

British National Carnation Society

Responsibilities of Officers

In an unincorporated association, such as BNCS the role of the officers – with the exception of Trustees – is not defined in legislation, and where it is not defined in the Rules of the Society, it is a matter of custom and practice, which can of course be modified by the Council or by members at a General Meeting.

The current Rules of BNCS were adopted at the AGM on 28 February 2009. These provide for the election by members of the following officers: President, Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Council, Secretary and Treasurer. Their initial term of office is ‘the ensuing year’ but there is no limit to the number of times that they may be re-appointed. In practice only the role of President, which by custom is largely honorific, is expected to last for only one year. Other officers are normally re-appointed as long as they are willing to stay in office, but annual re-election of both Officers and members of Council does give members the power to change ‘the management’ at any AGM.

The Executive powers of the officers of BNCS are not unlimited. Rule 8 states: ‘Since policies are decided by the Council the role of the officers will normally be determined by decisions of the Council. In unforeseen circumstances, when decisions must be made before the Council can meet to consider them, the officers, **acting jointly**, may take whatever action they think fit. In such cases they must inform all members of the Council by mail, e-mail or otherwise at the earliest opportunity and be guided by their response.’

This is an important limitation, preventing any officer from making commitments in the name of the Society which may not have the approval of the elected Council.

The role of individual officers has in recent years included the following:

President This role is now largely honorific. The President should chair the AGM, but if he or she is reluctant to do so – as has happened – the Chairman of Council may be invited to undertake this role. Presentation of Trophies, at Shows (e.g. Harrogate) or at the AGM also falls to the President. Apart from that Presidents may (but need not feel obliged to) attend BNCS Area Shows and those of Affiliated Societies. When the membership of BNCS was much larger than it is today, the annual replacement of the President was understandable, but nowadays a longer term of office would be more sensible. This was actually proposed at the AGM some years ago, but when opposed by a single member, the motion was withdrawn without being put to a vote.

Chairman of Council In BNCS this is the key role. The Chairman (not the Secretary as has recently happened) must decide the agenda for Council meetings and authorise the Minutes of those meetings before publication. It is to the Chairman of Council that members look for leadership: he should be aware of all the options open to the Society, of the policies that have been decided by Council in recent years – not simply those at which he has presided – and learn enough about all aspects of the Society’s activities to be able to develop an opinion, even if that does not subsequently succeed in winning the approval of Council. Such an occasion is not usually ‘a resigning matter’ unless the Chairman feels that a matter of principle is involved. The Chairman should be in constant contact with the other officers, to keep them and he informed about issues impending, and to try to form a broadly-based view before a matter is put to the Council.

Deputy Chairman of Council This post has not always been filled, but is useful in providing a potential successor to a Chairman, to deputise in his absence from a Council meeting or other function and to provide a ‘second opinion’ when the Chairman is in doubt. This works best when the Chairman can nominate his own Deputy, but any such nomination is still subject to agreement by members at the AGM.

Secretary This is another key role in any society or association. The Secretary is normally the first to receive information or enquiries both from members and from organisations with which the Society must deal – the RHS, Show Societies, professional dianthus growers (whether members or not). In many cases the Secretary should act as a Post Office, promptly forwarding information to the Chairman or other relevant officer, or suggesting that the Chairman should place a matter on the agenda for the next Council meeting. In such a case the Secretary should normally send a holding letter (e-mail or other communication) to explain the delay. Only when the Secretary knows by experience that his or her decision will not be challenged by the Council should he or she make a commitment on behalf of the Society, recognising that such actions must be reported and may be overruled. It is perhaps a weakness that it has not been our practice for the Secretary to circulate ‘papers’ on complicated subjects, or indeed on any subject, before Council meetings, with the result that members do not have the opportunity to consider matters before debating them in Council, and the Chairman does not have the chance to consult key members, which would save time (and often argument) at Council meetings. With members of Council accessible by e-mail this should not be expensive. The Secretary is also responsible for preserving records of decisions, his or her own and those of Council and of the AGM, of which only an abbreviated record may appear in the published Yearbook. How long these records should be kept has never, so far as I can discover, been decided: it would help if this were better defined.

The role of Secretary need not include the role of ‘Membership Secretary’ a secondary role not specified in BNCS rules. I note that our Treasurer has taken on this role, which is appropriate.

Treasurer The role of the Treasurer is self-evident: to receive members’ subscriptions and the Society’s income from shows or from the sale of books, to account for both income and expenditure at intervals determined by the Council, and to present accounts, verified by an independent examiner, to members at the AGM. Any recommendations by the Treasurer for changes in subscription rates must be approved by the Council and by the AGM during the calendar year preceding such a change.

Trustees Trustees were only added to the list of officers in 2009 when it seemed possible that BNCS might cease to exist. Rule 9 says that ‘Trustees are responsible for safeguarding the property of the Society against loss or misappropriation’. Strictly speaking this overstates their role. In normal circumstances the Council retains responsibility and delegates it to a number of people, obviously the Treasurer and others with whom property, equipment and trophies, are stored. It is at the point of dissolution that the role of Trustees becomes critical. Then they have to liquidate the assets and dispose of them as set out in Rule 11. They must jointly, by agreement. (The Trustee Act 1925 is still on the statute book, but where no legal trust exists ‘trustees’ have a degree of licence. Googling ‘Trusteeship’ gives guidance.

