



FEDERATION OF BRITISH BONSAI SOCIETIES  
AND FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL BONSAI COLLECTION

Joint meeting held at 10.30 am, Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2021  
"The Woodlands", New Hall Drive, Walmley, Sutton Coldfield, B76 1QX

**MINUTES**

1. In attendance. Peter Fielding, Denise Baum-Pick, Malcolm Hughes, Nigel Wright, Chris Durne, Barry Walker, Vic Yeomans and Kim Turton.
2. Apologies were received from Amnon Paldi who was unable to attend the meeting.
3. Minutes of the previous meetings.
  - a. Minutes of the FoBBS meeting were accepted as an accurate record of events. MH, PF.
  - b. Minutes of the FNBC meeting were accepted as an accurate record of events. BW and MH.
4. Matters arising.
  - a. From the FoBBS minutes.
    - i. PF stated that the AGM was not quorate, but he would follow-up on the issues raised by those attending.
  - b. From FNBC minutes.
    - i. KT will append to these minutes a record of the recent meeting between the officers of FNBC, the Curator of the Botanical Gardens, the Head Gardiner and his assistant.
    - ii. MH has recently provided a training session for new staff members at the Gardens and plans another in six months.
5. Correspondence.

DBP received a letter from the Information Commissioners Office. DBP felt that no action was needed and NW confirmed this.
6. Reports.
  - a. Financial (FoBBS and FNBC)
    - i. FoBBS. £7070 in the bank with £23 petty cash.
    - ii. FNBC £5725 as of 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

b. Companies House.

DBP has filed with company house and asked new members of the committee for their contact details so that she can update the records.

c. Membership

There are 41 member societies. North Yorkshire joined earlier in November.

Insurance. DBP reported that she asked the NFU for a rebate because many societies would not hold their normal number of meetings this year, but this was refused. The premium for next year would be approximately £1700. DBP proposed that as a result of the current membership numbers and the expected insurance premium we could reduce the cost of insurance for clubs to £45 (from £48). Agreed.

NW felt that FoBBS were missing out by not providing an individual membership but after a discussion DBP proposed that FoBBS would not offer an individual membership at the moment. Seconded by PF and agreed by all.

d. Status of the National Bonsai Collection

i. BW reported the watering issues that became apparent earlier in the year and which resulted in some trees suffering stress as well as the death of several trees in the Bill Horan Juniper group. A record of the subsequent meeting with the Botanical Gardens is appended to these minutes. The remaining trees of the Bill Horan group are at Woodlands.

ii. After considerable work carried out on the large Juniper BW he has returned it to the collection. KT reported that it is looking very good after the many hours BW has spent on wiring.

iii. The Bill Horan group has been replaced by a development project in the form of a very large raft Buxus sourced by BW from an old hedge. PF asked for a sign explaining the developmental nature to visitors to be made. BW agreed to ask GV to have a suitable sign manufactured and that FNBC would fund it.

iv. PF asked about the plans for replacing the dilapidated sign in the octagon. BW explained that Head Gardener has the materials and that the work was scheduled to be carried out this winter.

v. BW informed the meeting of the expansion plans for the National Collection. There is an area by the café entrance bounded by a steel railing on two sides where we will be displaying a number of very large specimens belonging to Ken Norman. It is planned to be in position in 2022.

e. EBA & WBBF

i. EBA. AP was not in attendance and no report was submitted, however several members of the committee were able to explain that not surprisingly the Covid 19 situation has left a big question mark over European events in 2022. At the time of the

meeting the planned event in Augsburg is still scheduled to take place but this is not yet confirmed.

ii. WBBF. The planned event in Perth, Australia for October 2021 was postponed to 2022, but this has yet to be confirmed. It appears that there are plans for a “virtual” event and NW suggested that they may use “pay per view” for some aspects of the event, but again, the details need confirming.

f. RHS Shows.

CD has applied to the RHS to display at Chelsea and Hampton Court but is waiting for confirmation.

i. Chelsea. In his application to Chelsea CD described the display as including tree(s) from the National Bonsai Collection. MH and BW informed CD that there are several trees that would be suitable for the show.

ii. Chelsea. In his visits to FoBBS member clubs PF has come to the opinion that after insurance, Chelsea is seen as a main benefit of membership. With this in mind he asked that if FoBBS are given display space we should invite all member societies to submit trees as well as ask for volunteers to help. CD reminded the meeting that latter would be dependent on practicalities and the availability of passes. NW to invite involvement by email as soon as FoBBS participation in Chelsea is confirmed.

iii. Hampton Court. If FoBBS are accepted this would be run locally as there are sufficient trees and people to do so. CD explained that he has applied for a sales table (£150 + vat), but was not clear as to what was available to sell. There is merchandise available and BW suggested that David Cheshire may be willing to provide Bonsai trees on a “sale or return” basis. BW to ask DC. KT informed the group that Dave is also planning to be at both events.

g. FNBC Boot Sale.

