Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Minutes of Annual General Meeting 11th October 2018

Northern Rugby Club Clubhouse, Gosforth

1. 32 members were present.

* The meeting began at 1915. 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. Special thanks were made to the many Club Members not on the Committee who ensure the smooth running of the Club and the promotion of it’s Charitable Aims. Members were reminded to sign in.
* There were apologies for absence from Jo Bentley.

1. Minutes of last meeting (12 Oct 2017) accepted.

1. Secretary’s Report.

The trustees of the charity forming the club committee during 2018 were Martin Davison (Chair), Jo Bentley (Treasurer), Tim Dean (Recorder), Trevor Blake (Sales), Steve Anderson (Outdoor Meetings), Steve Barrett (Bulletin Editor) and Andrew Brunt (Secretary). The committee functioned with two members short for the year. Martin Davison continued with the work of planning and booking speakers for the Indoor Meetings.

After the 2017 AGM Phil Hanmer showed us some spectacular ringing methods used for raptor studies in South Africa, with roadside traps and treetop height mist nets in action. Mark Eaton of the RSPB in November explained the range of monitoring schemes being used in the UK and what they tell us about the state of the UK’s Birds. A lively and wide ranging account of the importance of The Isle of May in seabird monitoring, delivered by David Steel, with a gallery of photos of migrants, brought 2017 to a close. In January Tom Cadwallender gave us his outlook on “Birding in the Americas”, which was an entertaining and fast moving presentation, as it would have to be when covering 3000 miles of continent. James Pierce-Higgins, Director of Science at the BTO tried to answer the question “Where have all our Curlew gone” at our February meeting. A sad picture of decline throughout Europe involved several smoking guns, and James gave us the background to the data and evidence pointing to them. A study of the Spanish Steppes, their landscape types and habitats, was Dave Horsley’s subject in March, and we enjoyed seeing and hearing about the specialist birds of the area. “Birds of Myth and Fact” was the title of Graham Bell’s presentation in April, when he showed us some amusing historical records of imaginary birds. And only last month, it was a treat for all to see photographs of our winter visitors in their spectacular breeding plumage, thanks to Colin Bradshaw and “Northern Flights – Travels in Sub-Arctic Europe”. The committee thanks Martin Davison for his time and effort contacting people and arranging such a wide variety of speakers.

Steve Anderson has continued to coordinate our outdoor programme. Nine club members visited Holy Island in late October last year. Always a very weather dependent venue, North Westerly gales made conditions difficult. A visit to Langholm was made in April, but was also weather affected. Further spring trips took place to Breamish, but a planned trip to seek Nightjars was cancelled.

Steve Barrett has been very successful in getting the bulletin out early each month, and he and his team of dedicated regular and reserve writers deserve credit for that. Steve has also organised the trial digitizing of a batch of paper bulletins, and we await results.

Thanks are due to Andy Mould and his team for managing the production of BiN to a high standard, and the change in format in 2016 was very well received.

We continue to receive requests for data from our past surveys. An administration charge is made for this when appropriate. Requests for survey data are currently managed by the Secretary. Regular monthly records collection during 2018 was the responsibility of Tom Brewis, and he has continued to be highly efficient in collecting and distributing records each month, and has made proposals for simplifying the processing of the records.

After some earlier discussion by email and in person, the committee received notice in July of Paul Buskin’s intention to step down as Webmaster for the club website. Paul is very largely responsible for its present appearance and function, having taken it on in 2013, and it continues to be a huge asset to members and to the furtherance of our aims. The long term work and expertise of Paul Buskin in developing the Club site and the Interactive Site Guide covering our area is deeply appreciated. For the present the Secretary is responsible for updating and adding items to the pages. Our Facebook page is under control of the Secretary, along with Jo Bentley and Alan Tilmouth, and Alan has volunteered to operate the Twitter account, for which we thank him.

Protracted correspondence with the Charities Commission was concluded at the AGM in 2017 when the exact form of words approved by the Commission, were accepted as our Charitable Aims by a majority vote. These have now been updated on the Charities Commission website as well as on our own.

The Club now has a Data Protection Policy in place which meets the requirements of the GDPR legislation, thanks to Jo for its development and implementation.

Seaton Sluice Watchtower has been confirmed by North Tyneside Council as being eligible for rate free status.

The Development Fund has so far this year made grants to Phil Hanmer for geologgers on breeding Goldeneye, and to Graham Sorrie for his continuing Swift Conservation project in Morpeth.

1. Treasurers Report
   * Spreadsheet pages were displayed showing the general account expenditure/income, unaudited, and are attached to these minutes.
   * Income was £10863.21, Expenditure £10,595
   * The reduced importance of the Atlas income and the continuing need for Gift Aid income was commented on.
   * The Accumulated Fund (Atlas and Development Fund) stands at £37404.13. The Chair reminded members that the Committee has been seeking suitable projects to support with this fund, and appealed for ideas from the membership.
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 continues to be two members 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. AOB

* There was no other business.

Meeting closed at 1935

Date of next AGM, October 10th 2019 at 1900

Northern Rugby Club, Gosforth (tbc)