

The SOC Scotland's Bird Club



COUNCIL MEETING 86/03 12th September 2022 Minutes

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

Session 86/03 of Council was held at 10:00 hrs on the 12th June 2022 at RSPB Loch Leven and using Zoom virtual conferencing software.

Present: Ruth Briggs (President), Jeremy Wilson (Vice President), David Lindgren (Hon Secretary), Richard Kerr (Hon Treasurer), Alan Knox, David Rackham, Richard Somers Cocks, Richard Leslie and Elizabeth Irwin, Rick Goater

Present by Zoom: Chris Wernham, Lesley Creamer (Vice President), Nina O'Hanlon, Will Cresswell, Jeremy Brock, Hannah Lemon, Helen Aiton

In Attendance: Wendy Hicks

Action

- 1 Apologies for absence** Apologies had been received from Zul Bhatia, Neil Stratton, Geoff Shepherd, Alex Banwell, Rachael Wilbourn and Peter Gordon. The President welcomed all to the first meeting of Council where at least some were able to gather together face to face. She also welcomed those attending by Zoom
- 2 Presentation on the Annual Accounts** Sandra Boyle from the SOC's Independent Examiner (Whitelaw Wells) reported to the meeting on the Accounts for the financial year to 31 March 2022. She noted that the report was a clean one, and that results were comparative with pre-COVID levels. The results showed a deficit in annual trading, but this could be met from reserves in the medium term. Noting particular details such as investment valuation and volatility, grants received in branches and expenditure on staff and maintenance. There was discussion on the appropriateness of the depreciation policy on Property and Buildings, and alternative treatments were discussed.

After thanks from the President, Sandra Boyle left the meeting.

The minutes for the meeting on 12th June 2022 were adjusted and approved.

3 Minutes of Council Meeting 86/02 held on 12th June 2022

4	Finance Report	The Treasurer tabled the current Profit and Loss account, highlighting the change in the insurance position, following a required revaluation, the rise in payroll costs (as they incorporated the Birding and Science Officer) and the anticipated income position once September membership subscriptions were received. He also described the new budgeting process, which would allow better short, medium and long term planning.
5	Strategy Group	The President referred to the minutes of the Group's last meeting and highlighted the work that had been done on the Risk Register, Fellowships, Staff Communications, Membership monitoring and Finance.
6	Birding and Science Committee	<p>Reference was made to the tabled minutes from the Committee's July meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted that the Scottish Birds database was being made available online, with opportunity for online contributions through a moderated Wiki style account. • Discussion had been had on the MOTUS opportunity, which could fund, with additional financial leverage, a sponsored PhD student. • The experience of seeking to run the Bird Recorder event face to face, which had had disappointing sign-up. • Progress towards Mark presenting JNCC ESAS courses commercially was being made. • The SOC's response to Avian Flu had been mainly reactive to specific branch and member concerns, although some generic advice on the importance of cleanliness of birdfeeders and on not handling dead birds had been passed on. Agreed that the generic advice was so important as to be repeated, particularly as the movement of birds would have changed with the seasons and the disease will therefore be apparent in different places. Suggested that the BSO become better connected with NatureScot and its avian flu taskforce, and provide focused summaries of advice as it is produced to the bird community (such as ringers) and links to the original advice. <p>JW to talk to the BSO and agree approach. Also to ensure that he can cope with workload and approves of the overall shape of his duties</p>
7	Management Committee	Reference was made to the Management Committee meeting minutes, and some discussion followed on pricing of ESAS courses.
8	Risk Register	<p>The President referred to the latest draft of the Risk Register. Particular risks were highlighted in discussion, such as the effect of the rise in energy prices, and the implementation of risk assessments by individual event leaders.</p> <p>Agreed that the Strategy Group should take the necessary steps to finalise the Risk Register</p> <p>WH and DL to review event risk assessments and ensure accessible.</p>

		Strategy Group to finalise Risk Register
9	<p>Events</p> <p>Wendy updated the meeting on the Annual Conference planning. The AGM notice was also noted.</p> <p>Central Scotland branch would be hosting the Spring Conference in the Albert Halls, Stirling. Suggested dates were 1st April or 18th March, school holiday dependant.</p>	
10	<p>Membership Report</p> <p>The report was considered. It did not demonstrate any clear trend. Agreed to continue to monitor as rising living costs add pressure to domestic budgets</p>	
11	<p>Council Vacancies</p> <p>The Appointments Panel reported on progress with finding a suitable candidate for the Vice President <i>Birding and Science</i> role. A possible candidate had been approached but was yet to confirm their willingness to take on the role (owing to current family commitments).</p>	
12	<p>Branch Awards</p> <p>The tabled report was considered and it was agreed to proceed with the process it outlined.</p>	Start Branch Award process
13	<p>AOCB</p> <p>Noting that the SOC committee structure meant that much of the business that might have otherwise been done by Council was now presented as papers for noting or for approval, and asking if this could be made clearer in Council agendas.</p> <p>The President noted that it was (perhaps) Jeremy Wilson's last Council meeting, and she summarised his efforts and achievements. Jeremy responded with his own gracious thanks to the SOC.</p> <p>Noting that there was a campaign to change the Woodcock hunting start date by Wild Justice. Discussion on how and whether the SOC, even although it was not a campaigning organisation, could support petitions that were relevant to its objects.</p>	To be considered by Strategy Group
11	<p>Next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting was set for 4th December 2022 (Zoom)</p>	