

CHICHESTER NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE 58TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 4TH NOVEMBER 2020 VIA ZOOM

Present: Christian Hance (Chair), David Hart (Treasurer), Sarah Hall (Secretary), Helen Dignum (Indoor Meetings), Heather Hart (Membership Secretary), Gill Hance (Outdoor Meetings), John Kelsall (Newsletter and Website), Terry Timblich (Publicity)>

There were 20 members who attended.

Apologies for absence.

Mr Jim Bagley and Dr Ray McGlone apologised for being unable to attend.

Minutes of the AGM held on 6th November 2019.

All present approved of the minutes of the meeting held last year.

The Chairman's annual report.

Due to the global pandemic, 2020 has been a unique year for the world and therefore inevitably for CNHS. Consequently, any report on our Society's achievements has to be in this context and we have to fervently hope that the world, and therefore our Society, is able to return to some form of "normal" as soon as possible. Having said that, I am very proud of what Chi Nats has achieved in 2020.

Pre lockdown, what a long time ago that seems! We were enjoying our winter lecture series and gearing up to another full season of field outings and surveys. Having enjoyed our members' evening in 2019, at the start of 2020 we were lucky enough to hear from Jill Sutcliffe about her travels to Nepal and also from Tim Pearce who gave a stimulating talk about the Millennium seed bank. Our field outings included trips to Chichester Lakes, Chidham, and my personal favourite, Burton Mill Ponds. Alongside these events, our popular pub lunch meetings continued with talks on topics as varied as Belize & Woodpeckers. It's also worth mentioning one pub talk that happened just before last year's AGM - John Arnott on "Life in the Soil" - I am told this was fascinating.

After the country wide lock down was lifted your committee discussed how we could re-start our activities, whilst staying safe in line with the Government's guidance. I am very pleased to report that under Philippa Arnott's leadership we completed all the Medmerry surveys, therefore continuing to build the very useful set of data on species colonising this area. Gill Hance has created a system that has allowed us to re-start our field outings and we have already had trips to Kithurst Hill and Nutbourne Marshes, with others planned. I would like to thank all of our members who volunteer to lead these field outings - especially as the new way of organising them requires more of their time.

Whilst we have had to postpone our autumn indoor lectures, we remain hopeful that we will be able to re-start these in the New Year. In line with a lot of other societies, we are going to make use of Zoom to run our evening meetings on-line. I appreciate that this is not ideal, as it takes away the opportunities for social interaction which we all value so much. However, until we can re-start face/face lectures, it will enable us to hear a series of interesting talks. Please watch your e-mail for details.

In the last couple of years, the Society has invested some of the legacy money we have received to purchase various pieces of kit. I am very pleased that these have been used heavily by members during 2020 as individuals carried out their own observations.

The Society remains vibrant with 147 members and will continue to promote our objectives and to run events that fit in with the Government's guidance. We are fortunate in having members who are prepared to volunteer to give a small amount of their time to serve on the committee. Having new people join the committee is a great way to keep the Society fresh with new ideas and in touch with our members. It is therefore important that people do keep on "stepping forward", so it's an appropriate time to mention that 2 of the officers of the Society - David Hart (Treasurer) and myself (Chairman) - have to step down in two years (the Society's rules do not allow us to continue). Therefore, it would be great to hear from anyone who would consider taking on one of these roles so that we could work together to ensure a smooth handover.

I would like to finish by recognising the Society's committee for all the amazing work they get through. My role is really quite easy, because the committee members quietly and competently get on with running the Society. My thanks.

The Honourable Treasurer's Report.

Cash and bank balances at 30th September 2020 shows that we have almost £1000 more than a year ago, this is due to a number of reasons.

Firstly, a very generous £250 donation with the express wish that this should be spent on owl boxes within the Chichester area, and a £65 increase in reclaimed gift aid.

Payments were considerably down due to the fact that Covid 19 cancelled the need for speakers in both April and September.

Savings on newsletters which are now being emailed to members bringing down the cost of printing and posting.

As there was no financial activity with the Project Account during the last year, that balance remains the same.

As I hope you can see on the screen we have £4048.75 in the General Current Account and £7064.23 in the Project Account. Cash in Hand £60.50, giving a total of £11,173.48.

Acceptance of the report was proposed by Sarah Hall and seconded by Linda and Ken Smith.

Election of the Committee

Helen Dignum is stepping down from Indoor meetings - Thank you for all you have done. Linda Smith is taking on the role.

Proposed by David Hart and Seconded by Helen Dignum.

John Kelsall is stepping down from managing the newsletter but will continue with the website. Helen Dignum is taking over the role of Newsletter organiser. Proposed by Sarah Hall and Seconded by John Kelsall.

John Kelsall will continue with the website.

Proposed by Heather Hart and Seconded by Sarah Hall.

Election of the President.

Jim Bagley is happy to continue as the President.

Proposed by Christian Hance and Seconded by Sarah Hall.

Jim Bagley asked Sarah Hall to convey some thoughts in his absence:
I am sure that the members will join me in thanking our Chairman and the committee for keeping the Society 'alive' over the past few months despite the restrictions caused by Covid 19. With thanks and Best wishes, JB.

Election of the independent Accounts Examiner.

Richard Fisk is happy to continue in this role.

Proposer Heather Hart and Seconder Maria Wildman.

Final Comment.

Christian Hance ended with thanks to all those who attended and thanked HD for setting up the meeting. Indoor Meetings will commence in January via zoom.