

## CHICHESTER NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

### MINUTES OF THE 56<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2018 AT THE PALLANT SUITE, CHICHESTER FREEMASONS HALL, SOUTH PALLANT, CHICHESTER

**Present:** Christian Hance (Chair), David Hart (Treasurer), Lesley Mann ( Secretary), John Kelsall (Newsletter/Website), Gill Hance (Outdoor Meetings), Helen Dignum (Indoor Meetings), Daphne Flach (Publicity), Heather Hart (Membership Secretary)

#### **1 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.15pm, welcoming 64 members and their guests. No apologies had been received.

#### **2 Minutes of AGM held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017**

The Minutes of the 2017 AGM were displayed on screen and approved with no amendments. Proposed by Maria Wildman and second by Ken Smith.

#### **3 Presentation of Chairman's Report**

The Chairman stated that 2018 had been a tremendous year for the Society and membership had grown. There had been 13 varied field outings both locally and further afield at Cissbury and Titchfield Haven, where we saw a variety of birds, a baby fox and a deer, all at close quarters. The nightjar walk was also very different and magical as we heard the bird sounds out of the dark. Focus subjects had included botany, fungi, moths, birds and general wildlife. Many thanks must go to our leaders, whose guidance and knowledge is much appreciated.

Our evening meetings continue to offer a diverse and interesting selection of talks. Helen Dignum has stepped into this role and has organised some excellent varied and stimulating talks this winter season.

Five pub meetings have been enjoyed by many. Chris Hardy does an excellent job organising these, tapping into the expert knowledge of our members. She is constantly surprised and pleased to find so many members prepared to talk. These have proved so popular that we have increased the maximum attendance.

Our legacy projects have gone from strength to strength and over the year we have planted a number of standard trees as part of the National Trust Northwood project; we have worked with three primary schools to provide a natural history focus for their children. We have purchased an automated bat recorder, about which we will hear more later. We have made a donation to the Friends of Pagham Harbour towards the new activity centre. A large number of swift boxes have been put up in the area and we

are about to talk to the District Council regarding where best to plant the trees we are buying.

The common thread through all of these activities has been diversity and involvement of our members. The Committee has been keen to introduce new activities in all our spheres of activity, ensuring that we cover a wide range of our local natural history. We would not be able to do all these things without the help of a wide range of people carrying out many different activities, and our thanks go to all. Not least Sarah Hall and Dee Bowerman who have stood down from the Committee this year.

It's great that as a society we have a committee that consists of members who have served for a long time, combined with new faces who bring in new perspectives and ideas. It is very important to ensure that the committee stays in touch with the membership. I am therefore very pleased to formally welcome to the Committee Helen Dignum as Indoor Meetings Organiser and Heather Hart as Membership Secretary.

The Society's trustees are the three officers of the Society – the Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. We serve for three years which means that in 2019 we will all be coming up for re-election and in line with the Society's rules we are allowed to serve one more term if re-elected. Without wishing to assume too much, David and I will be prepared to stand again for a 3 year term. Lesley, having done sterling work will be standing down, so during the next year we will be looking for someone to replace her from November 2019. Please let us know if you are interested in the role of secretary or serving on the committee in any capacity.

In the shorter term the Society needs to fill the roles of Sightings Co-ordinator and Deputy Newsletter Editor. Neither of these take much time, but both are critical for the smooth running of the Society. Please talk to me or any of the Committee if you are interested in taking on one of these roles.

The underspend of this year's legacy projects and some additional legacy funds have enabled the Society to identify new projects for the coming year. Reviewing suggestions from the members, the Committee has selected the following to be funded during the coming year:

- a writing competition for schoolchildren
- the purchase of a camera trap to record nocturnal visitors to gardens/reserves
- the purchase of a laser distance finder to enable accurate tree height measurement, as part of the West Dean Woods study
- a contribution towards the creation of a pond as part of the National Trust Northwood Project
- the purchase of an Android Bat Detector.

As with this year's projects, we are keen for members to be engaged, so please contact the Committee if you wish to participate. Indeed, the use of the camera trap and the bat detector both need co-ordinators, so it would be great if some people would take on these roles.

Finally, thanks again for all the efforts put into making the Society so successful.

#### **4 Presentation of 2017/18 Accounts and the Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer started by saying a few words on membership topics.

Firstly he mentioned that there are now 152 members (assuming all renew for the coming year). Under the new data protection legislation, he specifically asked all members who pay by Direct Debit to kindly register their approval for the society to retain their details.

Gift Aid was also mentioned asking those members who do not already gift aid their subscriptions to consider doing so as 25% of the subscription can be claimed.

The Treasurer started by explaining that due to the Legacy Project, he had opened a second Nat West Bank A/C so that the society's ordinary activities accounts and Project Accounts could be run separately.

Under Treasurer's Report he drew the members attention to the ordinary activities which showed an income under Receipts was down marginally by just a few pounds. On the Payments side, costs had gone up slightly due to the purchase of a second hand computer but also pointed out how hard the committee had worked to keep other costs down. Room hire and Insurance had stayed the same. The other main expense was the purchase of totally compostable cups for tea and coffees at the cost of £75.

Overall we had a net surplus of £65.05 for the year 2017/18.

On the Project Account it was shown that we had received a further £5420.14 from the Heather Solomon Legacy.

The committee having set up a number of projects had agreed the spending of £6300.49 which left a negative balance of - £880.35.

Finally it was pointed out that the balance in the No. 1 Account was 2,998.09

And in the Project Account 10,119.65

Cash & Bank Balances at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018 13,178.24

Finally sincere thanks were expressed to Richard Fisk for his pearls of wisdom throughout the year and also for agreeing to be the Independent Examiner and also to John Kelsall for his IT expertise.

Acceptance of the Accounts was proposed by John Arnott and seconded by Rosemary Marshall.

#### **5 Change to Rule 7(b)**

After discussion it was agreed to amend Rule 7(b) to read as follows:

"An Ordinary Committee Member shall serve three consecutive years with an option at the end of this time to be elected to serve further terms."

Proposed by Linda Smith and seconded by David Hart

**6      Election of Committee Members**

Carmen Janes proposed Gill Hance be re-elected as Outdoor Meetings Organiser and was seconded by Helen Dignum.

Jim Bagley proposed Heather Hart be elected as Membership Secretary and was seconded by Sylvia Gill.

**7      Re-election of President**

Rosemary Marshall stated that she believed the Society was in good hands, before being proposed for re-election by Elizabeth Andres and seconded by Linda Smith.

**8      Election of Independent Accounts Examiner**

The election of Richard Fisk as Independent Accounts Examiner was proposed by Rodney Wildman and seconded by Rosemary Marshall.

**9      Open Forum**

After discussing whether we should continue to use disposable cups at the evening meetings, it was agreed to consider the options once the current supply of compostable cups had been used up.

Topics suggested for future indoor meetings/outdoor events were reptile and amphibians, mosses and liverworts and land management.

**10     AOB**

There was no other business.