



EGM Agenda

Meeting Date: Monday 4 December 2023
Time: 1:15 – 1:25pm
Location: Assembly Buildings Conference Centre, Belfast, BT1 6DW
Chair: Jack Hannam

	Agenda Item
1.	Welcome and Apologies
2.	Election of new Trustee to the Board – <i>see attached paper</i>
3.	Any Other Business

Members attending the meeting will be able to vote in person.

If you are unable to attend in person and would still like to submit your vote, please submit your vote online via: <https://form.jotform.com/233062817224350> by **Friday 24 November**.

British Society of Soil Science Cranfield University, Building 42a, Cranfield, Bedfordshire MK43 0AL

T: +44 (0)1234 752 983 F: +44 (0)1234 752 970 E: admin@soils.org.uk W: www.soils.org.uk

Agenda Item	2.
Paper	Election of Trustee to the Board
1.	<p>Introduction</p> <p>The Board recommends that members support the election of David Tompkins to the Society Board from 1 January 2024.</p> <p>His application is reproduced below.</p>
2.	<p>Trustee</p> <p>The following application has been received from David Tompkins:</p> <p>At first glance my CV does not shout ‘soil science’, and members of the Society might wonder why I would be interested in joining the Board and whether I have any relevant experience. Both of these questions can be answered together, by taking a quick trek through my post-graduate history.</p> <p>For my final year undergraduate project I was lucky to be able to work with local advisors to Shell in Brunei on a glasshouse study into rehabilitation of degraded tropical soils. This mainly focussed on addressing nutrient deficiencies and selecting leguminous ground-cover species that would establish with minimum effort, kick-starting soil regeneration through turnover of leaf litter. Following this experience, my PhD investigated opportunities for the rehabilitation of mined land in Malaysia – sampling and testing mineral and organic substrates before combining them under controlled conditions to create artificial soils and testing plant performance. I also spent time sampling and testing natural analogue soil formations – particularly tropical podzols – with a view to informing future research into ecological restoration approaches.</p> <p>This research didn’t come to pass, as my post-doc research instead shifted to the (then) emerging UK biowaste recycling sector – helping a local authority to navigate its way through legislation associated with composting food waste, testing the products against prevailing standards and liaising with farmers to understand their knowledge of and interest in using commercial composts as soil improvers. From there my work with WRAP (the UK’s Waste & Resources Action Programme) saw me managing: multiple projects where composts were used for soil manufacture and rehabilitation; the re-casting of the topsoil standard BS3882; and a significant programme of research to address stakeholder concerns around the safety of recycling biowastes – and their potential impacts on soils.</p> <p>These links between policy (biowaste diversion from landfill), regulation (controlling how materials are used) and stakeholder acceptance (or not) have been at the centre of my subsequent work as an environmental consultant – shifting from a focus on solid wastes to a</p>

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	<p>focus on wastewater and sludges, and witnessing the efforts of both sectors to maintain land application routes for their residues in the face of concerns around plastic residues, chemical contaminants and other hazards in their materials which might impact on long-term soil health.</p> <p>My current role covers the whole urban water cycle from a Circular Economy perspective. This means seeking out opportunities to keep materials in use, recover resources for re-use and to articulate the potential for circular approaches to regenerate soils and the wider environment. I see soils under ever-increasing pressure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a sink for recycled materials • To store carbon • To buffer water (quantity) and improve water quality • To support regenerative farming practices • To support biodiverse, resilient landscapes • To support nationally significant infrastructure etc. <p>BSSS has a critical independent voice which can ensure that scientific evidence is brought to bear in response to these questions, and it is a practical multi-disciplinary approach that I would like to bring to the Board – having been a research scientist, a commercial consultant and a business manager. The importance of soils and soil science will only increase in coming years, and I hope to be able to play a part in supporting BSSS to capitalise on the opportunities that this will provide.</p> <p>David’s LinkedIn profile can be viewed at: https://www.linkedin.com/in/david-tompkins-3418823a/.</p>
Action	The Society Board suggests that members vote in favour of the proposed appointment.