

The SOC

Scotland's Bird Club



COUNCIL MEETING 84/01

14th June 2020 Minutes

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

Session 84/01 of Council was held at 10:30 hrs on the 14th June 2020 using GoToMeeting virtual conferencing software.

Present: President Ian Bainbridge (Chair), Lesley Creamer (Vice President), Jeremy Wilson (Vice President), David Lindgren (Hon Secretary), Andrew Thorpe (Hon Treasurer), Alex Banwell, Zul Bhatia, Will Cresswell, Peter Gordon, Elizabeth Irwin, Nina O'Hanlon (audio only), Alan Knox, David Rackham, Richard Somers Cocks, Neil Stratton, and Chris Wernham

In Attendance: Wendy Hicks

Action

- 1 **Apologies for absence** Apologies were received from Bob McGowan, Jeremy Brock and Rick Goater
- 2 **Absent** Richard Leslie was absent, although it transpired that this was because of a failure of the virtual conferencing software.
- 3 **Minutes of Council Meeting 83/04 held on 1st December 2019** The minutes for the meeting on 1st December 2019 were approved, subject to correct references to the meeting session being included.

4	Finance: Update & report	<p>The Treasurer, Andrew Thorpe (AT) referred to the tabled reports from the Finance Committee. He highlighted that the accounts were projected to show a £45-50k deficit, as had been previously forecast. He noted that the production of the year end accounts had been going well with the new reporting accountants, notwithstanding the challenges of homeworking.</p> <p>AT reported that COVID-19 had adversely affected the value of the investment portfolio, but that advice had been taken and the portfolio would remain invested. The cash balance held was larger than normal for the time of year, and included the proceeds of a council grant for which the SOC had qualified. It was noted that one staff member had been furloughed under the government scheme. Although Business Interruption insurance was held, it was very unlikely that it covered the effects of the pandemic.</p>	
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	<p>Noted that member numbers appeared stable and that current forecasts and budgets showed that the SOC was sustainable in the medium term, notwithstanding the continuing effect that the virus was having on SOC activities.</p> <p>It was noted that, on advice from Whitelaw Wells, who are the SOC's accountants, the format for the annual report and accounts was to be modified to reflect contemporary practice and OSCR recommendations. This would include reporting on activities and achievements, giving a useful measure of the success of implemented strategies. It was intended that the new format would also be a more attractive and accessible way to report to members and other stakeholders. It was agreed that the SOC adopt an appropriate format for its accounts to fulfil these ambitions.</p>	
5	<p>Management Report</p> <p>The Club Administrator, Wendy Hicks (WH) referred to the written report that had been circulated. It was noted in particular that the membership numbers remained stable. WH highlighted that over 20,000 people had responded on social media to the Club making an online version of the March issue of <i>Scottish Birds</i> available free of charge to the wider birding community/general public, and there were hopes that this would help spread interest in the SOC and lead to new members.</p> <p>The President and Council thanked WH for organising staff and keeping them effective notwithstanding the lockdown. They also thanked the staff for their excellent work in changed circumstances. It was reported by WH that the Waterston House staff had become a closer team as a result of the changes. It was noted too that contact was being maintained with the only furloughed member of staff.</p> <p>The President reported on the COVID-19 Management Group that had been formed to coordinate management of the issues that the virus had produced, noting that it had reported to the members and Council separately. At its most recent meeting, plans for the reopening of Waterston House had been considered. This task would be taken forward by WH and the Management Committee. The plans were at an early stage, but would lead to a gradual phased reopening, in line with the changing regulation, staff expectations and requirements, and the capacity of the applicable systems.</p>	<p>Management Committee to work with WH on staged reopening of Waterston House</p>
6	<p>Birding & Science</p> <p>Jeremy Wilson reported that as a result of the impact of COVID-19 (which included the furloughing of a member of staff) some of the actions outlined in the Committee's last meeting had had to be postponed, and the Local Bird Recorders meeting had been cancelled. He had however discussed the ambitions of the group with Alan Knox.</p> <p>There was a discussion on the use of technology to extract and analyse information from electronic data lists.</p>	

7	Autumn Conference	The President referred to the paper that had been prepared setting out options for the conference that had been scheduled for November. After debate it was determined that, with regret, the Conference could not be held physically for the present and should be cancelled this year.	WH to tell members of cancellation
8	AGM	The Secretary outlined the enabling legislation that would allow the SOC to hold an online AGM. In discussion it was suggested that this could be supplemented by some expert ornithological content, a bird quiz and so on. The COVID-19 Management Group would work on a suitable format.	WH to intimate tentative arrangements for AGM COVID-19 Mgmt Group to determine AGM format
9	Branch activities	The meeting considered the circulated report from Ayr on the use of virtual conferencing software. WH was looking to circulate the guidance to all branches to help them open and operate within lockdown guidelines. It was agreed that David Rackham form a working group to refine the report so that it could be provided to all branches.	Working Group to refine and circulate guidance
10	AOCB	There was discussion on the financial issues that St Abbs Head were facing, and the limited options that there were to ameliorate them.	
15	Next Meeting	6th September 2020 : 11:00 am at RSPB Loch Leven or virtually (to be decided)	