

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club
Minutes of Annual General Meeting 13th October 2016 (UNAPPROVED)
Northern Rugby Club Clubhouse, Gosforth

1. 42 members were present.
 - The meeting began at 1910. The welcome was carried out by Martin Davison. He thanked all club members for their support over the last year, and for the large attendance tonight. He explained how proud the committee was of the Atlas publication, and of the huge effort and skill displayed by so many people in its production. He urged anyone not yet having bought one to do so. He thanked the committee on the behalf of members for their work over the year. Members were reminded to sign in.
 - Apologies for absence were read from Jo Bentley, Steve Lowe and Steve Barratt.
2. Minutes of last meeting (08 Oct 2015) accepted.
3. Treasurers Report
 - Spreadsheet pages were displayed showing the general account and Atlas expenditure/income. The importance of the HLF grant in the publication of the Atlas was commented on.
 - The intention to “ring fence” a sum from the proceeds of the Atlas was outlined. The sum of £10,000 was stated as an approximate figure, but in any case one which would enable a substantial project, in accordance with the clubs aims, to be funded. The chairman is looking to the membership for possible ideas, and would like to hear from members with structured proposals, preferably with costings, about something that they are passionate about and which will be of lasting benefit. There was general agreement, and this proposal is to be communicated to all members via the bulletin.
 - The accounts displayed were all unaudited.
4. Secretary’s Report.

The trustees of the charity forming the club committee during 2016 were Martin Davison (Chair), Jo Bentley (Treasurer), Tim Dean (Recorder), Steve Lowe (HLF Rep.), Trevor Blake (Sales), Steve Anderson (Field Trips), Steve Barratt (Bulletin Editor) and myself (Secretary). The committee functioned with a member short for the year and Martin Davison took on the work of planning and booking speakers for the Indoor Meetings.

After the last AGM in October, Stuart Sexton took us on a tour of his notebooks and sketches he has made over the last 30 years, involving a discussion of notebook versus digital media for recording observations. The identification pitfalls and crucial field marks of juvenile white headed gulls in the North East, was one of the issues dealt with by Andrew Kinghorn in November, including a look at gulls yet to be recorded in the North East. A range of highly appealing birds seen in sometimes highly unappealing surroundings was a feature of a talk by Colin Bradshaw in December, when his account of a trip to China successfully targeting the Spoonbilled Sandpiper also tested his groups digestive capabilities to the extreme. If anyone here is still looking forward to “Birding in Retirement” then Tom Cadwallender in January gave guidance on how to deal with attacks by ants and Corys Shearwater (but not at the same time), steamy optics and immigration problems in communist countries. In February the interest was aural rather than visual when Geoff Sample transported us to many superb birding locations with his sound recordings. Our planned speaker for March cancelled at short notice and we are grateful to Martin Kitching for giving us a much appreciated talk on “Storm Petrels, White Beaked Dolphins and the NE Cetaceans Project”. Sharing the bill and equally appreciated was Ian Fisher, who informed us about the demise and fragile recovery of the Cahow – or Bermuda Petrel, and explained the work of David Wingate in the Cahow Recovery Programme. In April a full tour of the habitat types and spectacular birds in West Papua was a treat for us all, courtesy of Brian and Margaret Sykes.

A varied programme of Field Trips coordinated by Steve Anderson began with an October visit to Lindisfarne led by Trevor Blake which had sightings of Barred and Yellow Browed Warblers, and a group made the journey to Musselburgh in November and had both good visibility and sightings of sea duck and roosting waders. This year trips

to the Kielder area, Langholm and Geltsdale have been well attended. Last month a trip to the AIn Estuary had good conditions and sightings of typical birds of the area.

A major part of committee business since the last AGM has been taken up with the production, storage, distribution and sales of the Northumbrian Bird Atlas. Thanks have already been made elsewhere to the Atlas Committee and all others involved, but Steve Barratt displayed much initiative and energy and took on coordination of the distribution and promotion of the Atlas. Over 1200 copies were sold during the year, 34 copies donated to local libraries, 6 copies to the British Library and other National Libraries, and 77 to local schools.

Progress with the production of the current BIN is always an agenda item and the work of a team of authors and the editorship of Mike Richardson ensured Birds in Northumbria 2014 was published to a very high standard. Mike resigned as editor after the 2014 edition and the committee thanks Mike for his excellent input into the production of the report. We also thank Andy Mould for his willingness in taking over the role of editor for the next report. The monthly bulletin continued to be produced regularly by a dedicated team of writers under the guidance of Steve Barratt, and Steve also recruited new writers to the cause, and has successfully developed a "pool" of reserve writers. An essential part of both publications is the role of Data Manager, our warm thanks to Alan Tilmouth for his role in managing the monthly input of records in the past, and we are grateful to Tom Brewis for volunteering to take over this role.

The committee is always supported by the work of other club members, none more so than John Day, who over a period of 7 years has sorted and classified the records of the Club's first 50 years of existence. This includes Mastercards for the earlier Atlas publications, papers from Records Committee meetings and a collection of occasional publications and breeding survey results. This was done to such a standard that the Great North Museum (Hancock) has taken on custody and care of the collection, and the Club is very appreciative of the care and dedication shown by John on this task.

Several queries for survey data for use in development planning resulted in administration charges contributing to club income, thanks being due to Dick Myatt, the lynchpin of this process, who is managing the database for us.

The Development Fund has assisted with habitat management costs at St Mary's Wetland, additional funding for Swift nest boxes in the Morpeth area and a camera box was purchased for a primary school.

A lock change at SSWT went ahead and a few more members went through the induction process to gain access to Howden Wetland, courtesy of Northumbrian Water.

5. Election of Officers

- Only 8 nominations had been received by the Secretary, no election was required.
- The committee is again one member short, the chairman appealed for volunteers.
- The committee consists of M Davison, J Bentley, T Dean, S Anderson, T Blake, S Lowe, S Barratt, and A Brunt.

6. AOB

- Question from the floor "Would any new committee member be expected to take on the role of Indoor Meetings Secretary"? Answer from chair "No - roles can be adjusted and shared and it is not necessary to take over any defined role, a new committee member can participate in meetings and take on specific tasks as he or she sees fit".

Meeting closed at 1935
Date of next AGM, October 12th 2017 at 1900
Northern Rugby Club, Gosforth (tbc)

