

Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society

MEETING OF THE SANHS BOARD of TRUSTEES

Tuesday 14th March 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, Nigel Pearce (President), David Dawson (Vice President and Chair of Heritage Grants Committee), Rob Webley (Proceedings Editor) and James Spencer (possible new Trustee)

1. Apologies:

Received from Tom Mayberry and Gerri McHugh-Soliman.

2. Declarations of Interest:

None declared

3. Minutes and matters arising from the Board Meeting held on 10th January 2023

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

Matters Arising

- CW explained that Mary Siraut was now trying to organise a visit to the Newt, Somerset and it had been decided she would lead on this possible visit.
- The Society already owned a projector so there was no need to purchase another.
- Castle Gardens (to be discussed later)
- DR had not written of condolence to Philip Radford's family but he had talked to them and would be sending a letter of thanks for all the books and equipment that the family had kindly donated to the Society.
- LG would be contacting committees for members and reports.
- LI wondered whether James Spencer would write a small report on SANHS and VAT since he had worked in this field.
- MS not yet set up a meeting with SWT about rate relief but would do so.
- MS would be willing to write a letter to the museum reporting our concerns about the flaking stonework.
- CW had written a Programme of Events that had been posted out with the Newsletter.
- DR said he would be willing to take fliers to the Newt if he could have some printed and a plastic display container was supplied.
- CC had organised a visit to Hurd's Hill on Friday 8th September but he was sorry to report that the William de Morgan had been sold.
- CW had made a few changes to the Society Welfare Policy and supplied a paper copy to DR.

4 Reports

4.1 Risk Register – nominations for officers of the Society for next year were filled in, including proposers and seconders. Lizzie Induni agreed to stand as Chair, Martin Salzer as Honorary Treasurer and Christine Webster as Honorary Secretary.

CC asked how long this office would be if the CIO was set up. This is something that requires discussion in the CIO meeting.

Apart from a short discussion on possible future publications, it was decided that the risk register did not need further consideration.

4.2 Treasurer's Report – MS explained that there were mistakes in the accounts and until they were changed, he could provide few details. However, it was clear that there was less money in the General Fund than in the previous year.

4.3 Report and accounts of Early Dunster Project - this is the final year of the project and a day of celebrations were planned on 4th June with SANHS members invited to many activities. Reports were being written up.

4.4 Castle Gardens – the Castle Hotel wished to erect a shed in the eastern alcove after moving the SANHS garden shed round and had contacted the Society. CC had visited the gardens and discussed the issue with Stuart. He didn't think there was an issue and it ought to be allowed. DR thought the Castle Hotel, based on their past behaviour, should not be allowed to erect a shed. MS pointed out that this was against one of the clauses in the lease and wondered whether Matthew Blows could be asked to attend a meeting with the hotel. NP, however, suggested another avenue of communication. He had met up with Ronan (Hotel manager) and Stuart who were keen to keep the gardens maintained because they were such an important asset to the hotel. They would like the volunteer gardeners to return to the gardens. NP volunteered to meet with them to discuss matters (he already had a meeting arranged next week to discuss the fencing proposals). The Castle Hotel would like to be able to erect a taller fence between the car park and the gardens because they were experiencing people using the gardens inappropriately. CW agreed to investigate whether Scheduled Monument Consent would be needed. NP agreed to report back after his meeting.

DR thought we needed to clear all the backlog of issues with the Castle Hotel before we allow them to erect sheds etc.

4.5 Report of SANHS Estate – all rents are now up to date. NP thought the council had agreed to repair the Mill Leat (thought it had been approved at the scrutiny committee meeting). The hole in the roof of the Wyndham Hall had been mended and the ceiling had been plastered. The asbestos still needs to be removed/stabilised in the "loft" area and the heating needs to be seen to. MS pointed out that £7,000 would not go far in overcoming these issues and extra funding may be needed. ET had carried out some research on sponsoring a seat so that the upholstery could be renewed and suggested crowdfunding as a potential source of finance. DR suggested asking for a number of quotes from firms to remove the asbestos. CC agreed to investigate.

4.6 Committee Reports for AGM – most had now been received whilst the SCC report from Sam Astill had been promised by 27th March.

