



Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society
EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE SANHS BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Held virtually on ZOOM on 2nd December at 14:30

Minutes

An extraordinary meeting called to discuss terms for ending the tenancy of the Castle Hotel and the financial situation of the society.

Present: Rob Hutchings, David Reid, David Victor, Chris Jessop (Chair), Chris Chanter, Sue Goodman, Lizzie Induni, Mark Lidster, Harriet Induni, Louisa Gillett (minute sec.)

1. Apologies

All present.

2. Declarations of interest

None declared.

3. Treasurers Report October 2020

DV tabled two papers. The first paper showed the current cash balance of the general fund and a projected closing balance of £7000 for 2020 and £5000 for 2021 (based on current spending patterns). For SANHS to operate, it requires contingency funds and working capital of @ £25000 each; it cannot operate on £5000. The projected figures are low and immediate action should be taken to improve the financial situation. The second paper 'List of financial issues' explained the background of the current financial situation and listed several options for reducing expenditure and managing and growing the general fund.

- 3.1. *Proceedings journal*. Volume 163 will be the first volume made available electronically; the printed volume is available at extra cost. Producing only an electronic version reduces the production costs, which are currently about £4000 **per volume**. It was decided to set the **annual production budget** for Proceedings to £4000. It may be possible to produce more than one journal in a year using alternative production methods. The Proceedings group will be asked to investigate options.

Action: SG to advise the Proceedings group of £4k annual budget.

- 3.2. *Fundraising*. Develop an aggressive fundraising strategy to raise unrestricted funds.

- 3.3. *Budget 2021/22*. Make savings by reducing budgeted costs for 2021, for example by reducing the budget for Library Acquisitions.

Action: LG to organise a meeting for budget holders to review budget expenditure.

- 3.4. *Castle Hotel unpaid rent and tenancy agreement*. Decisive action must be taken to end the situation of unpaid rent and the broken tenancy agreement. (see next item on the agenda).

Action: SG to obtain the figures of paying members and share with the trustees.

4. Terms for ending Castle Hotel tenancy of Castle Garden

The Castle Hotel asked to be released from the tenancy agreement as they cannot afford to pay the rent because of the effect COVID has had on their business. The trustees agreed to the hotel's request subject to several terms and conditions. ML and CC discussed the terms for release with Nick Chapman, and subsequently sent a letter and an email confirming what had been agreed. It was noted that some of the trustees had not had sight of the letter before it was sent to Nick Chapman, specifically the offer to release

the hotel from £5000 rent arrears. In his response he does not agree to all the terms set out in the letter, principally the request for public access across the hotel car park was denied. Two courses of action were discussed; a response to Nick Chapman's letter; and to issue a court summons in the County Court for unpaid rent. It was agreed to leave the tenancy agreement in place. It was decided to issue a court summons. Nick Chapman will be sent a letter explaining that the trustees have taken this action because the hotel and the society have not been able to reach agreement on the terms for releasing the hotel from the lease.

Proposal to issue a court summons for unpaid rent of £5000 adopted. Proposer RH. Seconder LI.

Action: CC will arrange for a court summons to be issued, fees to be paid by SANHS.

Action: CJ to write to Nick Chapman informing him of the society's course of action and reasons for doing so.

After the meeting had finished the Chair announced that she will step down as Chair at the May 2021 AGM, and if anybody would like to take on the role of Chair before that date to let her know.