

**BRITISH NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION**  
**The National Body for Naturalists**  
**Founded 1905**

**Minutes of the 118<sup>th</sup> AGM of British Naturalists' Association**  
**On Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2023 Held Online**

**via Zoom**

The meeting began at: 14.25

**Present:**

**Hon. President:** Mr. R.K. Tabor.

**Members of Council:** Ms. E. Beer, Mr. J Curwen, Mr. M.R. Demidecki-Demidowicz, Mr. M. Dudley, Dr. C. Gibson. Mr. S. Rutherford (Chairman)

**Officers (other than those officers who are also Members of Council named above):** Hon. Website and Publications Editor: Mrs. P. Rutherford

**Others:**

Catherine Artindale, Nick Austin, June Birchall, Julie Blackmore, Chris James, Wendy Knowles, John Morrell, Tricia Moxey, Brian Sims, David Skydmore, Ken Merrifield, Danae Hasketh, Richard Gulliver, Andy Holtham, Caroline Leinster, Peter Ward, Laurette Guest, Gillian Foster, Joe Beale, Mat Stainton, David and Gill Shearing, Jean and Andy Young, Julie Wise

## **Agenda**

**1. Welcoming remarks.**

The Chairman opened the meeting by thanking everyone and welcoming them to the 118<sup>th</sup> AGM. He thanked Professor David Skydmore for his presentation of "Barking up the Right Tree"

Mr Steven Rutherford thanked Hon. President Roger Tabor for attending this meeting and asked him if he would like to take the Chair which Roger declined and asked Steve to continue.

The Chairman asked if there was a conflict of interest? There was none.

The Chairman reminded everyone notification of AGM was sent out with the September 2023 issue of British Naturalist. As indicated, notice of the AGM including details of how to register to attend the meeting and the Agenda, Minutes of the last AGM, proxy voting form, and proxy voting instructions could also be viewed on the BNA website.

When voting at this meeting can members keep their hands raised until their vote has been counted, each vote will be decided upon a show of hands. Those eligible to vote at this AGM are fully paid up graded, ordinary, senior, honorary fellows and student members. Youth members cannot vote.

**2. Apologies for Absence.**

Dianne Farrar, Peter Floyd-Spong, Jean and Richard Panniker, Neil Redgate, Bob Reed, Helen Brewerton, Neil Garrick-Maidment, Peter Robinson, Arjan Arenas, Jane Clist, Rachel and Kevin Hinchcliffe, Paul Guymer, Rhodri Gruffydd, Roy Stewart

**Proxy Votes.** We have received proxy votes from Helen Brewerton, Neil Garrick-Maidment, Peter Robinson, Peter Floyd-Spong, Neil Redgate, Jane Clist. two voted in favour of all the resolutions, the other four asked the Chairman (me) to be their proxy.

	for	against	abstain
Helen Brewerton	✓		
Peter Floyd-Spong	✓		
Neil Garrick-Maidment	✓		
Peter Robinson	✓		
Jane Clist	✓		
Neil Redgate	✓		

**3. Minutes of 117<sup>th</sup> AGM.**

Ordinary resolution: To agree the minutes of the 117<sup>th</sup> AGM as a fair and reasonable record.

Chris James didn't think she had received the minutes, however I said they were sent out and Michael also confirmed they had been available to view on the website.

Proposed: Nick Austin

Seconded: Tricia Moxey

Resolution agreed and passed (with 1 abstention from Chris James)

Steve will sign these minutes and send them to Michael Demidecki.

**4. Matters Arising.**

There were none.

**5. Consideration of the report of Council of Management and accounts for the year ended 30 September 2022.**

Mr. John Curwen Hon. Treasurer was asked to comment and said that hopefully everyone will have seen the circulated report which is also on the website. There was a deficit in income of £2196, a little more than the previous year but not entirely unexpected. But that said we still have cash reserves of just under £100,000 and can run a small deficit with no immediate financial concerns, in fact we will report a deficit in the current year as well. That said, the Council of Management is still aiming to balance the books to ensure we remain viable in the long term. He offered to take any questions on the financial status or accounts, which there were none.

