The Haworthia Society Committee Meeting – 18 September 2025

Attendees

William Darbon, Lawrence Loucka, Steven Molteno, Andrei Nitu, Colin Walker, Tony Roberts, Jacqui Au, Jon Schwark

Organizational Decisions

- The executive committee confirmed it is duly structured and quorate
- Following the resignations of Leslie Pearcy (chairman) and Adrian Weatherill (secretary) in May, the new committee roles were confirmed: Andrei Nitu as treasurer and membership (in training), William Darbon as acting chairman, sales and distribution, and Lawrence Loucka as editor, acting secretary, web and social media manager
- Tony Roberts (former treasurer) will be retained as a non-voting agent of the committee whilst the new treasurer is fully trained
- Colin Walker agreed to continue as president for another year but will step down from the committee after the BGM (Biennial General Meeting) in November
- The committee decided to remove Stirling Baker from the election roster as he hasn't submitted the required documentation
- Alan Rollason's resignation as Life VP was accepted, and his request to no longer use his copyright artwork in future publications will be honoured
- Leslie Pearcy was confirmed to continue managing seed distribution and made a non-voting agent of the committee
- The committee discussed establishing a permanent society address with mail forwarding services

Administrative Updates

- Tony Roberts will apply to update the NatWest mandate to reflect recent leadership changes. The following was agreed: add Andrei Nitu and William Darbon; remove Leslie Pearcy and Adrian Weatherill.
- Election dates were adjusted: candidate statements were extended to the end of the month, and online voting was pushed back by two weeks
- Plans were made to review the Constitution in the new year with potential amendments in 2026

Signed:

Lawrence M Loucka (acting secretary) Date: Sept 20, 2025

- The committee agreed to standardise representative names across the constitution, website, and journal
- The committee discussed creating abbreviated minutes to document recent changes
- A membership survey is being developed to understand member needs better
- The committee agreed to continue providing free journal copies to Life VPs while respecting requests to be removed from the masthead

Quick recap

The committee discussed various organisational matters, including advertising at plant events, streamlining journal distribution, and planning for upcoming conventions and national shows. They addressed personnel changes and administrative updates, including election processes, committee roles, and the need to standardise representative names across their constitution, website, and journal. The conversation concluded with discussions about future events, succession planning, and the need to update the NatWest mandate, while creating abbreviated minutes to document recent changes.

Upcoming Events

- Plans were discussed for a conference at the end of next year
- A South African get-together is planned for March
- Potential UK Haworthia growers' convention in 2026 was discussed, with concerns about possible conflicts with other events
- William reported on his attendance at the ELK plant event, suggesting the Society could benefit from advertising there
- The BCSS Showing and Judging Weekend was confirmed with 32 total attendees
- The committee discussed creating promotional materials like pull-up banners, handouts, business cards, and QR codes for future events

Action Items by Responsible Person

William

- Write a Chair note for the October Haworthiad
- Explore options for society promotion at events, including pull-up banners and promotional materials
- Contact Ian Warner about advertising at the ELK event
- Handle sending journals to European members from the UK
- Investigate Dorothy Miners' current whereabouts

Tony

- Send William the list of European members
- Update the NatWest mandate with Andrei to reflect recent leadership changes

Jackie

- Continue working on the membership survey

Lawrence

- Edit William's Chairman's note
- Continue reaching out to potential speakers for future events
- Provide minutes
- Schedule an Editorial Board meeting

Andrei

- Seek clarification from Alan about his specific intentions regarding artwork removal
- Update the NatWest mandate with Tony to reflect recent leadership changes

Committee

- Form teams for planning upcoming events
- Address succession planning in the new year
- Review of the Constitution in the new year with potential amendments in 2026
- Standardise representative names across the Constitution, website, and journal

Details

Event and Membership Strategies

William shared his experience attending a plant event in ELK over the weekend, where he observed 75 vendors and approximately 40 British attendees. He proposed advertising the society at future events by potentially investing in a pull-up banner or business cards, estimating a cost of around 100 euros, which he suggested could be covered by new member fees. William also discussed a plan to streamline journal distribution to European members by having Tony send a list so he could manage shipments directly, noting the current cost of £3.20 per journal.

