Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Thursday 13th October 2022 - 19.15 - at Northern Rugby Club, Gosforth

1. Attendance and apologies - 32 members attended, apologies Jo Bentley.

2. Minutes of last meeting - (14th Oct 2021) accepted.

3. Chairman’s welcome and report - Martin Davison welcomed members to the AGM and thanked them for their continued support. Thanks were expressed to Andy Mould and the team of writers for their production of the Annual Report. Thanks also to the Bulletin editor, Alan Tilmouth, and his team, for their reliable delivery of the monthly bulletin, and for developing it’s presentation and style.

4. Matters arising from the last AGM – the digitisation of the bulletins has been delayed, Graham Sorrie has kindly agreed to take over and further the process. The aim is to have a digitised and searchable bulletin record available.

5. Honorary Secretary’s Report AGM 2021

The trustees of the charity forming the club committee during 2021-22 were Martin Davison (Chair), Jo Bentley (Honorary Treasurer), Tim Dean (Recorder), Trevor Blake (Sales), Steve Anderson (Outdoor Meetings), Steve Barrett (Bulletin Editor), Graham Sorrie (Twitter account) and Andrew Brunt (Honorary Secretary). No nominations were received other than for the existing committee members. The committee functioned with one member short for the year. Martin Davison continued with the work of planning and booking speakers for the Indoor Meetings.

The AGM in October was followed by Phil Hanmer giving us an update on his ringing and research into Goldeneye. In November “The Hen Harrier in England” was the subject of Stephen Murphy, who works in what could be termed the middle ground between Landowners, Keepers and Conservationists – factions who are often at each others throats. He gave us many personal anecdotes, along with facts about the species’ fluctuations in population and distribution. The last talk of the year was about “Birds of Conservation Concern” by Dr Mark Eaton, who described the function and value of the BOCC periodical stock take carried out every 6 years. In January 2022 members enjoyed immensely the birding and photography skills of Dr Colin Bradshaw which he used to show us the birdlife of an area of Spain easily accessed from Newcastle. In February Gary Hobson gave us an intriguing account of his birding trip in Washington State, USA - more specifically Seattle, as he visited a huge range of habitats in a compact area. Fred Milton in March presented a talk on a more historical subject than is usual for us -

"Pledging to protect birds – the Dicky Bird Society, a phenomenal nineteenth-century children’s society". Launched in 1876 by the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, the Dicky Bird Society set out to encourage children to protect birds and carry out proactive conservation work. Our Chairman Martin Davison in April spoke on "Seabirds at Kielder - Revisited". A few years ago Martin did a talk on sea watching at Kielder. Well we now know a lot more about overland movements of seabirds, and Martin explained how Kielder has “cashed in” on this. Our Indoor meetings programme restarted at our usual venue in September when we were entertained by by Lindsay McDougall on the subject of Birds of Namibia.

The committee thanks Martin Davison for his time and effort contacting people and arranging such a wide variety of speakers, and enabling the programme to continue despite the impossibility of having meetings in the usual sense.

Steve Anderson has continued to coordinate our outdoor programme. For the same reasons as above, the programme was curtailed.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to the late Steve Barrett and his team of writers for their regular commitment in getting the Bulletin out every month. Steve persisted with his Editing role throughout his terminal illness, and the Committee were deeply saddened by his death. Much appreciated also are the photographic contributions which enhance the appearance and interest value. The work of compiling and editing the Bulletin is now being very capably handled by Alan Tilmouth. An essential element of Bulletin production is the regular collection of monthly records, which continues to be very effectively managed by Clive Hampton.

Andy Mould and his team have continued to develop the quality of production of our Annual Report in its relatively new format. Andy has reported to and met with the committee to present alternatives and discuss its future.

We have received several requests for data from our past surveys. An administration charge is made for this when appropriate. Requests for survey data are currently managed by the Secretary.

The club website continues to be a vital resource for the distribution of data and requests for descriptions, and sometimes for members to sell or donate to others their surplus equipment or books. The website had a security upgrade during 2021, guidance was received from it’s designer and former Webmaster, Paul Buskin, which was much appreciated.

5. Treasurer’s report - see attached. The treasurer noted that membership had remained steady in 2020/2021 at 242 and subscriptions were coming in steadily. Many members now pay by standing order which saves a significant amount of time chasing late payers. The lack of hire charges for indoor meetings largely balanced the need to post all copies of the annual report rather than the usual distribution of the majority from a monthly meeting. Postal charges are now £2.70 per copy. Grants from the development fund included funds towards the local Beached Bird survey and Embleton Nature reserve. The treasurer noted that a significant number of members, including the committee and the editors and writers of our monthly and annual publications, contributed a good deal of voluntary time and effort to the running of the club.

6. Election of Officers - One nomination was received by the Secretary, Alan Tilmouth proposed Tim Dean, seconded Andrew Brunt. Other committee members were willing to continue and no election was required. The committee continues to be one member short, the chairman appealed for volunteers. The committee consists of M Davison, J Bentley, T Dean, S Anderson, T Blake, A Tilmouth, G Sorrie and A Brunt.

Meeting closed at 19.45 - Date of next AGM - Thursday 14th October 2023.