

The SOC

Scotland's Bird Club



COUNCIL MEETING 85/02

13th June 2021 Minutes

SOC Scottish Charity Number: SC 009859
A Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Session 85/02 of Council was held at 10:00 hrs on the 13th June 2021 using Zoom virtual conferencing software.

Present: Jeremy Wilson (Vice President and Chair), Lesley Creamer (Vice President), David Lindgren (Hon Secretary), Rich Kerr (Hon Treasurer elect, *joined meeting after item 3*), Chris Wernham, Zul Bhatia, Will Cresswell, Elizabeth Irwin, Alan Knox, Nina O'Hanlon, David Rackham, Richard Somers Cocks, Neil Stratton, Jeremy Brock, Peter Gordon, Rick Goater, Richard Leslie and Rachael Wilbourn.

In Attendance: Wendy Hicks

Action

- 1 Apologies for absence** Apologies were received from President Ian Bainbridge, Alex Banwell and Bob McGowan.
- 2 Minutes of Council Meeting 85/01 held on 7th March 2021** The minutes for the meeting on 7th March 2021 were approved, subject only to the correction of minor typographical errors.

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| 3 Appointment of new Honorary Treasurer | <p>The Secretary described the recruitment process for a replacement for Andrew Thorpe as the SOC's Honorary Treasurer, and concluded with the recommendation that Richard Kerr be appointed as a member of Council and Hon Treasurer, noting that the appointment would be reconsidered by the membership at the next SOC AGM. Council unanimously approved the appointment.</p> <p>Mr Kerr was invited to join the meeting, and a round of introductions followed.</p> | |
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<p>4</p>	<p>Birding & Science</p>	<p>The Chair referred to the minutes of the Birding and Science Committee meeting of 6th April 2021, that had been circulated.</p> <p>He thanked all who had been involved in the recruitment of the Birding and Science Officer (“BSO”). In questions, it was noted that the BSO had previously presented at SOC Conferences. It was clarified that, although he would be working primarily from his base in Aberdeenshire, he would also be attending Waterston House periodically and that he would be available to supplement the existing bird knowledge of front of house Waterston House staff as required. Agreed that the BSO be invited to attend Branch meetings, noting that the BSO was an important asset to the Branches, and not just to Waterston House. The priorities for the BSO were being set by the Birding and Science Committee, and they included working on the Local Bird Recorders Conference. All agreed that the recruitment of the BSO was an important and exciting initiative for the SOC.</p> <p>The Chair outlined the steps that had been taken to make Scottish Birds available online. The trial method of making a copy available through a password supplied to members who were able to access a Flipbook version of the publication had worked well. The intention was to use a members’ portal to make Scottish Birds available to members in the future, but the preliminary indications that this might cost £4,000 to develop meant that more competitive quotes for the service were being sought. Council suggested that a members’ portal could be used for wider purposes, including bird reporting and ecommerce. It was however noted that this would complicate the existing project and add additional cost. Council asked the Birding and Science Committee to consider and report on the wider applicability of a members’ portal. In discussion it became apparent having noted a background of rising print and distribution costs, and ecological concerns already apparent amongst the membership relating to the physical magazine, that Council accepted the suggested cost for the first stage of developing a members’ portal to allow members to access current and archive editions of Scottish Birds using the identified Flipbook format. It was noted that developing an ecommerce shopfront would be considered once this had been established, and if the portal was to be used to provide paid for bird reporting information, reconciling that policy with the branches that already provided some of that information free would be necessary. The Chair thanked Wendy, Jane and the others who had been involved in the project and the trial, noting that it was a step towards facilitating digital only memberships in the future.</p>	<p>B&S Committee to consider uses of a members’ portal on SOC website</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Management Report</p>	<p>Lesley Creamer referred to the minutes of the Management Committee meeting that had taken place on 13th May 2021.</p> <p>She highlighted the discussion on suitable opening hours for Waterston House once COVID restrictions had been eased. It was Management Committee’s recommendation that Waterston House only open 4 (or perhaps 5) days each week, subject to monitoring the effect this had on staff and takings. This reflected the new responsibilities of the staff that evolved during the period that Waterston House had been shut. The first review will be of the financial performance from April to July 2021, and it will be compared to the same period in 2019. There was discussion as to whether certain periods of the year were busier and should therefore be met with full time opening. Lesley reported that this had been considered, but that the results from Waterston House were not cyclical.</p>	<p>Management Committee to review effect of WH limited opening hours</p>

	It was agreed that Management Committee’s recommendation be adopted and Waterston House continue to operate 4 days a week, but that the position be monitored regularly to ensure costs and income are not adversely affected by this.	
6	Finance Report The Secretary referred the meeting to the management accounts, noting that they had been reviewed at the Management Committee. He highlighted the small surplus that had been achieved at the year end, but noted that the COVID grants that had been received in the course of the year meant that this was an atypical year.	
7	Events There was discussion on the form that the November Conference should take. The prevailing opinion was that the SOC should continue to plan for a face to face meeting at the Atholl Palace, Pitlochry, but be prepared to back track and replace it with a virtual event should COVID conditions so dictate. The conference theme would be “conservation”. The secretary set out the options for the AGM if there was not to be a face to face conference, as the SOC constitution required that AGM’s were conducted by members meeting “in person”. It was agreed that if the conference was not to be face to face, the conditions then prevailing would either not allow an AGM to take place, or make it impractical, but that members should be presented with the annual report and allowed to ask the normal sort of questions of Council using virtual technology, all as part of any “virtual” conference. Noting that it would not be possible to hold elections for Council or (ironically) change the SOC constitution to allow members’ meetings using virtual conferencing technology. The election of new Council members could however be managed through appointments made by Council rather than members. Noting that steps were being taken to recruit young birders onto Council. Noting too that Bob McGowan was due to leave Council at the AGM.	Steering group to continue Conference planning WH and Jane help recruiting young birders to Council
8	Annual Report WH reported that last year’s popular new format would be used again. The intention was to have a limited print run, and make the report available digitally.	
9	Branch Activities and Communications David Rackham summarised his findings on Zoom meetings, hybrid meetings and face to face meetings that were recorded and the recording made available after the meeting. He will continue to test the available technology with a view to making recommendations on technology and practice. Noting that Fife were involved in the process and would share their experiences with David Rackham. Peter Gordon asked whether branch meetings could be shared more widely with members outside those particular branches. Noted that Branch secretaries had been sent guidance by WH on holding events. There was a discussion of how selected member data was to be made available to branches, with guidelines on how that data must be stored and how it could be used. It was noted that a GDPR audit of the SOC’s systems was to be commissioned.	GDPR guidelines/ data to be made available to branches
9	Matters Arising None outstanding, save for secretarial support.	

10	AOCB	Alan Knox outlined the information that he had obtained on the operation of the App and how it showed the movement of birders in different seasons, and their preferences for particular areas of Scotland. He hoped that the Birding and Science Committee could make strategic use of this information.	
11	Next meeting	The next meeting was set for 5 th September 2021. If pandemic conditions and restrictions allowed, it might be scheduled as a face to face meeting. It was suggested that at least one Council meeting a year should be conducted face to face, and that the venue for it should be rotated around different Scottish regions.	

Approved