Event Speakers and Show Planning

The group discussed potential speakers for an upcoming event, including Jakub, who has two new talks, and Jan Vandorpe, who can present a talk on Gasteria. Lawrence mentioned a young South African writer and explorer, Andries Cilliers, who would likely be willing to contribute. The conversation then shifted to the BCSS Showing and Judging Weekend, where William reported they have 32 total attendees, including 24 candidates, 6 committee members, and 4 speakers.

Committee Roles and Election Planning

The committee met to confirm roles and discuss organisational matters. They confirmed Andrei as treasurer and membership secretary, and Bill as chairperson, sales and distribution. The group discussed adjusting election dates, with plans to release the election app on October 1st. They also explored the possibility of obtaining a permanent address with mail forwarding services, though concerns were raised about potential issues with UK banks requiring physical addresses. Tony noted that he rarely receives mail except for subscription renewals and Haworthiad returns.

Privacy and Membership Discussion

The group discussed two main topics: member expulsion and the use of meeting recordings. Regarding expulsion, Lawrence expressed concerns about potentially expelling members due to upcoming elections in November, though Colin clarified that these were separate issues. The group agreed to table the discussion about meeting recordings, with William and Colin both supporting the idea of keeping recordings private while maintaining accessible meeting minutes. The discussion also touched on the need for a privacy policy to clarify how meeting recordings and social media content can be used.

Handling Officer Resignation and Complaints

The committee discussed two main issues regarding former officers. Colin Walker confirmed that he had resolved Alison's complaint about unresponsive emails by explaining his limited executive powers, though Allison indicated that she might follow up further. The group also addressed Alan Rollason's verbal resignation from Life VP and his request to no longer use his artwork in future publications, deciding to respect his wishes going forward while keeping existing materials unchanged. The committee debated how to handle Alan's historical record and artwork on the website and social media, with Andrei offering to seek clarification from Alan about his specific intentions regarding the artwork removal request.

Election Date and BGM Planning

Lawrence proposed several election date changes, including extending candidate statement deadlines to the end of the month and pushing back online voting start date by a couple of weeks. The group discussed the upcoming Biennial General Meeting (BGM) and its responsibilities, including reviewing minutes, preparing the chairman and treasurer reports, and potentially electing new honorary officials. Tony clarified that Derek Tribble was previously a life vice president who became a life president for a limited term but later reverted to life vice president when Colin was appointed president.

Election Process and Constitution Review

The committee discussed election processes for the upcoming general meeting, with a focus on handling electronic voting and potential write-in candidates. Colin Walker agreed to continue as president for another year and will remain on the committee until the BGM, after which he will step down from the committee. The group reviewed the Constitution's current nomination requirements. It acknowledged that, while it allows for last-minute nominations, the committee needs to prepare clear communication for members about the election process to prevent potential issues. The committee also discussed the possibility of reviewing and potentially amending the Constitution in the new year, with a focus on clarifying the role and key responsibilities of committee members.

Personnel and Administrative Updates

The committee discussed several personnel changes and administrative matters. Sterling's offer to be chair was rejected because he hadn't submitted the necessary documentation to the Secretary, and he was removed from the roster. The committee agreed to continue providing free copies to life VPs in recognition of their service, while allowing them to opt out of having their names on the masthead. Les

Percy was confirmed to continue managing seed distribution, and the committee agreed to make him a non-voting agent of the committee. Regarding Dorothy Miners' current whereabouts, Bill offered to investigate. The conversation ended with an agreement for Lawrence to submit expense claims for Zoom, MailChimp and ElectionRunner to Tony for reimbursement.

Haworthia Society Event Planning Meeting

The meeting focused on planning for upcoming events and organisational matters. Lawrence inquired about a conference expected for the end of next year and mentioned a South African gathering in March. The group discussed forming a team to plan the society conference and show. Also raised was a concern about a new Facebook group that had blocked current Haworthia Society admins. Lawrence also outlined succession planning and emphasised the need for backup personnel in key positions to avoid future leadership gaps.

Organisational Updates and Voting Changes

Organisational updates and administrative changes we discussed. Lawrence and William would like to standardise the names of representatives across the Constitution, website, and journal, as well as potentially update the voting method and formally adopt electronic voting. Tony raised concerns about updating the NatWest mandate, which requires documentation of recent leadership changes and the co-option of Andrei Nitu as treasurer. The group agreed to create abbreviated minutes covering these points, with Tony, Andrei, and Bill serving as signatories. Lawrence confirmed plans to schedule an editorial board meeting in the coming days.