4.7 Proceedings – DD reported on the progress of Proceedings 165. It had been sent out to Editors for comments and should be out for distribution in April. Provisional costings for 166 had been supplied and would be put to the Trustees. It is likely that £2,000 would be needed to pay for this edition.

4.8 Report on Engagement and Marketing – LI described the excellent Steepholm webinar delivered by Steve Parker last week. Approximately 60 people listened to it live. It can still be viewed by visiting the website. LI has been working with David Bromwich and Sue Goodman to prepare a webinar on the SANHS library. It was hoped to encourage more people to use this fantastic resource. The webinar was likely to take place in the Autumn and it would be useful to have a SANHS Story of the Month on this topic – could perhaps do a feature on the 16th century Tyndale Bible that is held in the library collection?

ET reported on the progress of the Marketing Group. Leaflets had been produced, a shorter e-bulletin has been implemented and social media was being used to advertise SANHS events. ET put forward a photography competition idea whereby entrants offered their photos to appear on the front of Facebook. There would be a monthly winner and a final over all winner who would gain free

membership of SANHS for one year. This was considered an excellent idea since it would generate lots of photos that could be used by the society (with permissions) and the idea was voted through by all trustees. ET also explained a 2024 event was already beginning to be planned – 150 year anniversary of SANHS buying Taunton Castle. A joint event with SWHT was planned. This would be an ideal time to have a Medieval feast in the Castle Gardens. NP to investigate with Castle Hotel.

4.9 Membership Report – Louisa Gillett had supplied a report on SANHS numbers. A number had still not paid their 2023 subscriptions and they would be sent a reminder before the AGM.

4.9 CIO update – it was decided to leave all CIO discussion until the next Board meeting.

5. Proposals

5.1 Budget – MS explained that his immediate budget recommendations had been voted through in the last Board Meeting. The proposal to spend £2,000 on starting the CIO conversion process had been voted upon by all trustees and had been unanimously accepted. MS pointed out that significant legal fees from Clarke Wilmot were expected soon.

5.2 Proposal for Membership Database Integration Work – CW explained the background to this work and how it had been hoped to introduce the new system before the membership subscription increases in 2024. However, further research into Donorfy (the membership database) had suggested this work should be postponed until the CIO bank account had been set up. This would allow members to change the subscription rate and the bank account details all at once.

5.3 Proposal for Website Work – CW explained some of the issues with the website. Work had been carried out by RITA, making it more stable and secure but issues still remained. A meeting on 24th March was scheduled for handover of the website and to ascertain the work that was still required. The main security risk was the Members Area and it was proposed to close this. All trustees voted to accept the suggestion but DD was keen to let members know how the last copy of the Proceedings could be accessed.

5.4 Proposal to sell a complete set of bound copies to Matthew Blows for £1,000 – all trustees voted in favour.

5.5 Proposal to buy a SANHS laptop – LI explained the need for a laptop for Zoom meetings and for running power point displays at talks and conferences. Louisa Gillett had suggested one for just under £300. DR proposed and MS seconded the proposal. All trustees voted to accept the proposal.

5.6 Approve changes to Office Manager's Job description – LI explained the huge amount of work that was needed to be done in preparation for CIO conversion and that the help of the office manager was vital. This had required changes to be made to the job description. She also pointed out that further changes may have to be made in the future. DD asked that all committees were kept informed about these amendments. MS proposed to accept the changes, CW seconded and all Trustees voted to accept the changes.

(At this point CC had to leave meeting. No more proposals could be considered because the group was not quorate.)

The Trustees thanked NP and DD for their willingness to be Vice-Presidents for 2023/24.

AOB

DD had read a draft copy of the CIO constitution and could not see any mention of the Maltwood Fund. He thought it was important that the fund did appear in the constitution since it forms a sub-charity within SANHS.

Next Board Meeting Date

Tuesday 28th March 2pm – Research Room at SHC

Actions**David Reid**

- To write a letter to the Radford family thanking them for their donation to SANHS
- To take some SANHS leaflets to the Newt.

Martin Salzer

- To set up a meeting re rate relief on Wyndham Hall
- Write a letter to the museum reporting our concerns about the flaking stonework.

Christine Webster

- Investigate whether Scheduled Monument Consent would be needed for taller railings in Castle Gardens.

Chris Chanter

- Request more quotes for asbestos removal from Wyndham Hall

Louisa Gillett

- Request committee reports and committee members for AGM papers.