

## Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society

### MEETING OF THE SANHS BOARD of TRUSTEES

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023 14.00

Somerset Heritage Centre

#### MINUTES

**Present:** Chris Chanter (Chair), Lizzie Induni (Vice-chair), Martin Salzer (Treasurer), Christine Webster (Hon Sec), Emma Turk, David Reid.

**1. Apologies:**

Received from Gerri McHugh-Soliman, David Dawson, John Page.

**2. Declarations of Interest:**

None declared

**3. Minutes and matters arising from the Board Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the chair.

**Matters Arising**

**3.4** ET now has the Eventbrite password.

**4.** CC has not written letter to Newt about the loans agreement. However, David Dawson has informed the trustees that "Under the terms of the 2008 agreement the SWHT is our appointed agent in these matters so the loan agreement is between them and the Newt. Terms were discussed and agreed by the Museum Collection Panel and further endorsed by the Board".

However, DR explained that there was very little time between the trustees being informed of this arrangement and the items going to the Newt. He asked for more prior notice of these arrangements so that trustees could consider them more carefully. TM has not arranged for the trustees to visit the Newt so it was decided to contact the organisation directly to request an opportunity to visit the museum. CW to send letter.

**4.** CW has not written a letter to SWHT about their success in obtaining portfolio holder status. She would like to know more details. LI suggested asking Vicky Dawson.

**6.1** The CIO has considered a possible conflict of interest between constitution and SANHS membership rules. Matthew Blows will amend membership rules to comply.

**6.4** LG has been informed of price reductions in books. DR asked if these books could be bought directly from the SHC without paying for postage. It was agreed that this would be possible if bought from SANHS office.

**6.6** The need to purchase new IT equipment had been made unnecessary by the most generous donation of a selection of items from Hark Solutions including a laptop and 2 screens. A letter has been sent thanking them for this donation. The only equipment now needed was a projector since the SANHS one is very old and will not work with new laptop. ET knew of a projector that was for sale and would find out the price.

**7.** LI has written up list of tasks for Executive/trustees and office manager. This has been circulated and no issues have been reported.

#### **4. Reports**

##### **4.1 Chairman's Report**

The Trustees have had a busy few months leading up to the end of 2022. The main thrust of their efforts is to get the Society back on track after the Pandemic with our duty to give Members as good value as possible for their loyalty and participation. CC is conscious of the number of events that

need to be arranged as soon as possible. However, the full and informative newsletter gives an extremely good flavour of the varied events that have still been going on within the Society and he particularly wanted to express his gratitude to all those people involved in its planning and publication.

The Society's properties are continuing to yield rent and he could report that Somerset West and Taunton are bearing the cost of repairs to the Millstream which is a relief. The Society is changing its Constitution in line with the unanimous approval at the AGM to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and with enormous help from Matthew Blows, a member and Corporate Lawyer this is happening apace. Members and Trustees will be kept informed. It will make the Governance of the Society far more straightforward and less onerous on Trustees than the current structure.

## **4.2 Treasurer's Report**

MS had been unable to give the December financial report because the accounts were not available. LG was busy preparing the year's accounts for the accountant. In future, it would be better to have this Board meeting a little later in the year.

Proceedings have still not been published so these expenses would now shift to 2023 – as would the newsletter. Therefore, the 2022 final accounts would show an underspend.

**4.2.1 Accounts** - unavailable at the moment.

**4.2.2 Draft Budget** – the draft budget had been discussed in the last Board meeting but MS asked for approval to

- make the surplus fund from the 2022 interim budget available to pay for publishing Proceedings. Vote - all in favour.
- Spend up to a maximum of £7,000 on the Wyndham Hall. Vote - all in favour.
- Spend up to £2,000 on initial CIO legal fees. Vote - all in favour.
- Adopt the draft 2023 budget (presented in November) to cover on-going expenses until the next Board Meeting. This would include office manager salary, office costs, editor's fee for Proceedings 165. Vote – all in favour.

There was discussion of other expenses in coming year including office manager's salary.

## **4.2 Risk Register**

**DPR policy** has been updated and there will be a DPR audit soon in 2023. An archive retention policy has also been written. LI asked whether bindings could be written on acid free paper in future. This was agreed to be a sensible policy.

**Castle Gardens** – there has been no progress in this matter. It was decided that the Executive/trustees would write a letter to the Directors of the Castle Hotel, stating the issues/concerns in the Castle Garden and this would be sent to Nigel Pearce for approval. MS agreed to write the letter. LI pointed out that we needed to complete the Castle Gardens project before the CIO started.

**Membership numbers** – There are 472 members - 378 individuals (106 of these are joint members). There are 94 institutions, 32 of these are Associated Societies and 30 are Exchanges. There were 27 new members in 2022

These figures appear fairly healthy but more work was needed to keep up the trend. CW pointed out that one of the aims of the Marketing Group was to increase membership numbers. ET explained that social media was keeping many people informed of SANHS and its activities. The newsletter may also engender interest. DR informed the Board of the death of Philip Radford on Boxing Day. He had been an enthusiastic SANHS supporter. DR agreed to write a letter to his family. An obituary would be written for the newsletter.

**Lack of Connection between Committees and Trustees** – the meeting with Matthew Blows had helped to start the process but it was still felt that more could be done. The Board wasn't sure how many people were on each committee and how long the chair of each had been in place. CW offered

to write to each committee asking for this information and a report on their work in 2022 (which was required for AGM).

**Finance** – investments are attracting a lower rate of interest but this is impossible to overcome in present markets.

5. **Membership** – see above.

6. **Governance** – LI reported on the progress of CIO although there has been little work done over Christmas and a meeting was to take place on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023. LI was continuing to make up a list of recent holding trustees with their dates.