20<sup>th</sup> March 2022. KT confirmed that the room booking for the AGM on the same day. He informed the meeting that 2/3 of the space has already been booked. BW expressed concern that individual sellers might be pushed out by professional traders in large vans. KT understood his point and explained that he plans to find space for all individual sellers who apply for space within a reasonable time of the event.

7. FoBBS supported Regional Shows incorporating NTC

i. FoBBS shows. PF reminded the meeting that in pre-Covid days he spent time visiting FoBBS societies building and maintaining relationships with the members. This was seen as very useful and he hopes that at some point in the future it may be possible again. Such meetings would be useful occasions to offer support for regional shows probably in the form of use of backdrops, admin help and advice etc.

There was a general discussion about a possible FoBBS event along similar lines as the successful “Best of British” events held at the Botanical Gardens. BW proposed that FoBBS

hold a two day event at Birmingham Botanical Gardens. MH to speak to the Gardens regarding a possible date, but expected that due to existing bookings 2023 would probably be a realistic date.

ii. New Talent Competition. PF explained to the meeting that he wants to make the competition relevant within the UK. NW suggested that contestants might be attracted by different prizes. PF said that he currently had interest from three credible individuals and he didn't feel that different prizes would attract more interest. NW suggested that we might consider inviting known enthusiast to apply and as part of the competition they would keep the tree they worked on. It was agreed that due to the hike in prices post Brexit/Covid this would be prohibitively expensive. KT suggested that we investigate the possibilities of changing the format so that competitors provide their own material. It was agreed that PF, MH and KT would meet after the close of the FoBBS meeting in order to develop a new format for the NTC.

8. AOB.

PF asked if NW would be able to put out an information leaflet to member societies every two months so that contact is maintained with member societies. PF to liaise with NW.

9. Date and venue of the next meeting.

10.30 am, Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at Woodlands.

# FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL BONSAI COLLECTION

A meeting between FNBC officers, the Curator and Head Gardener of Birmingham Botanical Gardens and Glasshouses.

28<sup>th</sup> September 2021

## Minutes

1. In attendance. Kim Turton, Barry Walker, Malcolm Hughes, James Wheeler, Giulio Veronese, Wayne Williams.

The meeting started with JW explaining that the National Bonsai Collection is viewed as a high status addition to the Botanical Gardens and as such it has an important part of the future the Gardens.

2. Responsibilities regarding watering and the watering system.

a) GV explained that the normal routine is to visually check each tree when the collection is opened each morning looking to see if the trees are damp as well as foliage health. Before the meeting FNBC members visited the collection and discovered on testing the watering system that two or three spray heads on the end of the system were not working, as a result it was agreed in the meeting that a weekly check of the spray heads function should be added to the routine.

b) At weekends the collection is on the rota to be checked before opening to the public at 10 am.

c) It was agreed that MH should be the only person responsible for changing the operating times of the watering system, but he would provide GV with instructions for a manual override so that he could perform the weekly spray head check.

3. Training of BBGG staff and is there a need to highlight particularly vulnerable trees?

a) MH has been responsible for staff training and is happy to continue providing it. JW asked if all new staff could be trained as soon after starting as soon as possible. WW to coordinate with MH as and when training is needed.

b) MH to hold a refresher training session in April 2022.

c) The use of a red label to indicate particularly vulnerable trees was felt to be useful. GV has a range of coloured plant labels available and will provide FNBC with a small number of red ones. FNBC are responsible for which trees the red labels will be used on.

4. Futureproofing the collection; space for trees to be rotated out of the poor light conditions at the Gardens.

a) There was a discussion regarding the need for onsite space where trees could be placed for rotation purposes as well as room for trees in development. JW agreed with the aim and agreed that BW and WW should seek candidate areas that would be suitable for the purpose.

5. Future of the collection.

a. Architectural changes.

i) JW reminded the meeting that the gardens carry a Grade 2 \* listing and as such modifying the fabric of the collection must be referred to a consultant. BW accepted that the proposed removal of the security gates would need to meet the listed planning requirements and agreed to provide drawings in order to progress this matter. There followed a discussion regarding the security implications of removing the gates which resulted in the meeting agreeing that should the gates be removed; a) the alarm would continue to be used and b) some form of visual deterrent be used to remind visitors that there are active security measures in place. BW reminded the meeting that the proprietor of "Bontag" has offered to install his security devices into all of the trees at no cost providing a small sign advertising the product was displayed in the collection. JW agreed with this.

ii) BW reminded the meeting of the plan to display a large tree in the corner of the terrace in order to raise the profile of the collection. JW raised a concern for the security of the tree in such a high traffic area but liked the idea of how it would increase the public awareness of the collection. BW explained that due to the size of the tree to be used there was little danger from theft and the placement of the tree would be such that physical damage from careless visitors would be minimised. BW continued by stating that having the large Juniper in the body of the Japanese Garden for the past few years has been a successful trial run for this idea.

b. Plans for the trees.

MH informed the meeting that a prominent member of the Bonsai community is in the process of donating up to three major trees to the collection and explained that this emphasized the need for onsite storage space for trees.

The meeting closed with JW informing us that should the current bid for funding the development plan be accepted there would be opportunity to develop the National Bonsai Collection as part of this.