

Cmdr Williams slides. Martin Salzer has agreed to edit, clarify and organise the associated information and label the slides accordingly. The collection will ultimately be housed at SHC as part of SANHS' archival collection there. HBC has agreed that the slides can be put on the SANHS website.

Confirmed that the slides were bequeathed to the Historic Buildings Committee specifically, together with a cash bequest (now in the restricted funds) to be used for their curation. The HBC should therefore insure the collection. It is not clear how much jurisdiction, if any, the trustees have over the collection.

4.5 *Webinars report*

The webinar team's report, plus record of numbers attending and donations made, were received and accepted.

Identifying donations received and linking them to the correct event is proving a problem. HI is studying the position. Trustees wished to know whether they would be able to have sight of bank statements, in order to help allocate payments.

ACTION: HI, DV and LG to ensure suitable financial details are made available to trustees who need them: webinar managers, membership officer, &c. DV to liaise with LG on this issue.

ACTION: HI to continue examining the possibility of making payments to SANHS by credit card.

4.6 *Castle Garden report*

CJ's report dated 20 March received and accepted.

LI queried frost damage on walls. This is monitored and so far is surface damage only. Historic England has the information and finds it not a problem, it will not affect their support for the project.

ML queried the planting scheme. CJ assured the meeting that it is in line with overall plans. A detailed plan of the garden and planting scheme are still awaited.

Future management of the garden still needs to be finalised. Communication with the Castle Hotel should be strengthened, and a general outline of ongoing work agreed.

ACTION: ML plans to talk to Nick Chapman shortly.

The Brewhouse Theatre & Arts Centre and Somerset West and Taunton council have expressed an interest in using the garden for social events, when this becomes possible. Other lets involving the garden and Museum of Somerset are likely. The meeting agreed to ML, as estate manager, taking these plans forward.

ACTION: ML to discuss future events in Castle Garden, as outlined above, and report back to the trustees.

4.7 *Verbal update on publication of proceedings*

DD reported on behalf of Rob Webley, and subsequently sent the following note:

"Proceedings 163

The invoice for preparation of £1,284 has been authorised for payment.

Recharges of £5,180 are being prepared.

"Proceedings 164 Things are progressing well in general - it is looking to be around the same size as 163. Some aspects are a little behind, but I am generally trying to keep the timetable as close to a

normal one as I can. David B, for example - not to single him out, but only because it came to mind - has asked for some grace as he has not been able to readily access the library. I have also been told that there will not be any buildings recording submissions, for obvious reasons."

Some commercial details were discussed. DD confirmed that the majority of papers published are archaeological. If a paper reports archaeological work done as part of a commercial project, the author, or their employer, is charged £40 per page to publish in *Somerset Archaeology and Natural History* (i.e. Proceedings). This is in line with other similar publications, and brings in about £5,000 a year for the general fund. Publication arising from work done by SANHS members, or for a non-commercial enterprise, is not charged.

4.8 Verbal report on website

HI reported. The members area plug-in has been installed on the website, and HI is starting to populate it. The contents of Proceedings vol. 163 (due for publication this month) can be uploaded as soon as the pdf's have been prepared for individual reading as separate papers.

4.9 Verbal report on Heritage Grants made.

Following the HGC meeting on 19 March, DD gave a verbal report, mentioning that three applications had been received and all were awarded. He subsequently sent the following note: "Request appointment of Mark Hailwood, Senior Lecturer in Early Modern History at the University of Bristol, following the resignation of Jonathan Barry formerly of the University of Exeter."

5. AOB

- 5.1 DD having temporarily withdrawn from the meeting, CJ proposed that, at the AGM on 15 May next, DD be asked to continue as President until the 2022 AGM. The Board was in unanimous agreement. DD returned, CJ asked the question and he agreed.
- 5.2 Noted that the updated Strategic Plan should be completed and agreed by trustees before the current NLHF bid is submitted.
ACTION: all trustees to send comments/updates on the Plan to LI as soon as possible.
ACTION: ML to send details of Castle Garden progress, together with a note of all current tenancies, to LI for the Strategic Plan.
- 5.3 At the next Joint Meeting of SANHS, SWHT and SCC, Library access for SANHS members should be discussed. SG and David Bromwich, Chair and Secretary of the Library committee respectively, to attend if possible.
ACTION: CJ to investigate the possibility of an ad-hoc Joint Meeting to discuss Library matters, including member access.
- 5.4 Office Manager job description. DV had made a first revision of the OM job description, including a list of parallel activities where the OM works with other individuals but does not have primary responsibility. These areas are membership, website management and development, and volunteer management. All trustees are asked to read the documents and send comments to DV as soon as possible. He will then amend the job description accordingly. Meanwhile, he is acting as OM line manager and liaison, until the AGM in May.
ACTION: ALL TRUSTEES to read revised job description and send comments to DV.
ACTION: DV to incorporate Trustees' comments into revised Office Manager job description.

6. Dates of next meetings – all via Zoom unless changed during the year:

Main Board meetings for the rest of 2021 will be on Saturdays, time to be confirmed:

12 June

11 September (NOT 12th as previously stated)

27 November (NOT 28th as previously stated)

The AGM will be on Saturday 15 May, 10.30 am, via Zoom.

The meeting closed at 1.10pm