**7.1 Early Dunster Project** – work on reports was ongoing. There would be a big event in May/June to celebrate the end of the Project. Some reports would appear in the Proceedings but all would eventually go to the SWHT. They had agreed to write a small booklet of their findings for SANHS to publish.

**7.2 Castle Gardens** – see above.

**7.3 Wyndham Hall** – LI explained the work that was required in the hall before the society could consider using it for events. Alison Bunning had agreed to act as architect for SANHS on this project. There would be an on-site meeting on Friday to consider the work required. Some estimates had been received on the work. LI wondered whether SANHS had to pay VAT on these repairs (£8,000 for a full roof repair). She agreed to investigate the situation on this.

Bruce Induni had written a specification for the roof repairs.

MS was investigating rate relief from SWT and proposed requesting a meeting with the council to see if this was possible. Support from a councillor was recommended and ET offered to approach the leader of the council to see if she would support this.

At the moment, the electricity standing charge is £2.50 a day. It was agreed that we needed to change this as soon as possible by changing to a new provider with better rates for charities.

The proposal to spend up the £7,000 on repairing the most immediate needs in the building was unanimously supported.

**7.4 Goodland Gardens** - LI explained the problems that were being experienced by SWT in the Goodland Gardens. Contractors had dug a trench immediately to the north of the Museum building for a new electricity cable without consent. They were now seeking retrospective consent to lay a new cable. The Mill Leat wall was also collapsing and SWT had agreed to repair this although they were rather shocked to hear the estimated bill. An application by SWT to go ahead with this was being written.

An estates inspection took place on 30<sup>th</sup> December. It highlighted some issues that had not been noticed before including a very uneven wall alongside the path to the museum entrance and flaking stonework in the museum courtyard. It was agreed that we would contact the museum to express our concern.

## **8. Engagement and Outreach**

**8.1 Marketing Group** – ET displayed the A5 and folded A4 fliers she had produced for SANHS. It was agreed that these were very good and would be excellent to give out during events. DR agreed to take some to the Newt. The new printer in the office was now of a satisfactory standard to produce small batches of these fliers.

The group had proposed to try to get SANHS in the news as much as possible. The initial item proposed was the news that all past copies of Proceedings from 1849 to 2017 are now on the website. It was agreed that this was a fantastic resource that deserved being publicised.

ET explained that the group had agreed to take part in free Eventbrite training on marketing.

GMS has had to step down from her role as chair of this group. The trustees thanked ET for agreeing to take on the role.

DR was surprised that SANHS hadn't issued more information on leaving money to SANHS in wills and legacies. Other charities such as RSPB were sending out leaflets about this and SANHS should do more. It needed more prominence in the e-bulletin. DR also said that members should have the option to specify which fund they would like their money to go.

**8.2 Website** – the £40 payment to the website team was approved. A meeting had been planned for 11<sup>th</sup> March to discuss the progress of the team.

**8.3 Proceedings** – see above

**8.4 Newsletter** – MS had received 3 quotes for printing the 40 pages of the newsletter. They had quoted £700, £510 and £575. As this was on thinner paper, it allowed some other papers to be sent out at the same time. DR wondered whether the legacy leaflet could be included. It was also intended to send out the Spring and Summer timetable of events although the details of very few events had been received so far. CW agreed to send emails to all committees to try to receive this information before the end of January. LI pointed out that Associated Society events could be included as well as those of SIAS.

**8.5 Events** – CW proposed a William de Morgan seminar event since there appeared to be a lot of interest in his work at the moment. CC wondered whether a visit to Hurds Hill which has William de Morgan fireplace could also be arranged. ET thought part of Hurds Hill could be hired. CC agreed to look into this.

**8.6 Webinar** – DD was presenting a webinar on Thursday on Chapels in the Somerset Landscape. More were planned. DR expressed his annoyance that after watching a webinar, it was only possible to make a donation if you have a mobile phone. He wished to know how many people actually paid but unfortunately, this was impossible due to the way PayPal was set up.

9. **Committees** – David Dawson had provided information about the Annual Archaeology Day on 25<sup>th</sup> March at Banwell. An autumn meeting in Bath would focus on recent fieldwork in that city.

Heritage Grants Committee – applications to the Maltwood Fund to be received by 31 January but as it is unlikely the income from the Gray Fund will be known before we meet in mid-March, applications to this fund will not be sought until until the autumn round.

## 10. Proposals

10.1 Society Welfare Policy – this was approved by all but 2 small changes were needed to charges for events and card reader totals needed to appear in monies section.

10.2 £40 cost of updating part of website – Approved by all.

11. **AOB** – nil

**Date of Next Meeting** – had been booked in for Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March at the Friends Meeting House. Changed to Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at SHC at 2 pm

## Actions

3. (4) **CW** to write letter to Newt about a Trustee visit to museum.

3. (4) **CW** to seek out information about portfolio status for letter to SWHT.

3. (6.6) **ET** to ask about price of second-hand projector.

4.2 **MS** to write a letter to Directors of Castle Hotel re Castle Gardens. To be sent to Nigel Pearce first.

4.2 **DR** to write condolence letter to Philip Radford's family.

4.2 **CW** to contact committees about members and report for 2022.

7.3 **LI** to look into VAT situation for SANHS.

7.3 **MS** to set up meeting with SWT re rate relief.

7.4 Letter to Museum about flaking courtyard wall. **Individual not decided**

8.4 **CW** to send letter to committees to ask for events information before end of January.

8.1 **DR** to take some SANHS fliers to the Newt.

8.5 **CC** to investigate possible visit to Hurds Hill and the William de Morgan fireplace.

10.1 **CW** to make minor changes to Welfare Policy and to send hard copy to committees.