

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022 OF THE TRUSTEES FOR BOURNEMOUTH NATURAL SCIENCE SOCIETY

1. REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS

- a. The charity's name: Bournemouth Natural Science Society.
- b. The Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered number 1165951.
- 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: Mr Grenham Ireland (Chair), Mr Gerry Duggan, (Treasurer), Mrs Jacqueline Bainbridge (Honorary Secretary), Mr Keith Butt (to January 2022), Miss Pam Field, Mr Malcolm Gould, Mrs Anne Jolliffe, Mr Steve Limburn and Mr Colin Lord.

2. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Society was formed in 1903. A new Constitution and Rules for the CIO were agreed by the Society Members at the AGM held on 5th December 2015. The Charitable Incorporated Organisation was registered on 9th March 2016. Financial and related matters are overseen by the Trustees who this year have mainly met via Zoom. The Trustees 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. Sadly, Mr Keith Butt died in January 2022.

The Assembly of the Society is open to all members who can raise any matter of overall interest. The Assembly usually meets roughly quarterly. The first meeting was held following the AGM to elect the Assembly Chair and Section Chairs. Meetings were held on 11th December 2021, to elect the Assembly Chair and Section Chairs. The meetings on 29th March and 28th June 2022 took place remotely, on Zoom. The hybrid meeting scheduled for 29 September 2022 was postponed because some members contracted Covid.

The activities of the Society are run by a small number of committees. An ad hoc Programme Committee (consisting of those Section Chairs who could attend meetings by Zoom) has been responsible for the lecture programme. A small number of field trips were organised from spring to autumn. The Museum Committee and Library Committee did not meet.

3. FINANCE

There are many positive indicators that Museum activity is recovering well post Covid, and revenue streams are beginning to reflect this.

Sales have improved from £165 in 2021 to £2,100 in 2022 (on stock costs of £335), a testament to the work of the volunteers not only for staffing the sales area, but also ensuring that there are attractive items available at competitive prices especially for our discerning younger visitors.

Lettings have increased from £6,200 to £10,900. This was greatly assisted by additional financial contributions from hosting televised interviews with Jane Goodall at the BNSS, initiated by Pam Field.

Young Explorers income has recovered from zero to £920 and Activities (e.g. school visits) from £100 to £1,100, all organized by Steve Limburn.

Subscriptions and donations have increased by 10% to £15,900.

BNSS managed to secure a final (re-opening) Covid grant of £4,000 in 2022 (£26,500 in grants applied for and paid into 2021 accounts).

The principal reason for the reduction in total BNSS income for 2022 (£40,300) vs 2021 (£53,500) is the ending of the Covid Grant assistance scheme in 2022.

On the expenditure side the main items are:

Funding for Egyptology and display case improvements (e.g., Mummy) was increased to £8,000 in 2022 from £3,700 in 2021. The artefacts have been worked on to a very high standard principally by Joyce Navarro and will shortly benefit from being professionally lit by utilizing in-cabinet LED strips, a project led by Jo Crane. These improvements may lead to an increase in visits.

There was a reduction of approximately £7,000 in building related projects, the focus in 2022 being on removing water ingress to the building and extensive repairs to the sash window frames and upgrades to the basement flat. Total BNSS expenditure, although down from £78,800 (2021) to £47,000 (2022), reflects the continuing investments being made in the building and museum.

We would anticipate £6,500 expenditure level range for BNSS in 2023 due to insulation, the enhanced maintenance programme and refurbishment costs, with more usual levels of expenditure returning in 2024.

Trustees are taking into account BNSS exposure to increased energy costs (£3,500 up to ~£7,000 p.a.) and business rates (£2,000 up to ~ £3,000 p.a.). Minimum wage increases in 2023 are likely to be about 10%, adding a further £1,000 p.a. The increased cost of business-as-usual operations such as insurance, CCTV, security, fire alarm and hygiene services will also add another £1,000 per annum.

Colin Lord has secured the final 10% (£7,000) grant payment from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Lantern, which will get the BNSS accounts for 2023 off to a flying start!

Total Reserves (Bank account funds and investments) total approximately £ 200,000 comfortably above the recommended threshold of 2 years' total expenditure (~£130,000).

The Trustees are fully aware of the challenging environment we are all facing and the BNSS financial reserves will naturally be treated with utmost prudence to ensure compliance with the financial policy.

Unseen work that is vital to BNSS is carried out by the Independent Examiner, Louise Tonkin of Fisherton Consulting, who reviews the accounts for best practice and suitability for submission to the Charity Commission, to ensure BNSS retains its charitable status.

Thanks are due again to Mary Tiller, who manages the Society's cash transactions and keeps records of cash donations required for the Society to be eligible for Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme. Also, to the Membership Secretary, Sally Grant, who has the vital job of maintaining the membership database and submitting the direct debit requests for payment every month

4. MEMBERSHIP

Membership was 244 on 1st October 2021 and 234 on 30th September 2022. During the year, there were 13 new members, 18 left and 5 deaths. A small reduction over the year occurred, possibly due to some members being unable to access the Zoom lectures.

5. PUBLIC BENEFIT

The museum has been open on Tuesdays throughout the year and on some Saturdays. During August, the museum was open additionally on Mondays and Saturdays with good attendances. Throughout the year, weekly lectures via Zoom were made available to the public who requested a link. Lectures were advertised on the BNSS Facebook page as well as the BNSS website. All activities were free to enter but were also supported by members explaining the importance of donations to keeping our activities going and to providing support towards maintaining the old Victorian building. Non-members wishing to join Zoom meetings were sent the link with information about making donations online. BNSS was again able to host the Arts University Bournemouth Spring display by second year students this year. The Young Explorers programme for 7 – 12-year-olds was restarted and has had a very successful year with attendance at many meetings being in the high teens and low twenties. There were 10 school visits, two groups from the Arts University Bournemouth. Steve Limburn and Mark Spencer also conducted talks and sessions with groups in schools and local parks.

6. ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

6.1 Programme

A total of 52 talks were offered to members between 1 st October 2021 and 30th September 2022. Mostly these were on a Tuesday evening by Zoom. We started by offering one talk a month on a Saturday afternoon from April onwards. Most of these Saturday talks were "hybrid talks" i.e. delivered 'in house' with simultaneous broadcast by Zoom using our new projector and AV equipment. In fact, there were 13 of these talks delivered in this way this year and the AGM. Two talks were 'in house' only. All these talks are open to non-members and BNSS was very grateful for any accompanying donation. Three quizzes were offered in the year. We ran a number of field trips during the year, six botanical, three bird orientated, three entomology and three mycology. Two evenings of guided stargazing were offered and warmly received. A photography competition was publicised, and awards given in three categories of landscape, best fauna, and best flora. A joint meeting was held with the Quekett Microscopical Society where members and non-members were able to view exhibits and hear short talks. A trustee offered free guided walks around the BNSS building as part of Dorset Architectural Heritage Week in September 2022 and members were on hand to explain our exhibits, the history and aims of the society and provide refreshments.

6.2 Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan (2016-2019) was published in late 2016, 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. A new plan is now overdue, and a strategy review will be instigated by a group of trustees in November 2022 in conjunction with preparations for re-accreditation. Consultation with officers and members will take place early in 2023.

6.3 Museum Curation

We have still not received the request for re-accreditation from the Arts Council England (ACE) although it is anticipated at any time. Work has continued on the important aspects such as cataloguing which is now virtually

complete. The allocation of accession numbers is still ongoing, but progress is being made. The SPECTRUM and other accreditation documents are being updated. The delay means that some sections will need to be re-written. The pest control activities have continued with the entomology collection being regularly checked as well as the vulnerable fossils for pyrite decay, and volunteers have helped with cleaning of some of the drawers of fossils. The general checking and recording of the pest traps have continued with remarkably few pests found. Additional traps have been added to some cabinets. The Egyptology room has been refurbished with a new paint scheme and Tahema is now safely in her new case. The Beale fossil and mineral collection has now been fully documented and curated. Space for new collections and for storage is still a major problem and inhibits the possibility of varying the displays and presenting exhibitions. The general environment of the building in terms of temperature and humidity are less than adequate for both people and the collections. Action is now needed. Many of our windows are now able to be opened to provide better ventilation. Extra insulation above the lending library should improve conditions for both those who work in there and the books.

6.4 Museum Public Openings and Exhibitions

The Museum was open to the public, on Mondays, Tuesdays and Saturdays between 1st and 27th August 2022. This was organised by Pam Field and Grenham Ireland and staffed by a number of volunteers on each day. Tuesday openings to the public continued throughout the year.

6.5 Publicity

Publicity was mainly by postings on our website and Facebook pages and postings on the Institute of Physics website.

7. PREMISES - THE HOUSE

Externally a lot of jobs have been done such as getting the Lecture Theatre roof watertight and re-laying the footpath at the side entrance. All external doors have been prepared and painted. Inside the house all rooms now have windows that open and in some cases the sash cords and rotten windowsills have been repaired. New carpets have been put in the caretaker's flat and will shortly be laid in the Lending Library. A double layer of insulation has been put in the Lending Library void and three radiators are being installed to the heating system to allow better conditions when working in the library.

8. LIBRARY

We are pleased to see an increase in the number of books borrowed this year. Hopefully with the reduction in Covid infections and our new audio-visual system in the lecture hall members will start to use the library before and after the lectures as previously. We have received some most generous donations of books this year. Dr. David Godfrey has given over 200 books most of which we have incorporated into the library. Previous Chair of Entomology Doug Taylor sent a dozen books from Cambridge, also several books from Ray Chapman with more to come. This year we purchased two new books, Guide to Mushrooms by Paul Sterey and Barry Hughes and Wild Flowers by Simon Harrop. We are continuing to sell duplicate and surplus volumes on Anybook.

9. HEALTH & SAFETY

The emergency lighting has all been updated and now fully works. PAT electrical safety testing has been completed. The 5-year electrical inspection has been completed and work will follow. The emergency handbook has also been updated.

10. VOLUNTEERS

As always, the trustees are deeply indebted to our volunteers many of whom give the Society hundreds of hours of their time each year. We have been fortunate during the year to have attracted new volunteers, both members and some who are not. They are all very welcome. We should particularly mention that some of our volunteers are in a much younger age-group than many of us and this has been most helpful. Our new volunteers have been found to be very personable, energetic, flexible, and reliable. In fact, exactly what we need. Our aim to open the museum more frequently remains in place but cannot be introduced without a greater number of regular volunteers. We would reiterate our request that anyone with spare time should get in touch via contact@bnss.org.uk to alert us to their interest.

11. COLLABORATIONS.

We had a joint meeting with the Quekett Microscopical Club with whom we hold an affiliate membership. We have kept our collaboration with the Arts University Bournemouth. Our patron Jane Goodall has continued to use our premises for somewhere to hold recordings of her interviews with a number of organisations for which we are grateful.

12. THANKS

This has been a year of recovery and we continue to be indebted to our members for keeping us running through their subscriptions when our other sources of income have been reduced. From the other sections of the report, you will be aware of the many contributions from trustees, officers, and volunteers without which the Society would cease to function. Our website and social media continue to be important for communication with members and the public. We are grateful for another year of free 'charity hosting' for the website from 34SP.

The Trustees, November 2022