



BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND SCIO SC016283

Minutes of the AGM, chaired by BSS President Prof Jonathan Silvertown, RBGE, Thursday 16 May 2024 at 19.00 hrs

24 members were present. Council members present: Jonathan Silvertown, John Grace, David Chamberlain, Sim Tang, Liz Kungu, Ellie Bestington, Maria Chamberlain and Richard Milne, Greg Kenicer, Chris Jeffree.

There being more than 15 members present, the meeting was quorate with 24 members present.

1. Welcome, apologies for absence and management of the meeting

Jonathan Silvertown welcomed everyone.

Apologies were received from Pat Cochrane, Richard Wilson, Jill Thompson, Liz Lavery, Brian Ballinger, Kevin Gaffney, Lyn Jones and Jim McIntosh.

2. Minutes of the last AGM (18 May 2023)

These had been displayed on the members' area of the BSS website. No comments were received. The minutes were proposed by David Chamberlain and seconded by Jackie Muscott and accepted by a show of hands.

3. President's annual report 2023 – 2024 (Jonathan Silvertown)

- **New website:** the Society has developed a new website during the year www.botsoc.scot. The front page hosts a clear link to enable new members to join easily. Thanks to Richard Wilson for his hard work.
- **Membership:** Membership is going up, including amongst students. Kevin Gaffney was thanked for his continuing role as Membership Secretary

Type of membership	2023	2024
Standard + Plant Ecology and Diversity	79	80
Standard	94	114
Student + Plant Ecology and Diversity	12	11
Student basic rate subscription	24	36
Total individual paid membership	209	231

- **Lectures/BSS You Tube/social media:**
There were 12 monthly lectures held in person at RBGE and elsewhere round Scotland from September 2023 to May 2024. Five of these were recorded and can be found on BSS You Tube. A link to BSS You Tube can be found on the website. There are 260 BSS You Tube

'subscribers' who are auto notified when a new video is put up. In addition, there are 1800 BSS Facebook members.

- **Field Meetings:**

There were 14 field trips in 2023 some jointly with other societies. Locations included Edinburgh, Dundee, Tain, Bathgate, Biggar, Livingston, South Queensferry and Alyth. Some had an urban emphasis to support the Urban Flora of Scotland Project. Particular thanks to Brian Ballinger and Maria Chamberlain for organizing the programme were noted.

- **Grants for students, or in the first year after graduation:**

- We now have an active student group, which will be represented on Council this coming year by Katie Ricci. Ellie Bestington was thanked for her leadership of the student group last year.
- Four applications for field work and training grants were received in 2023 and all were awarded.
- We are supporting through travel grants the final of Botanical University Challenge in Oxford in which students from several Scottish Universities will be participating in August. We wish them well.
- Other student activities included a Student Eco Ceilidh and a Cyanotype Printing Workshop

- **Student thesis prizes 2023:**

BSS awarded the 2023 student thesis prize to Scott Galloway for his dissertation. Jonathan thanked the two thesis reviewers for their hard work, time and expertise.

- **The BSS weekly botanical blog incorporating *Plant of the Week (Open to all)*** continues to be very successful. Daily views are currently 200-400. There are 329 Subscribers. It started in May 2020 and there are now over 200 blogs which are viewed from across the world although mostly the UK and USA, with c75,000 views per year. They are now hosted on the society's new website <https://botsoc.scot/>. Plant of the Week (13 May 2024) was Green-winged orchid, *Anacamptis morio*

- The Society's international journal, **Plant Ecology and Diversity**, is now in its 17th year. It has an impact factor 2.6 which is in the top third for journals of this type. John Grace said that recent volumes have unfortunately been rather 'thin' because of lack of submissions and action to change this is required. The rejection rate has also been high as about 80% of submissions are off topic. The plan is to go online-only, to increase profile of journal, increase submissions and reduce costs. Competing journals are already doing this.

- John Grace particularly mentioned the contribution over many years of Senior Editor **Prof Richard Abbott** who died on 23 February 2024. Richard had a particular interest in the genus *Senecio*, was Professor University of St Andrews, BSS President 2006-2008, Senior Editor of Plant Ecology and Diversity and Local BSS Secretary for St Andrews. He will be greatly missed by the Society and his family.

- A replacement Senior Editor is being sought. Jonathan thanked Dr Laszlo Nagy the chief editor, and the journal publication and editorial teams for all their work producing the journal.

- **Urban Flora of Scotland project (UFS)** – What grows in your street [Urban flora of Scotland – The Botanical Society of Scotland \(botsoc.scot\)](https://www.botsoc.scot/urban-flora-of-scotland)
- Since 2015, >90,000 records from over 200 towns and cities (over half of all towns in Scotland with population >10,000) have been made. Recording continued in 2023 to ‘fill gaps’ and has now covered the main areas where people live (central belt, east and northeast). There are a few significant gaps which we’ll cover summer 2024 (e.g. Fort William). By October 1st we aim to cease recording and work on analysis for the book. The *irecord* data base will remain open and we expect records will continue to come in. We are open to suggestions about ‘what next?’

