

HEREFORDSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

Minutes of the 69th Annual General Meeting held at Holmer Parish Centre on 14^h March 2019

Present: (45 members) Judy Allen; John Birkinshaw; Archie & Ian Buttriss; John Colley; Mick Colquhoun; Mervyn Davies; Russell Davies; Norman Fincham; Terry Foxton; Robbie Ledlie; S.E. Griffin; Susanna Grunsell; Giles King-Salter; Kerry Lloyd; Mary MacKay; David Macklin; ; Astrid Mick; Una & Gareth Morgan; Steve O'Neill; Helen Osborn; Gerald Parker; Christine & David Peacock; Nick Pegler; Joy & Andrew Prew; Gavin Price; John Pullen; Viv Quinn; Frances Riddell; Chris Robinson; Fiona Shutler; Nick Smith; Josephine Spencer; Robert Taylor; John Tilby; Tom & Jennifer Weale; Gerald Wells; Ann & Jim Wilkinson; Brian Willder; Martin Winrow.

1. Apologies: Chris Bartlett; Gail Belville; Philip & Margaret Brown; Dennis Chapple; Steve Coney; Nicky Davies; Peter Eldridge; Tony Eveleigh; Stephanie Greenwood; Bob Hall; Rachel Jenkins; Bill Laws; Fiona & Peter Leathart; William Marler; Wendy Rushton.

2. Minutes of the 68th Annual General meeting held on 8th March 2018 at Holmer

These had been sent to all members.

3. Adoption of the minutes

Proposer Gerald Parker; Seconded Archie Buttriss. These were adopted without dissent.

4. The Chairman's Report Susanna Grunsell

"At our last AGM we faced the prospect of a challenging year of change for the Club. The Chairman threw down the gauntlet for members to come forward for the several roles that needed filling either immediately or in this next year. I am pleased to be able to thank those already doing the work and those we hope to nominate tonight for the next 3 years. We have experienced several months however when the future of the club was in some question and this highlighted the conditions of our dissolution rules in our charity status. Changes relating to this matter will be voted on at this meeting.

Thanks to our new sub committee, John Pullen, Gerald Parker, Gerald Wells, Sue Griffin and Robbie Ledlie, who organised the field meetings out of county to Gilfach, Slimbridge and the Newport Wetlands and others within Herefordshire. All have been very well supported and thanks to the leaders on these trips. Thanks to Rachel Jenkins we continued to have a splendid selection of indoor meetings with talks on Spoonbill Sandpipers, Goshawks, Merlins, Bird Behaviour and Swifts. The annual Dr Walker Memorial lecture by Professor Tim Birkhead was about Francis Willughby. His unique classification and records obtained by an incredible journey in the mid 1600s through the "then known world" in Europe were absolutely amazing. This truly entitled Willughby to be "the first true ornithologist."

We are also grateful to Ann Wilkinson for taking over the running of the HOC's Garden Birdwatch. She would welcome more participants in this valuable work, which involves recording the largest total of each individual species seen in your garden weekly.

Further surveys done this year were for Curlew, Swift, and House Martin. The Curlew survey is ongoing, as a bird which was described 60 years ago as "common and widespread" in the county has now less than 20 breeding pairs. In 2018 out of 19 identified nest sites, only 2 were known to have survived to fledging. Thank you to Chris Robinson for co-ordinating efforts to help this bird. He would welcome any information and help supporting surveys of Curlew in the county. The Swift survey was carried out on known sites in churches in the County and in Ledbury. Here the survey will continue this year.

Our HOC News, edited by Nicky Davies, keeps us up to date every quarter. Thank you to her for that valuable contribution to the Club. Amongst many articles may I remind you of the detailed guides to the best birding sites in the County. These are available on our transformed website.

Our recently received Annual Report of 2017, highlights the continuing work of Mervyn Davies and his team, who consistently bring this excellent work so efficiently to publication. Thank you all.

I am pleased to report that we have renewed a close involvement with the Hereford Wildlife Trust and look forward to further meetings and collaboration with them.

Following requests for generic talks from various outside bodies, a selection of topics supported by digital images is to be drawn up in the next few months. It is hoped that these talks when requested will enlarge our membership and inform the general public of our existence as a Club.

I hope you will all have been enjoying our new website. Great thanks are due to Robert Taylor and Mick Colquhoun for their tireless work setting this up.

We now have to thank the retiring officers from the committee. Norman Fincham, after 2 years and Tom Weale who has given nearly 20 years to this group, a great contribution of time and interest for which we are extremely grateful. Una Morgan is also retiring after her 3 year term as secretary. Despite serious health problems she has given dedicated reliance to this role. Thank you Una for this invaluable service.

Finally, for many years we have sought a Publicity officer for the Club, a lot of this work has been done by our retiring Treasurer Jim Wilkinson who reminds us all of upcoming Club activities and more. How we will miss his dedicated work and a very big thank you goes to him. He assures us he will continue to attend meetings but we wish him a deserved rest.

