Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Minutes of Annual General Meeting 12th October 2017

Northern Rugby Club Clubhouse, Gosforth

1. 30 members were present.

* The meeting began at 1910. The welcome to members old and new was carried out by Martin Davison. He thanked all club members for their support over the last year, and for the attendance tonight. Members were reminded to sign in.
* There were no apologies for absence.

1. Minutes of last meeting (13 Oct 2016) accepted.

1. Secretary’s Report.

The trustees of the charity forming the club committee during 2017 were Martin Davison (Chair), Jo Bentley (Treasurer), Tim Dean (Recorder), Trevor Blake (Sales), Steve Anderson (Field Trips), Steve Barratt (Bulletin Editor) and myself (Secretary). We thank Steve Lowe who also served on the committee but resigned during the spring, and the committee functioned with two members short for the rest of the year. Martin Davison continued with the work of planning and booking speakers for the Indoor Meetings.

After the 2016 AGM Martin Davison showed us an unfamiliar aspect of his local patch, and gave us information on sightings of seabirds around Kielder, the Irthing Valley and Catcleugh. In November Mark Hollings presented a summary from the SE Scotland Bird Atlas. This contains masses of information and some startling findings, and these were explained with very professional slides and an authoritative commentary. The motives for and difficulties encountered during the re-establishment of the Bird Observatory on Skokholm was the engaging subject of a talk by Giselle Eagle and Richard Brown in December. In January Richard Baines illustrated the conservation measures being taken at Flamborough Headland and the positive impact they are having on Red-Listed farmland birds, showing that the famous site is not just a good spot for migrants. The following month a tour of a relatively compact area of Arizona but which included big variations of altitude, provided Tim Dean with material for an illustrated talk showing us species from a huge range of bird families, with supporting photographs from Janet Dean. In March a single species, the Dotterel, was the subject of John Callion who gave us a very engaging and informative talk on this declining species. Conservation issues facing birds and wildlife in the Antarctic Peninsula and South Atlantic Islands was the subject of Tim Daley’s presentation in April, with supporting photographs from David Horsley showing us some of the iconic species and scenes we all associate with this region. After the summer break the beaches and brightly coloured birds of Australia was Anthony Tooley’s subject, with valuable advice on where to make a start with the avifauna of New South Wales and Queensland.

Steve Anderson has continued to coordinate our outdoor programme, and a spring trip to Langholm had both good weather conditions and sightings of Hen Harriers and other raptors. Trips to Geltsdale and Kielder were not so well attended, but an outing to hear and see Nightjar in June was up to the maximum and possibly had a waiting list, and was deemed a great success.

Steve Barratt has been indefatigable in getting the bulletin out on the 4th or 5th of each month, and he and his team of dedicated writers and reserves deserve credit for that. Whilst on the subject of bulletins, we must thank Roger Norman for donating an almost full set of past bulletins which have filled a few gaps in our collection.

Andy Mould has not been content with managing the production of BiN to such a high standard, but produced a thorough review of its production, with costings of future options for its development, and was kind enough to attend a committee meeting and discuss this with us and agree a way forward.

We continue to receive requests for data from our past surveys, many thanks again to Dick Myatt for managing the storage and extraction of the tetrad data. A charge is not always made for this, for instance to Northumberland Wildlife Trust for local site data. Dick has decided to relinquish this role and he is migrating southward, so I think it may now be one of my jobs. Regular data collection is the responsibility of Tom Brewis, and I am sure all are impressed by his polite efficiency in collating and distributing records each month.

The committee thought we were going to have to go into the building sub-contracting business on hearing of a leak in the roof of SSWT, but were very relieved and grateful when Tim and Ann Cleeves got the job done at their own trouble and expense. Our thanks go to them.

The Atlas takes up much less of our time in committee now, but we have decided not to supply retail outlets with further copies, the small remaining stock is available here, or from Trevor Blake by post.

Tim Dean is in correspondence with BBRC who are not intending to keep paper records of rarity reports from before 2007, we are looking to “reclaim” those of local significance.

The Development Fund has made grants to Flexigraze, the forthcoming North East Raptor Forum conference, and to Dan Turner for an educational display project.

1. Treasurers Report
   * Spreadsheet pages were displayed showing the general account expenditure/income. The importance of the HLF grant in the publication of the Atlas was commented on. The balance sheet showed a positive balance of £11,906.60.
   * Sources of income and some costs were explained - the full rate relief being received for our use of SSWT was highlighted as a benefit of our charitable status.
   * The intention to “ring fence” a sum from the proceeds of the Atlas from last year is continuing. The treasurer reminded the membership we are looking 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. The Committee has been seeking a partner in this.
   * The development Fund is split between an interest and bond account attracting £308 interest, balance now at £37,404.13.
   * Comment from Tim Dean that he regretted the committee decision not to re-print the Atlas, but recognises the financial justification for the decision.
2. Election of Officers

* No nominations had been received by the Secretary, no election was required.
* Existing committee members have expressed their willingness to continue for the next year.
* The committee is now two membersng short, the chairman appealed for volunteers.
* The committee consists of M Davison, J Bentley, T Dean, S Anderson, T Blake, S Barratt, and A Brunt.

1. Motion to amend the Constitution of the Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club

Members will be aware that a change to the Constitution was agreed at the AGM in 2013. It is a requirement of Clause 8 of the constitution that

*“No alteration to Clause 2, Clause 9 or this Clause shall take effect until the approval in writing of the Charity Commissioners or other authority having charitable jurisdiction shall have been obtained; and no alteration shall be made which would have the effect of causing the Association to cease to be a charity in law.”*

Despite long prior negotiations with the Charities Commission the changes to the Charitable Objects (Clause 2 in the 1995 version) was not accepted, even though based on an exemplar from the CC website. Negotiations have continued with some long delays, and the CC have now approved by email the following change to the Charitable Objects and Furtherance Powers, and the following motion is proposed by Martin Davison and seconded by Andrew Brunt to change the Constitution of the Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club at the Annual General Meeting of 12th October 2017 at 1900, Northern Football Club, Mc Cracken Park, Great North Road, Gosforth NE3 2DT.

*AIM 1*

*To advance the education of the general public in the knowledge and understanding of ornithology to promote research in ornithology and in any particular aspects thereof as may from to time be approved by the committee and publish the useful results of such research.*

*AIM 2*

*To promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment, in order to promote the welfare and diversity of the local bird population.*

*In furtherance of these aims but no further or otherwise the club shall have the following powers:*

*1) To provide for the production of a regular bulletin and an Annual Report and other publications as approved by the Committee.*

*2) To organise field outings, lectures and indoor meetings.*

*3) To co-operate and assist in the work of other individuals and organisations with*

*similar objects and pursuing charitable activities concerned with ornithology in*

*North East England.*

There were no objections to this proposal, and the motion was approved unanimously.

1. AOB

* There was no other business.

Meeting closed at 1935

Date of next AGM, October 11th 2018 at 1900

Northern Rugby Club, Gosforth (tbc)