



Minutes of the Annual

General Meeting on

Tuesday 13th April 2021 at 7.00pm. held via Zoom

Present:

The Committee Steve Piotrowski (SP), Rebecca Bedwell (RB), Stephen Dean (SD), Roger Walsh (RW), Paddy Shaw (PS), Helen Gooderham (HG), Donna Dean (DD), Sue Alderman (SA), Jane Watkins (JW), Richard Walden (RW) and Leslie Cuthbert (LC).

There were also approximately 8 club members.

1. Welcome and Apologies

1. The Chairman welcomed everybody. Apologies were received from John Garbutt (JG) and Keith Watkins (KW).

2. Minutes of the AGM 2019

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matter Arising not elsewhere covered in the Agenda

- 3.1 There were no matters arising.

4. Election of Officers

4.1 President

Chairman

Vice Chairman

Secretary

Membership Secretary

Treasurer

Ringling Liaison Officer

Projects Officer

Event's Organiser

Recorder

Communications and Publicity Officer

Website

Ordinary Members

Steve Piotrowski

Steve Piotrowski

John Garbutt

Rebecca Bedwell

Jane Watkins

Vivienne Broughton

Chris McIntyre

Paddy Shaw

Helen Gooderham

Richard Walden

Donna Dean

Kevin Allenby(*ex-officio*)

Cheryl Deeks

Keith Watkins,

Leslie Cuthbert

Mark Broughton

4.2 SP reported that he was pleased that Vivienne Broughton had agreed to take on the position of treasurer from Stephen Dean.

4.3 The committee was then voted in *en bloc*.

5. Chairman's Report

5.1 As we would all be aware; our activities have been restricted as part of the country's bid to fight the deadly Covid 19 virus. At the beginning, none of us knew just how big the impact was going to be to so many. Fortunately, I don't think WBC has lost any of its members to this awful virus, but we have had our losses in other ways. At the time, we did our best to honour them and to express our sympathies to their families for losing a loved one during this particularly difficult moment in time.

5.2 Moving on, we would never have envisaged that 12 months on our activities would still be restricted, which presented the Club's Committee with the dilemma. How we were going to keep ourselves going and connected with our members. Helen had prepared a most varied programme of events and it was such a shame that most of these were scrapped. As restrictions eased briefly, we were able to run one medium-range outing to Lincolnshire, which was well supported and enjoyed by all attendees. During the autumn, another set of events was planned for 2021 based on the rule of six at the time, but again the first few were cancelled due to yet another lockdown.

5.3 I am so proud to say that the Committee has continued throughout to work hard ensuring that members could still enjoy their birds, albeit from the ongoing confines of their homes. We have sent out regular newsletters, invitations to members to join the Clubbers WhatsApp group, so they could keep up with nature news of what others were seeing in their gardens and a "best bird seen from your home" competition. Many embraced the competitions and a winner, Richard Smith, was declared the winner during the summer. Richard's winning bird was a White-tailed Eagle flying over his house, the first sighting of many of this majestic bird. As I write, it feels like déjà vu as the anniversary was celebrated by another two magnificent eagles that were wide-ranging over Suffolk.

5.4 Our belated AGM in July went very well and I cannot thank Chris McIntyre enough for giving us a baptism on Zoom, so we could hold committee meetings remotely and now our second AGM in this format. Many of us have embraced this new technology, so perhaps this will be something we can do more regularly in the future?

5.5 Finally, the Committee must say goodbye to Stephen Dean who has completed a marathon stint as our Treasurer. His meticulous handling of our accounts has kept the Club in good stead. Our new Treasurer, Viv Broughton, will take over the Treasurer's role after this meeting. We must also say goodbye to Roger Walsh, who has served the Committee well in a number of roles and to Sue Alderman who has been of great assistance particular to our ringing teams working and Dunwich Heath National Trust.

6. Treasurer's Report

6.1 SD gave his treasurer's Statement. The Club's accounts for 2019 and 2020 have been subject to independent examination.