May I wish you all a continued, successful year of birdwatching in 2019 and I look forward to greeting you all at the first indoor meeting in September"

5. The President's address Gareth Morgan

The President re-iterated the Chairman's thanks to all who help run the HOC, particularly Jim Wilkinson and Tom Weale for their help when he was chairman. He also reminded members of the two distinguished members we lost this year- Keith Mason and Graham Wren. He expressed his appreciation of the HOC News, the new website and the Annual Report. He asked members to look out for a replacement HOC News editor as Nicky Davies has said she will stand down in 2020. He suggested members talk to candidates in the forthcoming local elections to ensure they know the importance of habitat preservation and protection of wildlife. He encouraged members to participate more fully with the aim of improving the life of birds and to tell the club about any success.

6. Treasurer & Membership Secretary's Report Jim Wilkinson

First my thanks to our Auditor, Ian Rowe for auditing the accounts again.

The Club had a surplus of £2003 for 2018, a reduction from £2845 in 2017. Our overall income was essentially the same as last year. Attendance at Indoor Meetings continues at a good level and we are more than covering our costs. Gift Aid refund has reduced slightly as has interest from our savings accounts. We should expect that interest to reduce further over the next few years as, hopefully, the money is put to better use for the benefit of birds in the county.

Expenditure, as predicted, has increased from last year. This is almost entirely due to the development of the new HOC website which is now operational. There will be further expenditure on the website in the current year before the project is complete. We continue to be grateful to those members who help to keep costs down by delivering Annual Reports to local members.

Overall HOC finances are in good order and I expect a similar surplus this year.

HOC now has some £37300 of unallocated funds. I am therefore not proposing any increase to subscriptions for next year.

Finally, a brief update on membership. We had 25 new members last year so that by the end of 2018, there were 301 (294) subscriptions to HOC including 13 Life & Honorary members.

So far this year, we have lost 24 members with 13 still to pay/resign. This is a somewhat higher number than usual and is perhaps a reflection of our age profile. But the good news is that, since the beginning of December, we have had 14 new members some of whom are under the age of 60!

Before I sit down for my final time, I will make a brief comment on the past 10 years. The subscription has remained unchanged over the period which is mostly due to substantial reductions in expenditure on printing and postage. Sending the Newsletter out by email, although not universally popular, has had the single greatest impact. Also changing the format of the Annual report and a regular re-tendering process has brought those costs under control. So thank you for your support during a period of significant change.

I have enjoyed my time serving HOC and I hope Martin, my successor, also enjoys his time in office.

The acceptance of the accounts was proposed by John Pullen and seconded by Nick Smith and carried unanimously

7. Election of Officers and committee

The posts as below were up for re-election at this AGM

Nominations received before the AGM were

Secretary: Josephine Spencer; (proposer Una Morgan, seconder Nick Smith)

Treasurer: Martin Winrow ; (proposer Jim Wilkinson, seconder Susanna Grunsell)

Recorder; Mick Colquhoun (proposer Una Morgan, seconder Gareth Morgan)

Annual Reports Editor Mervyn Davies (proposer Gareth Morgan, seconder Una Morgan)

HOC News Editor: Nicky Davies (proposer Gareth Morgan, seconder Una Morgan) Ordinary

Committee member: Stephanie Greenwood (proposer Una Morgan, seconder Susanna Grunsell)

The block vote was proposed by Jim Wilkinson, seconded by Nick Smith and agreed unanimously.

8 Appointment of Auditor

Ian Roe was proposed as auditor by Jim Wilkinson seconded by Gareth Morgan. Carried unanimously.

9 Motions from the committee

“The Committee propose to amend Rule 16 b, subject to written approval of the Charity Commission, so that a quorum at an Extraordinary Meeting to consider Dissolution of the Club is reduced from half the total membership to not less than 40 current members”

This is only amending part 16b of the Rules and all other parts of Rule 16 Dissolution Section remain unchanged. In answer to a query, the Secretary confirmed that Rule 16c still included the need for two thirds of the full and voting members at the Extra Ordinary Meeting would be required to pass a resolution to dissolve The Charity.

The Secretary reported that the Charity Commission had given approval by email if the AGM approved the change.

Motion was proposed by Gerald Wells and seconded by Brian Willder. It was carried by the meeting with one abstention.

10 Any Motion from any member

None was received.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm

River Wye Award

The President presented the River Wye Award to Nick Pegler for his outstanding contribution to the Club over many years - in his record submissions, wonderful photos and his skill and perseverance in finding the birds.

The meeting was followed by a Dutch supper. The Chairman read a poem from the book "Watch the birdie"; then Chris Robinson talked about the Curlew Project and Mick Colquhoun showed some of the best photos from members during the year and Giles King- Salter showed one of the videos from his trail camera where a Sparrowhawk was seen drowning a Great Spotted Woodpecker in the garden pond.

Una Morgan 24th March 2019