

## **1. Reference and administrative details of the charity, its trustees and advisers**

- a. The charity's name: Bournemouth Natural Science Society.
- b. The charity number 219585.
- c. The address of the principal office of the charity: 39 Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH1 3NS. Tel 01202 553525.
- d. The charity's trustees for the year were:  
Dr Rod Cooper (Chair), Mr Gerry Duggan, (Treasurer), Mrs Anne Jolliffe, Mr Steve Limburn, Mr Ashley Leftwich, Mr Ray Chapman, Mr Matthew Hepenstal (Co-opted), Mr Tony Williams (Co-opted)

## **2. Structure, Governance and Management**

The Society was formed in 1903. A new constitution was adopted in 2006. Members' also agree to abide by the Rules of the Society, which were updated in December 2012.

Financial and related matters are overseen by the Trustees, who normally meet monthly. They are also responsible for the appointment of those officers of the Society who have responsibility for substantial assets of the Society.

The Trustee body is elected annually by secret ballot by members present at the Annual General Meeting. Up to nine trustees may be elected. Of these two are ex-officio, the treasurer and secretary. A chairman is elected at the first meeting of the new trustee body each year.

The Assembly of the Society is open to all members, who can raise any matter of overall interest. The Assembly usually meets quarterly. The Assembly chairman is elected annually at an Assembly meeting immediately following the AGM.

The activities of the Society are run by a small number of committees: the Programme Committee is responsible for the lecture and field trip programme, with each section of the programme being the responsibility of a Section Chairman who is appointed by vote of the Assembly. The Museum and Library are also overseen by committees made up of volunteers with an interest in these areas.

We are pleased to be able to tell you that by the time you receive this Annual Report the Society will have the status of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The process has taken much longer than originally planned due to the need to transfer the Society's Assets to the CIO.

We announced last year that we were introducing a President's Award. Details have been distributed to schools, libraries, the press, etc. and we wait to see how many nominations we receive. The winner will be announced at the AGM. We hope this will become an annual award. It has been suggested that the Society introduces a Volunteer's Award for work undertaken by a member of the Society during the past year and the first winner of this award will also be announced at the AGM.

We were honoured that Dr Jane Goodall DBE agreed to be one of our Patrons. Not only is Dr Goodall considered the world's foremost expert on chimpanzees but she was brought up in Bournemouth.

Due to the amount of money that needs being spent on our building, the Trustees considered a suggestion of selling the building and moving to another location. The suggestion was rejected. The view, shared we are sure by most members, is that we have been in the present building for nearly 100 years and we are likely to be here for the next 100 years. However the Trustees are not against having a BNSS annex in the centre of Bournemouth, if a suitable site became available and if we have the funds and volunteers to run it. After considerable debate the Society has adopted a new logo, of which I hope you will approve.

## **3. Finance**

\* Income up 70% . Increase due to £36,000 Legacies (from Barbara Sweet, Dr Graham Langsdale. Alan Lindsay, Stephanie Roberts and Evelyne Bentley). All benefactors can be viewed in the Legacies Book.

\* Young Explorers roughly broke even. Open Days contributed around £3,000 to Society Funds.

\* Legacies were our largest source of income, £36,000, followed by Lettings at £15,000 and thirdly subscriptions £10,000 of which £7,500 is Direct Debit.

\* Expenditure is up by 9% compared to last year to £57,500.