2019 began with a balance of £21,613.43, made up as follows:

- £ 2,886.30 Waveney Bird Club (WBC)
- £ 3,997.97 Waveney Bird Club Ringing Team (WBCRT)
- £11,797.25 Access for All Path (AfAP)
- £ 2,931.91 Suffolk Community Barn Owl Project (SCBOP)

During 2019 receipts were as follows:

£1,850.50 WBC
£2,535.69 WBCRT
£ 773.00 AfAP
£ 220.00 SCBOP

During 2019 expenses were as follows:

£4,438.05 WBC
£3,265.50 WBCRT
£ 369.40 AfAP
£ 0.00 SCBOP

The closing balance of the Club's funds, at the end of 2019, was therefore £18,919.67, made up as follows:

£ 298.75 WBC
£ 3,268.16 WBCRT
£12,200.85 AfAP
£ 3,151.91 SCBOP

During 2020 receipts were as follows:

£2,086.20 WBC
£1,520.52 WBCRT
£3,637.00 AfAP
£ 75.00 SCBOP

During 2020 expenses were as follows:

£ 778.02 WBC
£ 0.00 WBCRT
£1,608.60 AfAP
£ 0.00 SCBOP

The closing balance of the Club's funds, at the end of 2020, was therefore £23,851.77, made up as follows:

£ 1,606.93 WBC
£ 4,788.68 WBCRT
£14,229.25 AfAP
£ 3,226.91 SCBOP

7. Membership Secretary's Report

7.1 JW reported that so far we had 107 fully paid-up members. JW felt that maybe some people did not pay because we were not meeting. Next year if some members had still not paid, they would be deleted from the club. JW said that the membership was healthy with new members joining.

7.2 Many of the members were adding a donation onto their subscriptions for either the Barn owl Project or the Access for All Paths.

8. Project Officer's Report

- 8.1 Paddy Shaw (PS) reported that there were obvious limitations on what could be done in 2020, although we did manage to carry out our annual Swift Count in Bungay – even if the Swift Pint was a little harder to achieve, extending this beyond Bungay this year was too difficult, so Beccles was not included. The routes through the town were revised to try and ensure everyone had an equal chance to count birds, and – in order to reduce the social contact – we limited group sizes, and had them meet on the edges of town, moving in towards the Butter Cross in the centre. Although few WBC members took part, it was encouraging (and perhaps even the purpose) to have so many members of the wider community involved, and particularly representatives of Bungay Town Council, which has taken a ‘green turn’ recently and has been very supportive of a number of initiatives. Unfortunately, the skies were fairly clear and most of the birds were at some altitude – until after we stopped counting, of course, at which point they returned to rooftop level. This kept the numbers down, but there was general enthusiasm for the project in general and the chance to convey some Swift Facts sheets to the participants via email.
- 8.2 Subsequently, I was asked to write a couple of scripts for the volunteers at Carlton Marshes on Swifts by Suffolk Wildlife Trust, which was completed.
- 8.3 On the subject of projects in general, members should be aware of the Operation Turtle Dove project, taking place this year. Turtle Doves are down 95% in the UK since 1995 and in grave danger of extinction here.
- 8.4 Those undertaking the BTO's Breeding Birds Survey who have reported Turtle Dove on their patches in previous years have been contacted by the RSPB requesting separate, specific visits to count these (and a few other target) species.
- 8.5 Operation Turtle Dove also intends to ‘spread the word’ about these beautiful and increasingly rare birds; anyone who remembers the early 1980s will remember ‘trimphones’, and how much they sounded like Turtle Doves. As well as being a vehicle for increasing awareness, Turtle Dove sightings can be recorded at: www.operationturtledove.org

9. Charitable Status Report

- 9.1 In his absence SP reported that John Garbutt had received all the necessary up-to-date financial documents and would now continue to process the application.