A conference was held (21st - 22nd September 2023) funded from the accumulated subventions from the Journal publishers. A special issue of the Journal publishing the papers from the conference “*Urban Floras - a contribution to biodiversity*” and a book are in preparation, although there is still much work to do. Jonathan thanked all members of BSS, BSBI especially John Grace and all volunteers who have contributed data.

- **BSS News**
Two editions of the BSS News have been published since the last AGM, in September 2023 and March 2024. Jonathan thanked the BSS newsletter editor Jill Thompson and coordinating editor Cameron Diekonigin, and everyone who had contributed articles. A new newsletter editor is being sought. Articles are always welcome from both members and non-members.
- **Thanks to Council** Jonathan thanked the Council and all those who contribute to the smooth running of the Society. It is a team effort.

4. Treasurer’s Report – David Chamberlain – audited accounts. This was David Chamberlain’s 25th Treasurer’s report and his last!

Summary of BSS Accounts 2023-2024 – Receipts

	2024 (£)	2023 (£)
Voluntary Income (incl. Subscriptions)	6,452	5,852
Royalties (PED)	5,343	4,834
Editorial Subvention (PED)	3,380	3,380
Douglas Malcolm Bequest	10,000	-
Total	25,175	14,066

Summary of BSS Accounts 2023-2024 – Outlays

	2024 (£)	2023 (£)
Lectures & Annual Conference	930	744
IT Zoom Expenses	-	297
Members' Copies (Journal), Edit. Meeting Newsletter	5,002	10,030
Student Awards (incl. Group expenses)	2,318	1,038
Urban Flora Conference 2023	2,708	2,301
Web Collect	13,739	-
Website Upgrade	442	291
Governance, Support Costs	4,754	-
Total	1,059	700
	30,952	15,401

Summary of BSS Accounts 2023-24 – Assets

	2024 (£)	2023 (£)
Cash, Current a/c & Paypal	21,553	26,131
Cash, CCLA Deposit a/c	17,582	11,767
Investments, CCLA Ethical Income (AA)	180,462	165,975
Investments, CCLA Accumulation (AB)	22,564	20,148
Gross Assets	242,161	224,021
Interest received	5,823	5,332

Key points from the Treasurer include:

- A lot of the Society's income comes from sources other than subscriptions
- The Douglas Malcolm bequest was challenged but successfully awarded to the Society and is to be used for 'occasional conferences'.
- The main expenses have been, the urban flora conference although funded by the subvention for the journal; members' copies, the website upgrade. Overall outgoings were double what they had been in 2022/23.
- The assets are strong. Ethical investments delivering a good return. The Accumulation Fund will cover student grants and costs associated with the UFP conference book.

Jonathan Silvertown proposed to accept the accounts, Sim Tang seconded. The accounts were approved by the meeting.

David passed the Treasurer's baton on to Sim with a card of congratulations and a BSS wooden piggybank while he intended to 'go out to pasture'!

5. Elections/re-election of BSS Council members

There were no questions and voting to accept or reject Resolutions A, B, C & D followed.

Resolution A: BSS Council proposes the re-appointment of Council members who **have not reached** the end of their current 3-year term.

David Chamberlain (re-elected 2023)

Maria Chamberlain (re-elected 2023)

Brian Ballinger (re-elected 2022)

Kevin Gaffney (re-elected 2022)

Hamlyn Jones (elected 2022)

John Grace (re-elected 2023)

Liz Kungu (re-elected 2023)

Richard Milne (re-elected 2023)

Laszlo Nagy (re-elected 2023)

Jonathan Silvertown (elected 2023)

Sim Tang (elected 2023)

Jill Thompson (re-elected 2023).

Resolution A was proposed by Richard Milne, seconded by Maria Chamberlain and accepted by a majority show of hands.

Resolution B: BSS Council is not proposing the re-election of any Council members who **have reached** the end of their current 3-year term. No vote is required on Resolution B.

Resolution C: BSS council proposes that the following be elected as full members of council:

Katie Ricci

Rachel Catherine Thomas

Richard Wilson

Resolution C was proposed by Ellie Bestington and seconded by John Grace and accepted by a majority show of hands.

Resolution D: BSS council proposes a vote of thanks to the following members who are retiring at the end of a 3-year term:

Cameron Diekonigin

Sandy Hetherington

Liz Lavery

They were all thanked by a round of applause.

Maria Chamberlain also wished to thank Liz Kungu and her helpers for provision of tea and coffee at each indoor meeting and clearing up afterwards.

The new BSS council will meet on 23rd May 2024 to discuss the coming year and peoples' roles on council.

6. Any other competent business

BSS welcomes everyone, members and non-members to our field events and lectures. See our BSS Website and Facebook page for events and other information.

The meeting was closed at 19:33.

www.botsoc.scot