- \* Professional fees were high, approx. £8,500. £4,400 CIO legal fees and £4,000 architect's fees.
  - \* The cost of Accommodation & Services including repairs & maintenance, insurance and utilities is £21,500, salaries and Tax is £22,500.
- Regulatory costs continue to grow: lightening protection testing, water hygiene, Fire Training, PAT Testing etc.
- \* Administration fees are £3,700, which includes a new photocopier & printer, desktop PC and laptop and costs of printing and posting proceedings, programmes, AGM and newsletters.
- Administration fees also include Web and Dropbox online storage fees.
- \* Savings made include paying a final sum for ongoing hire of the scaffolding and also the boiler behaved itself!
  - \* Margaret Evelyn ran another fantastic coach trip out to Portland. She made a modest profit of £110.
  - \* Cash at bank available to the Society is £107,500, up from £88,500 last year
  - \* Society Investments total a further £47,000
  - \* Total BNSS liquid reserves made up of Charity Investments, Deposit Bank Account & Current Bank Account: £154,000 an increase of approx. £18,500
  - \* The reserve cash fund is now £92,500, an increase on £12,500 from last year
  - \* Within those figures, the Society has 2 Restricted Funds (Lecture & Garden) totalling £3,501.
  - \* The Society reserves policy recommends the Society to hold approx. 2 years expenditure, so we are compliant.
  - \* Reserves allocated for future liabilities include external maintenance £12,500 publicity & fundraising £16,000, CIO fees £2,000 and lantern roof £20,000, total £50,500
  - \* Society is required to set up and administrate a workplace pension scheme from 1st February 2017 which is in progress.
  - \* Society will have to increase its income from all sources and control its costs to ensure a healthy future.
  - \* The Society needs to increase further its focus on lettings to offset the large overhead in supporting the buildings, and also to make it more straightforward process to leave a legacy to the Society.
  - \* Bournemouth Music Festival are not using BNSS next summer to host the event, which will leave a £2,000 shortfall in lettings compared to this year without some action to offset by the Society.
  - \* The financial figures indicate that any major project expenditure will require the majority to come from Funding Bodies. We are not in a position to make any major investments from our reserves.
  - \* Without the injection of funds from legacies, the Society's financial position would have been approx. £17,000 negative.
  - \* Thanks are due to Independent Examiner, Louise Tonkin of Fisherton Consulting
  - \* Thanks also especially are due to Mary Tiller who manages all the Society cash transactions, cash reports & physically banks it all!

#### **4. Membership**

Membership was 258 on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015, and 241 on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016, a decrease of 17. Recruitment of new members continues to be a major drive and priority for the Society. Membership categories and subscription rates were not altered during the year. 124 members pay by Direct Debit as of 1st October this year, the remainder paying by standing order, cheque or cash. The Young Explorers Club has continued to be popular, with more than 80 children currently signed up as members – mainly through word of mouth. The popularity of Open Days would suggest that potential new members should be available to recruit but most of the attendees are young families, which is a good thing, but they tend to have other priorities.

#### **5. Public Benefit**

All the Society's lectures are open to the public and the programme of activities and special events is publicised online, in local libraries and occasionally in local newspapers and radio. Word of mouth and social media continues to be a good source of interest in the Society. Committed members supervised by the

Trustees, have opened the building and premises to the public on three full Open Days this year. These have all been free admission, but asking for donations. Various U3A groups have asked for a guided tour of the building and its collections and most groups give a small donation. Cub and scout groups have asked for a visit and welcomed a volunteer to show them our exhibits. Craft activities for children at Open Days are charged at a nominal small amount and are very popular, with the children taking away a variety of well-constructed items.

Local primary schools are given access to bring their years 3 and 4 to view the Egyptian Mummy in line with the National Curriculum to study early civilisations. They also attend to generally visit the exhibits where they are conducted round the collections by knowledgeable volunteers. Art groups, both adult and junior visit to use the collections as models as do students from Bournemouth University. An ecology year group from Bournemouth and Poole College has been carrying out work on our herbarium assisting in cataloguing and photographing the specimens under the tuition of a member of the botany section.

Objects from our Egyptology collection were loaned to the Christchurch Red House museum for an exhibition, two further loans for exhibitions are to take place in the next year.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed with the Arts University Bournemouth and collaboration on various activities will commence soon.

The Society opened its doors for one day as part of the Dorset Architectural Heritage week and a lecture on our building was given to an appreciative audience..

Members of the public continue to take the opportunity to visit to talk with specialists on our open morning in the week.

We have recently been visited by groups of adults with learning difficulties who, with their carers, have toured the collections.

## **6. Achievements and Performance**

### **6.1 Programme**

During the year the Society has organised 116 lectures and 23 field trips. Average attendance is about 35 members and 10 visitors. Donation boxes at the back of the lecture hall have helped improve our gifts from visitors. The most successful are those held jointly with the Wessex Astronomical Society and the Historical Association which average about 60 and 70 attendees respectively.

The programme has included a themed week relating to National Science and Engineering Week in March. Various study groups continued during the year covering a wide variety of topics. There were ten Young Explorers mornings, eight Drop-in evenings, a highly successful Open Weekend and four events, two of them associated with the Bournemouth Arts by the Sea Festival.

