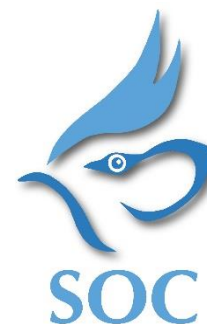


The SOC

Scotland's Bird Club



COUNCIL MEETING 86/04

4th December 2022 Minutes

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

Session 86/04 of Council was held at 10:00 hrs on the 4th December 2022 using Zoom virtual conferencing software.

Present: Ruth Briggs (President), Jeremy Wilson (Vice President), Lesley Creamer (Vice President), David Lindgren (Hon Secretary), Chris Wernham, Zul Bhatia, Alan Knox, David Rackham, Richard Somers Cocks, Neil Stratton, Peter Gordon, Hannah Lemon, Richard Leslie, Rick Goater and Rachael Wilbourn

In Attendance: Wendy Hicks

Action

- 1 **Apologies for absence and preliminary business** Apologies were received from Richard Kerr, Jeremy Brock and Elizabeth Irwin. As had been intimated at the AGM, it was noted that the post of Vice President, Birding and Science was vacant, but that Jeremy Wilson had kindly volunteered to continue in post until a replacement could be found. Council co-opted him to the post.
- 2 **Minutes of Council Meeting 86/03 held on 4th September 2022** The minutes for the meeting on 4th September 2022 were approved, subject to surprisingly few corrections.

| | | | |
|---|----------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 3 | Finance | <p>The Treasurer's written report was received. It was noted that the results were close to those in the budget, subject to timing differences. Analysis of the results at March Council would include subscriptions and the final results from the Annual Conference, and would give a more complete picture.</p> <p>Wendy reported that the final conference expenses were still coming in. It was looking as though the conference would break even.</p> <p>Wendy also reported that a generous legacy of £25,000 had been received. Council discussed the more focussed approach of other organisations to securing legacies, including the full time legacies officer used by the BTO. There was a diversity of opinions on how aggressively the SOC should pursue</p> | Strategy Group to consider |
|---|----------------|---|-----------------------------------|

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | <p>legacies, and it was therefore suggested that the Strategy Group consider this. Suggestions for motivating legacy giving included linking it to specific longer term projects, or objectives such as young birders' support. For context, Wendy reported that projects and young birders would always be mentioned when legacy packs were being sent out to applicants.</p> | <p>appropriate ways to attract legacies</p> |
| 4 | <p>Strategy Group</p> <p>Ruth Briggs referred the meeting to the Strategy Group minutes that had been tabled. She highlighted that work continued to finalise the Risk Register, and that further details of required actions and mitigations were being added to the version that had been presented to Council.</p> <p>Alan Knox suggested that the logistics of the Fellowship scheme needed careful consideration, particularly to allow the refusal of applications to be handled sensitively. Ruth Briggs agreed to look carefully at the procedures with this thought in mind.</p> <p>In discussion, it was noted that there had been no change to the guidance offered to Branches and groups conducting walks, and that the SOC's policy and approach remained the same.</p> | <p>RB to look at Fellowship procedures</p> |
| 5 | <p>Birding and Science</p> <p>Jeremy Wilson explained that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on 8th December 2022. He reported that Mark had been working on a paper setting out current knowledge gaps, and this would be considered, developed and approved. The MOTUS project was proceeding with the direct approval of the donor involved. A Bird Recorder group meeting was scheduled, and it was to be a virtual meeting. Mark was making progress with the LBR issues that had been the subject of previous Council discussions, and the Birding and Science Committee hoped to develop a plan that could be recommended to Council. JNCC were offering members a funded course, which will be advertised to them. An ESAS course had been run by Mark, at a profit, in early November.</p> <p>Zul welcomed the report on Mark's work. He wanted there to be a place for branch involvement in the knowledge gap work, and generally for Mark to give a little more time towards branch involvement. In discussion, it was suggested that Local Bird Recorder work would naturally provide local focus at branch level.</p> <p>In a discussion about branch events and issues experienced with tickets and no shows, members of Council compared approaches by different branches discussing whether events should be free, limited (if they did not involve training), methods used to contact participants on the day (and thereafter).</p> | |
| 6 | <p>Management Committee</p> <p>Lesley Creamer referred to the minutes of the last Management Committee meeting. She highlighted that the Staff Day was to take place later in December.</p> <p>There was a long discussion about the proposed staff salary review, which concluded that a 5% rise should be awarded to all staff at the end of 2022, with further consideration of whether that was appropriate of itself or whether an additional rise be awarded at the beginning of the SOC's financial year in March once appropriate benchmarked equivalents had been obtained and the effect of greater rises considered in the light of the 2023/24 budget.</p> | <p>Management Committee to benchmark salaries and budget increase</p> |

