



FEDERATION OF BRITISH BONSAI SOCIETIES

Minutes of Committee Meeting, 10.30 a.m. Sunday, 1st November 2015
"The Woodlands", New Hall Drive, Walmley, Sutton Coldfield, B76 1QX

- 1) **Present:** Malcolm Hughes, Reg Bolton, Denise Baum-Pick, Peter Fielding, Judith Davison, David Cheshire, Keith Wilson, Barry Walker.
- 2) **Apologies:** Andy Dolman, Nigel Wright.
- 3) **Minutes of the previous meeting**, (19th July, 2015): The minutes were read and acceptance was proposed by DC and seconded by BW.
- 4) **Matters arising:** None.
- 5) **Correspondence:**
 - a) Mark Moorland has expressed his appreciation of the new Bonsai News but suggested that more effort should be put into encouraging more input from clubs. This was deemed to be far too labour intensive to be practical.
 - b) MH reported that the matter regarding damage to some of the backdrops sustained whilst on loan to the 'Bonsai World 2015' show has now been satisfactorily resolved.
Suggestions regarding prevention of similar occurrences in the future, included a) Insist that 2 people from the society come up to be trained in assembly, b) 2 people from FoBBS go with the stands to ensure their proper management, or c) Clubs wishing to borrow them should pay a deposit, which would be refundable when the stands were returned undamaged. No decision was made at this stage.
 - c) DB-P has had a request for information regarding Britain's biggest bonsai collector from a Tom Gillespie but did not feel it was appropriate to respond.
- 6) **Reports:**
 - a) **Financial:** DB-P reported receipt of £580 from the RHS for Chelsea and that the current balance of funds stands at £10,001.53, petty cash held is £7.67.
 - b) **Companies House:** Nothing to report.
 - c) **Membership:** There are currently 58 members, of whom 5 are members only and 1 is an individual member. DB-P proposed that in future, new members joining after June each year could be offered membership at half the annual subscription but this would not include insurance; if they needed insurance they would have to pay the full amount. This was unanimously agreed.
 - d) **FNBC & National Bonsai Collection:** BW stated that one of the junipers has been relocated to The Woodlands to receive some TLC due to suspected over-watering.
There is a new employee at the Gardens with responsibility for the Collection and a new record book has been installed for maintenance issues. A team of 2-3 people has now been created to visit regularly.
 - e) **European Bonsai Association:** RB has received a document from Belgium detailing the working group that has been formed in order to re-evaluate the Association. He believes that the biggest problem within EBA is the failure of many delegates to respond to notices and therefore has suggested that each country appoints a second point of contact.
RB has now improved the judging rules for the NTC in order to make it fairer and has also instigated a new EBA merit award plaque to be awarded to all NTC finalists.
 - f) **W.B.F.F:** MH reported on a recent meeting in South Africa, which he was unable to attend, where the Americans raised some issues regarding unauthorized use of the WBFF logo. The meeting agreed that organizations wishing to use the logo should first request permission.
- 7) **Amateur New Talent Competition:**
 - a) PF reported that at the recent heat held at 'Bonsai Europa', David Fairbanks narrowly beat Gary Caulfield. A question has been raised as to whether UK entrants are of high enough standard to compete at EBA level and it was suggested that they should be offered further coaching before being entered for an EBA final. KW suggested that an information pack be sent out to all member societies, detailing the requirements for entry and the obligations entailed.
The competition at 'Bonsai Europa' was not well staged and MH questioned whether all future heats should only be held at FoBBS events to ensure the best possible environment for the contestants.

DC suggested that better signage would help to explain to the public what is going on. This was agreed and it

was also decided that the rules should be altered to say that winners would be considered for progression, it would not be as of right.

It should be remembered that FoBBS has no obligation to hold this competition and/or enter the EBA event, therefore sending competitors who lack a good standard of talent or proficiency is counter productive.

- b) The next EBA final will be held in Székesfehérvár, Hungary on 21st/22nd May 2016 and RB is to distribute the program as soon as possible. MH expressed concern over the lateness of information received.

8) **Bonsai judges training programme:**

- a) MH reported that he has had three enquiries from people wishing to attend the next course, which will be held on 8th November.
- b) RB is to circulate a list of judging criteria to be used at the Swindon Winter Image show next February. The suggestion made by some that a scoring system be used is impractical when judging a large number of trees, as it can take far too long. It is, however, a good tool to use for training purposes. BW suggested that FoBBS issue a list of standard criteria, including categories, tree sizes and the number of judges required at an event. MH proposed acceptance, seconded by DC.

9) **Proposed TV series:** NW is keen to pursue this idea and is intending to liaise with Tony Tickle.

10) **FoBBS Bonsai Events:**

- a) "Bonsai World" at Crawley went very well and is expected to become a regular biennial event.
- b) MH had been approached with a request for expenses of £320 incurred at the Hyper-Japan event, which was not sponsored by FoBBS. This has been paid but the consensus of opinion was that in future, budgets must be submitted in advance of an event. It was agreed that signage in and around FoBBS' events tends to be poor and could do with improving.

11) **Next year's events:**

- a) **RHS Chelsea:** The display will be 1 metre shorter (9 metres instead of 10) than last year and therefore we may get fewer passes issued; however, RB proposes to buy extra tickets as necessary. He also is confident of acquiring a new backdrop at nominal cost. Set-up will be on 21st/22nd May. Trees selected for display should be with RB by Thursday, 19th June.
- b) **Gardeners World Live:** Next year's show will be w/c 13th June and will be organized by Riverstreet Productions with a smaller prize for a gold medal of £300. As last year, societies will be entering on an individual basis.
- c) **Cardiff:** There will be an event supported by FoBBS held in Cardiff on 28th-30th May.
- d) **Thistledome:** Following on this year's success, DC is considering extending his car boot sale next year to be a weekend event with displays by local societies and demonstrations. This would be held on the last weekend in September and was deemed to be a good idea.

12) **Bonsai Speakers' Book:** Existing entries are all up-to-date; accredited judges will be circulated to members.

13) **Current state of FoBBS and FNBC websites and publicity:**

- a) Both FoBBS and FNBC are getting regular and timely updates.
- b) The new Bonsai News UK has had a poor response from members and if matters don't improve then it will cease publication.

14) **Next AGM:**

- a) Date – 13th March 2016.
- b) Constitutional changes – There is currently no limit on the length of time that anyone can serve as Chairman. MH suggested that the previous limit of 2 x 3 year terms should be reinstated with a clause added to the effect that, if after 6 years in the post, no new nominations were received, that the current Chairman could be re-elected (if willing) by a majority vote. This proposal to be circulated to members inviting applications from anyone willing to join the committee.

15) **Any other business:** RB has preparations for the Swindon 'Winter Image' Show well in hand and is in a position whereby he can refuse entries that are not up to standard.

BW is to compile a list of grading standards for discussion at the next committee meeting.

16) **Date and venue of the next meeting:** The meeting concluded at 15.30. The next meeting will be 21st February 2016.