

Report

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 8 MAY 2000

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at the Ulster Museum, Belfast, at 10.45 a.m. The President, Mrs M. Briggs took the chair 56 members were present.

Apologies for absence were read and the minutes of the 1999 Annual General Meeting (published in *Watsonia* 23: 373–375) were circulated, approved as a correct record and signed by the President.

REPORT OF COUNCIL

The report had been circulated to members and the President went through it commenting on the main achievements of the Society during the past year, noting especially the good progress with the Threatened Plants Database and Atlas 2000 and she thanked all who had contributed – the Co-ordinators, the Atlas organiser, the inputters and all the members. She finally thanked every one who had, voluntarily, worked so hard for the Society.

The Treasurer then presented the financial part of the Report. Summary accounts had been circulated to members; full sets of accounts had been available on request by post and were now available at the meeting. The Treasurer reported that the Society's accounts were in good order and that we had worked within our means. He pointed out that as Gift Aid had replaced Covenants, the Society is able to recover tax paid on subscriptions on completion of a simple form which would be circulated to all members; in response to a question, however, it was pointed out that this could not be done if the subscriber was, as a professional, claiming the subscription against tax in his business accounts.

The Membership Secretary had reported that the Society membership had declined, slightly, over the past year but that this did not appear to be as a result of the increase in subscription.

The Treasurer proposed the adoption of these reports which was seconded by Mr E. F. Greenwood. The President thanked the Treasurer for all his hard work, particularly the extra effort involving the Charity Commissioners.

ADOPTION OF REVISED RULES

Copies of the proposed revised rules had been available by post from the Honorary General Secretary and were now available at the meeting. The Treasurer stated that the changes were purely administrative and were in response to advice from the Charity Commissioners:-

They emphasise compliance with Charity Law.

They emphasise best practice in financial control.

They strengthen the quorum requirements at meetings of Council.

They update details of permanent working committees.

Under a requirement of Charity Law, they remove the vote from junior members under the age of 18.

They clarify that family members have only one vote per family.

The adoption of the Revised Rules was proposed by Mrs M. Lindop and seconded by Mrs J. Robertson and carried unanimously.

At this point, Mrs M. Briggs stood down as President and, as she did so, thanked all members for their help and support during her presidency; in particular she thanked Mr Peter Thomson, Council Minuting Secretary and Mrs Margaret Perring who was retiring after handling B.S.B.I. publications for 23 years; she welcomed Mr Jon and Mrs Sue Atkins of Summerfield Books who

were taking over. Finally, she welcomed her successor as president, Dr Geoffrey Halliday, well known to members for his work with Records Committee and for the acclaimed Flora of Cumbria.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

Dr G. Halliday was nominated by Council. He gave the Society's thanks to Mrs M. Briggs M.B.E. for all her good work on behalf of the Society – 2 years as President, preceded by 23 years as Hon. General Secretary. He expressed his gratitude for his election and said that he was looking forward to making his own contribution to the office of President. He was elected unanimously.

ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENT

Professor C. A. Stace was proposed by Miss A. Burns and seconded by Mrs M. Briggs. His election was unanimous.

ELECTION OF ACTING HONORARY GENERAL SECRETARY

The President thanked Mr R. G. Ellis, the retiring Hon. Gen. Sec. for all his hard work in that office and noted with gratitude that he was continuing as Editor of 'News'. Mr Ellis thanked Mrs Briggs and the Treasurer for their assistance and support and also recorded his thanks to Mr P. J. Fry for his work as Assistant Secretary at the B.S.B.I. desk at the Natural History Museum. The administration of the Society was under review, pending the outcome of the review, Miss A. Burns is nominated by Council to serve as Acting Honorary General Secretary.

RE-ELECTION OF HONORARY TREASURER

Mr M. E. Braithwaite, nominated by Council was re-elected, proposed by Mr R. G. Ellis, seconded by Mr A. O. Chater. The President thanked him very much for all his good work, particularly his continuing efforts with the Charity Commissioners.

RE-APPOINTMENT OF EDITORS, INDEXERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF COMMITTEES

The President proposed the re-appointment of the Honorary Editors, Indexers and Representatives of Committees and thanked them very much for all their hard work, mentioning especially, Mr C. R. Boon for indexing *Watsonia*.

At this point, the President also recorded his own thanks to Mr D. A. Pearman, Dr C. D. Preston, Mrs J. M. Croft and Dr T. D. Dines for their enormous amount of work with the Atlas.

ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

In accordance with Rule 12, nominations had been received for Miss R. Davis, Dr J. Edmondson and Mr M. S. Porter. Profiles had been circulated and would be published. The election of these new Council members was proposed by Mrs M. Briggs and seconded by Mr E. F. Greenwood; their election was unanimous.

ELECTION OF HONORARY MEMBERS

The President stated that three members had been nominated for Honorary Membership of the Society this year and that all three had made outstanding contributions to the Society in their different ways. Sponsors for all three had produced appreciations of their respective candidates and these were either given, or, if not able to be present, read to the meeting and would be

published in 'News'. Their election was proposed by Mr R. G. Ellis, seconded by Dr D. L. Kelly and was carried unanimously.

The three new Honorary Members are, Dr F. E. Crackles M.B.E., MSc., sponsor Mrs M. Briggs; Dr P. Macpherson F.R.C.P., F.R.C.R., sponsor Mr M. E. Braithwaite; Mr R. D. Meikle, sponsor Dr E. F. Greenwood.

RE-ELECTION OF HONORARY INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

The President expressed the Society's gratitude to Mr John Coats for his exemplary examination of the Society's accounts. His re-election as Honorary Examiner was proposed by Mr A. O. Chater and seconded by Mr R. G. Ellis.

There was no other business and the meeting closed at 12.40 p.m.

AILSA BURNS