| | | | |
|----|---|--|---|
| 7 | ESAS Training Initiative | <p>Report on the ESAS course that Mark had led.</p> <p>Discussion on future initiatives to generate income. Suggestions on margins and appropriate daily rates (for the birding and science officer and for other posts) -which might also help in grant applications. Agree that the SOC should be open to income raising initiatives on a case by case basis.</p> | |
| 8 | Vice President – Birding and Science | <p>Report from the Appointments Panel on the process to find a replacement for Jeremy Wilson as Vice President Birding and Science. The Panel was thinking of subdividing the role to encourage more applicants, as feedback from potential candidates had suggested that the role required too great a time commitment.</p> | |
| 9 | Governance | <p>The meeting papers had included an SCVO publication on The Scottish Governance Code for the Third Sector which trustees were asked to consider.</p> <p>Noted that a new Bill had just been published by the Scottish Government which would when enacted change the law as it affected trustees of charities. Agreed that the Secretary would brief Council when the position was clearer.</p> | |
| 10 | Event Planning | <p>Wendy Hicks reported on the Annual Conference. Agreed that it had been an excellent conference. There had been a surprisingly large uptake to the face to face part of the conference, but less than expected had participated in the virtual conference. A survey of participants was being prepared. Feedback so far had suggested that the format was becoming dated (Mark), that the youth conference could be held separately (although this would lose some of the integration that came with the current format), and that a range of accommodation (bunkrooms?) would broaden the appeal.</p> <p>A subcommittee consisting of Will, Hannah, Wendy and Mark agreed to consider options in advance of the March Council meeting.</p> <p>Suggestions for the next Conference theme included Bird Sounds, although there was a suggestion that this might not be enough for the whole conference.</p> <p>Council considered the paper that Jane had produced analysing the Branches Weekend feedback. Agreed that this was a good foundation for a dialogue with Branches, and that this should be focussed through the Birding and Science Committee, with Jane in attendance. Hope for another branches weekend to carry on conversation, but this was budget dependant. Suggest that Facebook and Zoom could be the mechanism in the short term for communication amongst branch representatives, and perhaps ideas on cooperation, meeting, resource pooling and sharing ideas, youth groups, websites...</p> | <p>Report on future format options to March Council</p> <p>BSC to take forward dialogue with branches. RB to discuss next steps with Jane</p> |
| 11 | Membership Trends | <p>Oral report that membership trends remained satisfactory</p> | |
| 12 | AOCB | <p>Noted the death of the local bird recorder in Clyde. A new candidate had been identified and would be appointed and would be an asset to the excellent existing team.</p> | |
| 13 | Next meeting | <p>The next meetings were suggested for:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 March 2023 | |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 June 2023 • 3 September 2023 • 3 December 2023 (although this might clash with the BTO Conference and would be moved if it did) <p>It was suggested that the Zoom meetings might take place midweek rather than at weekends. Survey to be issued</p> | <p>Secretary to send Survey to Council on meeting timing</p> |
|--|---|---|