### **6.2 Strategic Plan**

BNSS's 3-year Strategic Plan (2014-2016) was published in May 2014, following extensive consultation with Trustees, Officers, members and other interested groups and individuals. It contains background information on the history of the Society and how it is run, as well as a vision for the future with details of how we hope to achieve that vision. The plan is currently under review in order to assess progress to date and revisions for the future.

### **6.3 Museum Curation**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015 the Arts Council England (ACE) confirmed that the Society had been granted Accredited Museum status. There were a number of caveats which have to be addressed before the application for renewal three years after the original grant. These included completing the collection cataloguing to a programme that we proposed. We have to implement an environmental control system to monitor and control the temperature and humidity within the building and also take steps to reduce the UV levels where they can affect the exhibits such as the cased birds. Most of the other tasks relate to our dealings with visitors in terms of communication, signage and interpretation of the exhibits as well as learning plans for study.

These tasks are being addressed with some already completed, the cataloguing, accessioning and numbering are the major tasks which are being undertaken by volunteers

Conservation of the collection has continued with more birds being cleaned, backgrounds painted where necessary and the cases refurbished and sealed. Several specimens of mammals that we previously in store have also been conserved and made available for display.

The conservation of the entomology collection with a dedicated volunteer checking the trays for museum beetle damage, making it good, cleaning the trays and renewing the chemical moth balls. Similarly the checking of the fossil collection has continued to detect and control pyrite decay. The egg collection is being examined and cleaned as it is catalogued and in some cases new eggs used to add to or replace the existing grouping.

The cataloguing and recording of the botany collection, mainly the herbarium sheets is continuing and the archaeology collection is being reviewed and in some cases added to. Some of the Egyptology items were loaned to Salisbury Museum for an exhibition and are due for return. Several items have been donated as the result of a bequest, these included entomology items that added to our collection and fossil items including a cast of an *Ichthyosaurus communis*.

A new section, or rather the resurrection of an old one, in the form of a microscopy section is being established using existing microscopes plus some others. Slides have been collected from their various locations and are being checked. This section will be useful for education and also for study groups.

#### **6.4 Museum Public Openings and Exhibitions**

In 2015/16 the BNSS held four open days.

In October the Open Weekend coincided with the Bournemouth Arts by the Sea Festival, there were the usual mix of exhibits with live insects and cockroaches, birds eggs, butterflies and moths, botany specimens, water creatures under the microscope and fossils with descriptions and objects to examine under the microscope. Experts were available for interpretation.. There were also craft activities for children and refreshments were served throughout the days. Some 1000 visitors attended and the response was very favourable.

In April we held a Saturday open day in collaboration with the Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT). The DWT and various other local wildlife groups such as Butterfly Conservation set up stands in the garden for information and activities for families. The BNSS worked inside, with children's craft activities, plant sales and live insects for handling, as well as room guides and stewards. For this event we moved the shop and sales desk into the museum room, which seems to have worked well for this and the October open weekend. Members of the local Rotary club attended to help serving refreshments. There were some 650 visitors throughout the day.

We also hosted a performance from Simon Barraclough for the Arts Festival and a storytelling event for the Bournemouth Emerging Arts Fringe.

The annual coach trip in June was to Portland with a guided tour of Tout Quarry Sculpture and Nature Reserve, this was followed by a visit to the Grove Prison Museum and then Bennett Water Gardens near Weymouth, the trip finished with afternoon tea.

During the summer school holidays as an innovation we opened the museum between 10:00 and 4:00. The additional exhibits varied with the availability of volunteers and all of the collections were available to view. Some 440 visitors attended the majority of them children as was intended. This was felt to have been successful and will be repeated in the Christmas holidays.

The Photographic Competition continued for a third year with a high standard of entries.

#### **6.5 Publicity**

The BNSS had a positive year of publicity in the local press. Coverage in the Bournemouth Echo included articles on the Museum's accreditation in March, the announcement of Dr Jane Goodall as a patron in May and our participation in Arts By the Sea Festival in October. In the same month, Bournemouth University's The Breaker featured a profile of the BNSS.