So much for the Officers appointed by members at the AGM. The role of job-holders appointed by the Council is also undefined – very much what the post-holder makes of it, whether as Editor, Press

Officer or whatever. The role of the **Show Manager** in particular should be better defined. The Show Manager is currently responsible for allocating space at the location agreed by Council, for inviting qualified judges, for appointing Stewards (and instructing novices in this role in their duties) for reporting the outcome to Council, including lists of trophy winners for later presentation, and for ensuring that there are sufficient volunteers recruited to man the Society's stand throughout the Show and to clear up afterwards, including where possible the sale of flowers. Council needs to be satisfied before each show that these duties have been understood and provided for. Regrettably this has not been the case on a number of occasions in the recent past, and had it not been for the fortuitous presence of the Secretary or other Council members considerable embarrassment would not have been avoided.

Role of Show Manager

(Not in any particular order)

1. Confirm schedules.
2. Book venue, tabling/staging, vases, judges.
3. Confirm show dates.
4. Arrange advertising.
5. Send out schedules and accept entries.
6. Near the show date: - confirm venues
Confirm suitable access for exhibitors
Confirm judges and stewards
Ensure tabling, vases etc. are available
7. On show day: - Take entries
Ensure facilities are available for exhibitors i.e., toilets, water, food, drink, tabling space, vases, water.
Welcome judges and stewards and brief.
After judging ensure all awards and award cards are in place.
Confirm all awards are accounted for.
Calculate prize money/points.
Ensure judges/stewards hospitality and expenses are paid.
Record cultivars for Show Analysis report.
8. After Show: - Confirm no problems with judges/exhibitors/ venue.
Clear away and ensure safe return of all equipment.
Prepare show report for publication in Year Book.
Send points/prize money to treasurer for paying out.
Ensure exhibitors receive award cards/rosettes either at show or with prize money.
9. Ensure Society Trophies are accounted for and that they will be available at the show venue for presentation to class winners as required. Where Trophies have not been claimed and are in the hands of a Society custodian then ensure arrangements are made in good time to have the trophy transported to the show either by the person holding it or by a third person possibly via a Council meeting

Role of Judges Co-ordinator

(Not necessarily in any particular order)

1. Confirm register of Judges is up to date.
2. Arrange Judges Seminars to keep judges aware of any changes, new ideas, suggested rule changes, classifications etc.
3. Confirm judge's manual is up to date.
4. Encourage more people to take judges exam.

5. Put forward a proposal to Council for a new judge's exam, the current system leaves a lot to be desired.
6. Make judges aware of new varieties- a full classification list is long overdue-and this should be updated annually.
7. Keep the register of judges and their availability and advise show manager(s) BNCS and others accordingly, especially where area shows are concerned.
8. Ensure that judges are aware of what is required especially at National and Area shows-time of arrival, who to introduce themselves to, who is paying their expenses, speak to stewards-show managers etc.
9. Issue certificates to judges when exams are passed-would suggest that certificates are valid for a set period and to keep them up to date a judge must attend at least one seminar in the period of validity of the certificate say 5 years. This would ensure that all current judges would be reasonably up to date with any changes to rules, classifications etc.
10. Issue badges to judges with a validity period to match their certificates.
11. Ensure judges are booked for shows in good time and speak to them in person to ensure they are clear they have been booked. Ideally they should have a 9 to 12 month warning period and in ideal circumstances should live in reasonable proximity to the show venue. If for any reason they are unable to carry out the duty then they MUST take every step possible to arrange another judge to replace them and inform the Judges co-ordinator accordingly

Role of Stewards.

1. Should ensure, as far as possible, that all exhibits are according to schedule.
2. Should not be asked to officiate wherever they are exhibiting.
3. Should not comment on the work of judging except to answer any queries raised by the judge, nor should they take part in any technical aspects of judging.
4. Should familiarise themselves with the schedule and layout of the classes.
5. Should be available to move exhibits where necessary to give the exhibitors more space in which to stage their entries or where required by the judge. Care must be taken to ensure the exhibits are not damaged or disturbed in any way or moved into a wrong class.
6. Should endeavour to see that all exhibits are staged in the correct classes and that each has an entry card with the exhibitor's details concealed.
7. should inform exhibitors of any errors that maybe spotted i.e. exhibits in the wrong class,
8. Insufficient/too many stems etc., to enable them to put matters right prior to judging.
9. Should ensure that everyone leaves the exhibition area except those authorised to be present during judging.
10. Should ensure that judges are aware of special prizes, awards and trophies to be given.
11. Should ensure that exhibitor's details are kept concealed until all classes have been judged and special awards have been confirmed.
12. should record the judges decisions to enable the show the show secretary to collate the
13. Results.
14. Whilst the Judge(s) are at work, act as intermediary should any other person approach the judges to allow them to continue with their judging responsibilities and pass on any messages should they be of importance.