

MINUTES OF LINCS BIRD CLUB AGM HELD ON APRIL 9, 2019, AT THE GOLF HOTEL, WOODHALL SPA.

Attendance:

Phil Espin, John Watt, Andrew Chick, Phil Hyde, Mike Harrison, Bill Sterling, John Clarkson, Nick Tribe, Alistair Rinfree, Peter Overton, Ken Richard, Garry Steele, Peter Haywood, Val Moorhouse, Chris Grimshaw, Adrian Manley, Terry Whalin, Julie Harrison, Sally Prescott, Mark Bibby, Alex Lees, Nargila Moura, Anthony Bentley, John Badley, Alan Daws, Jim Wright.

Apologies for absence:

Ian Scott, Stewart Foster, Colin & Sheila Jennings, Roy & Linda Harvey, Andy Sims, Colin Casey, Steve Keightley, Graham Catley.

Minutes of 2018 AGM (already posted on website)

These were signed as a true record by the club chairman, Phil Espin.

Matters arising from the minutes

There were none.

Hon Chairman's Address

I should like to welcome everyone here tonight and thank all members attending this 39th AGM of LBC.

The chief business of the bird club is the production of the annual Lincolnshire Bird Report and I'm delighted the 2017 report has just been printed and published and is available tonight. As usual producing the report has been a

massive undertaking added to which our process has been totally revamped this year and you will see the report has a slightly different flavour.

When Andrew Henderson retired last year we decided to radically alter the way the report records are processed. We are greatly indebted to Colin Casey who has tenaciously developed IT processes to turn a mass of records from disparate sources into the information our team of report writers turn into the report. This has reduced the manual burden for Colin and Sheila Jennings who with a wider team collect records directly from members. Phil Hyde has shouldered the burden of overseeing the writing of the report entries and papers and written much himself as well as updating the county bird list information on the website. I'd like to thank everyone involved and appeal for more help from you the members. We always need new bird entry writers but we also need people with IT skills who can assist with the data management process we now have in place. If you can help speak to me, Phil Hyde, Andrew Chick or Colin Casey.

Another person who has been key to delivering the report over the last 10 years has been John Clarkson. John is retiring from his role as County Recorder North tonight. He has been doing it for 8 years and deserves a rest. He will be missed for the good humoured and professional way he deals with all those who put forward unusual bird sightings. Thank you John. Please stand up and take a bow.

LBC split the county recorder role in 2010 between North and South. No replacement for John is immediately in sight so I am pleased to announce that provisionally Phil Hyde has agreed to become Recorder for the whole county from tonight. I should say that the Recorder role is a mainstay of the club and we are looking for a replacement for John. If anyone is interested please speak to Phil Hyde or me.

Ian MacAlpine Leny has been the LNU appointed member on our committee for some years and has sadly retired from this role following a family tragedy and I'd like to thank him for his service. We welcome Nick Tribe who has taken

over Ian's role. LBC was formed out of the LNU 40 years ago this year and we have a good relationship with them. We hold a joint meeting annually in January and the event this year was the most successful yet. Professor Ian Newton gave a brilliant lecture on bird migration. Ian lives in Lincolnshire and the committee are considering inviting him to become the honorary President of the Club, a position that has been vacant for some years.

At the end of January we had our biannual conference with BTO at Whisby. I'd like to thank all the speakers, attendees and especially Chris Gunn the organiser for making it a thoroughly enjoyable day.

We need new blood coming through onto the committee and ideas that can help make our work more relevant to the birding community in Lincolnshire.

Following the website revamp in December 2017 we are finding that the new system has been good for generating new members but website and forum use seem to be declining. What can we do to improve it or are the social media changes, changing the way people do their online birding? If you have any ideas please put them forward. We also need someone who understand Joomla web software, or who is prepared to learn it to help with website management.

Our newsletters seem to have been one of the most popular innovations we have made, and articles for it are always welcome.

Another potential change the committee is exploring is the possibility of changing the membership basis to a low fixed fee which would not include the bird report. Members would buy the report online at a preferential rate direct from a third party sales service. The benefit would be possibly more and younger members and less work in getting reports out. No decisions have been made and we are exploring the implications. If you have any thoughts please share them.

Finally I should like to thank the committee for all their service over the last year and I'm pleased to say

all officers are happy to continue in post so no elections are required this evening. On a personal note I'd like to add that I have now been Chairman for 5 years. I enjoy doing it but I'm happy to stand aside if someone else would like a go. As I said earlier, new blood and new ideas are what keeps the club going and as was explained to me by Andrew Chick when I took over, all you need to do is chair 4 meetings a year.

Matters arising from the presentation

Robert Oates expressed concern at the age profile of the club membership and urged initiatives to recruit "desperately-needed" younger members. He suggested free membership for under-21s - a policy adopted by other clubs to positive effect. The chairman acknowledged this to be a concern that would receive further attention at forthcoming committee meetings. The challenge would be to adjust the electronic subscription set-up process to accommodate a free membership facility for young people. Andrew Chick expressed support. Other members, including Sally Prescott, suggested ideas for enhancing membership subscriptions/renewals. Phil Hyde favoured low-cost membership with a free copy of the annual report in PDF format - with the option of paying extra for those still seeking a printed copy.

John Badley suggested setting up a What's App group for LBC members to share information. He noted that one for RSPB Frampton had 45 members. Anthony Bentley cautioned that information should be confined to rare/notable sightings. The chairman agreed that there would need to be appropriate criteria. Andrew Chick noted that the maximum numbers allowed for a What's App group was 256. He agreed to investigate further.

Peter Overton said he believed Prof Ian Newton would be an excellent choice as club president.

The chairman confirmed that all matters raised would be taken forward at future committee meetings.

Presentation of accounts

Treasurer John Watt presented the receipts/payments accounts for the year ending December 31, 2018. In his report, he provided further information about the membership profile, how members paid their subscriptions, income from data sales and costs of producing the annual report. He noted that IT costs (£894.50) included £504 for the purchase of a laptop computer for bird records storage and payments for purchase of software. Under the heading, Miscellaneous, there were two payments, totalling £402, to British Birds magazine for purchase of historic rarity records from Lincolnshire. He concluded by stating that the club was in a "strong" financial position.

Questions about the accounts

Peter Overton queried a longstanding receipt of grant monies from Lincolnshire County Council. The Treasurer noted that there was still an intention for this money to be spent on its original purpose. The chairman said it was hoped that the monies would be allocated for production of the long awaited county bird atlas which was currently be prepared for publication.

Reports (if any) from other committee members

Andrew Chick (IT officer) said the new website was complicated to administer and he would welcome assistance from anyone with suitable IT support skills.

Phil Hyde said he would welcome someone to share with him the burden of compiling bird records now that John Clarkson has stepped down.

Any other motions previously notified to the secretary

None

Any other business

None

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 9.40pm.