Our social media presence continues to grow. 2016 saw a 26% rise in people following BNSS on Facebook, up to 1467 likes. Twitter followers grew by 12%, up to 790. We hope to gain insight from both these sites in order to increase the Society's visibility.

Many have asked about the new BNSS website and it is hoped it will be live for users to see by the beginning of December 2016

## **7. Premises – the House**

A number of options to repair the lantern roof have been looked at with Bournemouth Borough Council Planning Officer and our appointed Architect. The lantern remains protected by scaffolding and a cover. Quotes have been sourced but this has been difficult due to the Conservation Officer's requirement to carry out only repair works in situ without dismantling the Lantern. We are in the process of widening the feasibility study to include opening up the floor beneath, providing an unframed balustrade to be added for safety. To also include upgrading the doors to fire rated doors and secondary glazing to improve the thermal performance. Matched funding is being sought for the project

Work has been carried out on the main roof to make it water tight including replacing some lead which had gone missing.

Re-decoration of the outside of the house is due to start shortly.

Many other small maintenance jobs continue to be carried out.

## **8. Library**

Thank you to all the members who use the library before lectures and on Tuesday mornings; their comments have made me aware that the books and magazines are much appreciated as a valuable resource even in these days of computers.

The total borrowings number 70 for the year. We received 15 donations from various sources, which have been incorporated into the library system. The library purchased seven new books last year:

1. Britain's Plant Galls – Michael Chinery. This has excellent photographs with good descriptions.
2. World of Human Evolution – Chris Stringer and Peter Andrews. Good general study on evolution by two leading researchers.
3. Life's Greatest Secret – Mathew Cobb. The storey to crack the genetic code.
4. The Scientists – Andrew Robinson. Biographies of famous scientists.
5. Bad Astronomy – Philip Plait. Misconceptions & misuse in astronomy
6. Arthur Smith Woodward – several editors. A series of papers on his life and influence on modern vertebrate palaeontology.
7. An Ape's view of Human Evolution – Peter Andrews. A new perspective on human evolution.

The Trustees have indicated that they are considering combining the Reference and Lending Libraries. As a result of this we are holding an exercise in which each section leader is listing the volumes they suggest should be retained. Please continue to use our libraries and we will welcome any comments that you feel are relevant.

## **9. Health & Safety**

This has now been included as a standing item on the agenda of all Trustee meetings.

- An annual water test for Legionnaires disease was carried out and was found to be all fine.
- A Radon test was carried out in the Caretakers Flat and found to be well below the level to cause concern only 20Bq well below the level for action of 200Bq.
- Refresher First Aid training will need to be carried again in the New Year as it runs out in February 2017.

## **10. Volunteers**

Everyone that is involved in the running of the Society, with the exception of the Caretaker and the Communications and Publicity Officer, is a volunteer. Without the efforts of our volunteers the Society and Museum would cease to operate. The management of the Society is looked after by volunteers, the day to day activities such as open days, lecture arrangements, field trips, study groups and conservation are carried out by volunteers. All of these functions would not happen without the volunteers whose efforts are often not recognised by members. We always need more volunteers to reduce the load on our small but energetic team. Please join us it is interesting and very rewarding,

## **11. Collaborations**

. The Society has a formal agreement of co-operation with the Arts University of Bournemouth and we are hoping to work closely with them in developing the Society. We also have a close relationship with the Dorset Wildlife Trust and other local natural history organisations such as the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust (ARC).

BNSS is a member the Bournemouth Chamber of Commerce and remain members of various museum related organisations such as the South West Museums Federation and the Dorset Museums Association.

## **12. Thanks**

As we said last year, it is always dangerous to highlight to thank any one person from the many of you who give so much to the Society. By doing so we are in danger of leaving someone out who may be equally worthy, if not more so, for our thanks. Bournemouth Council gets round this problem by having an annual ceremony for those who, in the Council's opinion, have gone one step more. The Society has now introduced a Volunteer of the Year award and the President will be naming at the AGM the person who has won this year's award.

So this year we are going to offer our thanks to a number of people who in fact will never know that they are being thanked. Our thanks go to those who have left bequests to the Society. Whatever the size of the bequests, we thank you. We can truthfully say that your bequests have gone a long way to keeping the Society alive. We have a BNSS Bequest Book which is now on permanent display in the in the main reception area. Thank you to all of them.

**The Trustees  
November 2016**