Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Minutes of Annual General Meeting 10th October 2019

Northern Rugby Club Clubhouse, Gosforth

1. 45 members were present.

* The meeting began at 1915. The welcome to members old and new was carried out by Martin Davison. He reminded members to sign in. He thanked all club members for their support over the last year, and for the attendance tonight. Thanks were made to the many Club Members not on the Committee who ensure the smooth running of the Club and the promotion of our Charitable Aims. Especial thanks also to who work tirelessly on the production of the Bulletin and our Annual Report.
* There were apologies for absence from Alan MacFarlane.

1. Minutes of last meeting (11 Oct 2018) 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). Graham Sorrie joined the committee in December 2018 and has taken on management of the Clubs Twitter account. The committee functioned with one member short for the year. Martin Davison continued with the work of planning and booking speakers for the Indoor Meetings.

After the AGM in October 2018 Graham Sorrie gave us an account of his strategy and progress in promoting the fortunes of Swifts in Morpeth. His success in getting the cooperation of householders and builders for placing nest boxes, together with those placed on his own property have been of great benefit to the breeding success of this species in that area. The South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project is attempting to reverse the failure of Golden Eagles to spread into what seems suitable habitat in Southern Scotland. In November Rick Taylor, Community Outreach Officer for the Project, explained the aims and progress of the project so far. In December another subject of intense local interest was “Terns and other Seabirds” when Dr Chris Redfern gave a fascinating talk on the movement of terns from the Farne Islands.  He described how they cross the country and fly down the Irish sea on their way to Antarctica, and while there cover huge areas whilst fishing. In January Tom Cadwallender gave us a tour of a range of habitats and associated birdlife on the Island of Sri Lanka. His talk entitled “Sri Lanka – my cup of tea” was delivered in a lively and informative style and showed us lots of the Islands endemic species. Professor Martin Collinson in February brought us right up to date with the role of DNA testing in the study of speciation, and explained how little material is now needed to extract a DNA sequence compared to the early research done at Tynemouth. In March, “Bowra – to the edge of the desert and back again” was Ian Fishers talk. This former sheep and cattle station is the site for an annual ringing expedition and Ian showed us some super pictures of the birds both at the station and on a coastal wetland site. In April the speaker was Stuart Brooker on the subject of Why Birds Sing. Air density above the woods of the study site plays a part in reflecting birdsong, which is now different to 30 years ago – Stuarts study is exploring the geographical differences in this phenomenon. For a relatively small site, the NWT nature reserve at Fontburn has a wide variety of birdlife and in September Chris Wright described to us the progress of the regular ringing programme in existence there since 2013, the species using the site for breeding and on passage, and the contribution constant effort ringing makes in monitoring our bird populations.

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. Earlier this year nine club members visited Langholm, conditions were good and sightings of raptors and other upland species made the visit very rewarding. A trip to Geltsdale had the support of the Reserve Warden, but not the elements. A move to nearby woodland was a successful strategy and everyone enjoyed some good birding. In August a trip to Alnmouth and Boulmer was led by Tim Dean and many species characteristic to the area were seen by the five participants, some from out of county. The Committee thanks to all the leaders, as well as Steve for coordinating the programme.

Our thanks also go to Steve Barrett and his team of writers for their regular commitment in getting the Bulletin out every month. Much appreciated also are the photographic contributions which enhance the appearance and interest value. Steve has also managed the digitizing of a batch of paper bulletins covering 1981 to the present. These are now in pdf format and fully searchable, and so their research value is considerably enhanced. The aim is to also digitise 1958 – 1981 bulletins.

The Tyne Kittiwake Partnership has an important role in promoting the welfare of our unique Kittiwake colony. Steve Barrett has attended meetings of the Partnership on our behalf, and the Club is now formally involved as a partner.

Andy Mould and his team have continued to develop the quality of production of our Annual Report in its relatively new format. Andy has reported to and met with the committee to present alternatives and discuss its future. Some earlier Annual Reports are now available as down loads from the website.

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 until recently was the responsibility of Tom Brewis, unfortunately he has had to relinquish this role. We much appreciated his reliable and positive management of the process and he has our sincere thanks. A gift will be presented as a token of our respect for his effort. Tom also has had time to train Clive Hampton to take over the role and to provide ongoing support when needed, and we thank Clive for his timely involvement.

1. Treasurers Report
   * Spreadsheet pages were displayed showing the general account expenditure/income, unaudited, and are attached to these minutes.
   * The deficit was explained as being due to some one-off expenses – a fee for a new map for BIN, a three yearly payment for the website hosting fee, a batch of ISBN numbers for the next 10 publications, and a batch of record cards.
   * The Accumulated Fund (Atlas and Development Fund) stands at £38006.20. It has accrued £337.34 interest since the last AGM. The Chair reminded members that the Committee has been seeking suitable projects to support with this fund, and appealed again for ideas from the membership.
   * Members paying by Standing Order were asked to check their email addresses are still accurate, ie if their bulletins are not received, and to contact the Treasurer promptly in the event of any delay or inaccuracies.
   * Question from the floor “Do we still pay for the storage of old Record Cards”. The item £1354.24 includes about £600 for the purchase of new record cards and old BBRC records relating to our area. Approximately £600 p.a. is spent storing record cards. Less expensive options are being investigated, as is the digitization of records.
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 one member short, the chairman appealed for volunteers.
* The committee consists of M Davison, J Bentley, T Dean, S Anderson, T Blake, S Barratt, G Sorrie and A Brunt.

1. AOB

* The Chairman thanked Andrew Brunt for taking on the management of the Website at short notice.
* The Chairman thanked Trevor Blake for his management of the sale of club publications and for the refreshments at the Indoor Meetings.

Meeting closed at 1950

Date of next AGM, October 8th 2020 at 1900

Northern Rugby Club, Gosforth (tbc)