

S.O.C. Fife Branch



AGM

Minutes of the AGM held on Wednesday 12th April 2023 Via Zoom

1. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from Peter Davey and David Heeley.
2. **Minutes of 2022 AGM:** The Minutes of the 2022 AGM were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting, proposed by Elizabeth Irwin and seconded by John Irwin.
3. **Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising.

4. **Chairman's report:**

Elizabeth Irwin thanked those attending the AGM, 4 members of the operating committee and 4 other members, and gave an overview of the events and activities over the past year.

We have organised a number of outings, to Ruddons Point, Kinghorn and Kirkcaldy and the Howe of Fife, which were fairly well attended with some new members coming along. We also had a guided walk at Findatie on Loch Leven led by Scott Paterson which was both very enjoyable and useful, though only 6 members signed up.

The club-wide online meetings have continued with some excellent, high calibre speakers, and with the benefit of being able to watch on catch up for those members who missed it on the night. We had one branch specific online event, a presentation on Gull ID by Mark Lewis, the SOC's Birding and Science officer, picking up various tips which we then tried putting into practice on our outing to Kinghorn and Kirkcaldy later in January.

Elizabeth noted that the problems with the availability of St Andrews town hall for indoor meetings are ongoing. Even if a venue was available, she also flagged up the issue of staffing if she and John were unable to be there.

5. **Accounts:** John Irwin presented the branch accounts. A donation of £250 was made to support young birders to attend the SOC conference. Those attending the guided walk in March paid a £10 fee and the event broke even. The invoice is still be paid. With no indoor meetings, there was no other income. There have been no applications for the small grants offered to students. The current account balance at the end of March was £1269.28.

The accounts were approved, proposed by Caroline Gordon and seconded by Andrew Riches.

6. **Committee and Future Plans for the Branch:**

John Irwin has agreed to remain as Treasurer. Elizabeth noted that while the 'operating committee' wants to keep the branch going, she and others are not willing to commit more time to organising activities but are willing to try to keep things going at a level we can manage for the coming year, an approach that is being encouraged from HQ.

There was discussion of the need for change - though it seems that is not a widespread feeling across all branches. While Fife will not be re-introducing face to face meetings in the foreseeable future, Jane Allison at HQ has offered to organise 2 speakers and 2 workshops, all online, for the branch and this will be followed up.

Andrew Riches suggested informal outings, which don't need to be organised far in advance, should be considered and it was agreed that we would discuss this idea further.

Gillian Strugnell commented on the positive approach in Aberdeen where SOC and local RSPB groups have joint events and we agreed with Keith Ballantyne, chair of Fife Bird Club, to look at how we can better share information about any events that either group organises.

Allister Todd asked about the potential of Facebook and other social media to bring more people in. It seems that where the SOC has used this, it has generated a good level of interest from younger people, but branches are not able to use this directly themselves as all social media has to be done through HQ.

Elizabeth noted that she still sits, for now, on both SOC Council and the Strategy Group. However, she would encourage anyone who is interested in getting involved, either with these groups or the branch, to come forward.

7. AOCB:

No other matters were raised and the meeting closed at 8.25pm.