10. Events Secretary's Report

- 10.1 Helen Gooderham (HG) read out her report.
- 10.2 Unfortunately, since the last AGM no events have been able to take place except the trip to Lincolnshire. So, the 2020 programme was largely unused. All the speakers kindly agreed to rearrange for 2021.
- 10.3 The Events committee met in September to plan for 2021. We decided not to schedule any indoor meetings until the autumn so just day walks and three away trips to take place in June and September. We have since decided to postpone the June trip until next year due to the uncertainty about travel and accommodation.
- 10.4 So far this year no events have been able to take place but we restart on the 22nd of this month. In order to proceed within Government guidelines, we have planned for one leader for each group of five. For this reason, we have recruited more Leaders and now have a list of ten.
- 10.5 All who wish to attend events have been reminded to book beforehand and our arrangements have been clearly set out on the website. This means we have been able to schedule 2 Leaders to each event with the

possibility of another called in if the walk proves very popular. This will enable each group to remain separate. They can use radio contact and separate routes if necessary.

10.6 My thanks go to all those who volunteered to be Leaders, many for the first time, to all those who provided written descriptions of their events for the website and to Kevin Allenby who drew it all together and found appropriate photographs.

10.7 We really hope that Members will have confidence in our planning for the safety of all and will be very happy to at last resume birding with the Club.

11. Ringing Report

11.1 Chris McIntyre (CM) gave his report.

11.2 All ringing at Minsmere and Dunwich Heath in 2020 was cancelled due to Covid 19 and subsequently the ringing group did not carry out the CES and RAS ringing projects at Minsmere.

11.3 A number of ringers took part in a BTO project under CES protocols on resident passerines including summer migrants and also continued to ring in their own gardens or farmlands.

11.4 In some respects, 2020 has been quite a successful ringing year for the club with over 5876 birds processed and all ringing data for 2020 has been submitted to the BTO.

11.5 The club had started ringing at Dunwich Heath on the 6th April 2021 with two groups; there will be no demos until further notice and social distancing and all Government restrictions will be strictly adhered to as per our revised risk assessment which has been accepted by the National Trust. There is no news at present of the commencement of ringing at RSPB Minsmere.

11.6 CM then gave a visual presentation of some of the birds seen and caught during 2020.

12. Communications and Publicity Report.

12.1 DD reported that there had been a slowdown of the reports she had been putting out on the various social media platforms that the club uses.

12.2 We receive sponsorship from Viking Optical and their profile needed to be included in more of the twitter feeds.

12.3 DD put forward various suggestions to increase our profile on the Social media front and. Some of these DD will do herself and others she may need assistance.

13. Access for All Path.

13.1 SP reported that unfortunately due to Covid -19 all progress on the Access for All Path had ceased for the time being.

13.2 SP reported that the project hoped to be started in the Autumn. All the relevant money and grants were in place. Planning permission should be granted with no problems. He was hoping to attend a meeting at Minsmere on the 14th April to look at the progress of the scheme. If there was a shortfall in money the project would still go ahead and we would do what we could.

13.3 SP reported that he had made two grant applications to Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Galloper Wind Farm Fund and Access and Amenity Fund to provide screening and resting places for visitors using the path to follow the construction work.

14. Recorders Report and Presentation

14.1 Richard Walden gave his report.

14.2 Since taking over the sightings entry for the website I have gradually tried to produce it on a monthly basis. After initial discussions with SP, I have also expanded the recording area to include most of NE Suffolk, hopefully club members and others who read the articles won't think that this has been done at the expense of more local news. Most of the information that I use is gleaned from local WhatsApp groups and websites, and I presume that most members participate in these.

14.3 Highlights of the last year included the Black Browed Albatross seen by a very lucky few on 28th September. Other highlights were a Grey Phalarope, Radde's Warbler, Steppe Grey Shrike but the bird of the month must go to the Rustic Bunting. Seen in Lowestoft on 4th October. November brought in the usual winter wildfowl. In November the Eastern Yellow Legs made a long stay at Dunwich pools. December was a quiet month with the usual Swans and geese but 25 Tundra Bean Geese provided good views at Wenhaston.

14.4 This year there was no Top Spot award but it was decided that a short list of the 6 best birds seen by members would be drawn up and members could vote on the winner.

14.5 DW went on to say that it would be good to have some feedback from his reports.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45 p.m.

Signed

Date

Rebecca Bedwell
Secretary
25 April 2021