Ordinary resolution: To receive the report of the Council of Management and accounts for the year ended 30 September 2022.

Proposed: John Curwen

Seconded: John Morrell

Resolution agreed and passed

**6. Independent Examiner's report to the Council of Management for the year ended 30 September 2022.**

Ordinary resolution: To receive the Independent Examiner's report to the Council of Management for

the year ended 30 September 2022. The Chairman asked John Curwen if he had anything to add which he didn't.

Proposed: John Curwen

Seconded: Tricia Moxey

Resolution agreed and passed

## **7. Election of Council Members**

Ordinary Resolution: to elect to the Council of Management all those retiring members of the Council of Management who have offered themselves for election and such others (if any) who may be eligible and have been proposed for election under Article 37 and expressed their willingness to be elected.

Please note Article 37 of the Articles of Association:

*"No person other than a Council member retiring at the meeting shall unless recommended by the Council be eligible for election to the Council at any General Meeting unless, not less than three nor more than twenty-one days before the date set for the meeting, there shall have been left at the registered office of the Association notice in writing signed by a member qualified to attend and vote at the meeting for which such notice is given, of his intention to propose such person for election, and also notice in writing signed by that person of his willingness to be elected."*

The members of the present Council of Management are: Ms. E. Beer, Mr. J. Curwen, Mr. M.R. Demidecki-Demidowicz; Mr. M. Dudley, Dr. C.C. Gibson, Ms. S.V.L. Holt, Mr. N. D. Redgate, Mr. S. Rutherford (Chairman), Mr. R. L. Stewart, and Mr. T.J. Thomas.

All current trustees except Tom Thomas indicated they are eligible and willing to stand again for Council, in accordance with Article 37 of the Articles of Association.

Proposed: Chris James

Seconded: Laurette Guest

Resolution agreed and passed

## **8. Appointment and remuneration of Independent Examiner.**

Ordinary resolution: To leave the decision as to appointment and remuneration of the Independent Examiner to Council.

Proposed: John Curwen

Seconded: Chris James

Resolution agreed and passed

## **9. Chairman's concluding remarks and discussion.**

### **Past, Present, Future**

- In April, the BNA held the Encaenia and members day at the Natural History Museum in London. There were members from London, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Herts, Hampshire, Devon, Cheshire, West Midlands, South Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Wales. I would like to thank Steph Holt and her

colleagues from the NHM who set everything up and gave us all the chance to get together for the first time since the Covid lockdowns.

- In July, we held a BNA Weekend Workshop at Brandon Marsh near Coventry. This was a well-attended and enjoyable weekend and between us we recorded 360 species which have been passed on to the WLT, who were very grateful for this list which goes towards their land management plans.
- We have also continued with the Zoom meetings, which shows what a wealth of knowledge and understanding we have in the BNA, including today's from David Skydmore. Chris Gibson has presented two talks with and Roger Tabor and Roy Stewart have also given talks. The talks have been paused at the moment but we are hoping to bring them back again as they were so popular and help to keep the BNA Family together and is a wonderful way to share information.
- Another way we are trying to bring people together is through social media, in particular through WhatsApp and X (formally known as Twitter) and our Hertfordshire branch using Instagram. We have active WhatsApp groups in Norfolk/Suffolk and South Yorkshire. We will look into setting up a national WhatsApp group in the near future, which will give members a chance to post anything they see or need help with. This could help with recent sightings and phenology, for example, if someone sees something in Devon, and someone else spots it in Yorkshire, this gives us an idea of how long it has taken for that species to move up through the country. The students have their own active WhatsApp group, which Chris Gibson and Endymion Beer is helping to steer and advise.
- The BNA Young Nats (YNs) are kept up to date and in touch with their own "Nature Gazette", which Endymion Beer and her team put together. As a point of interest, the percentage of young members (YNs and students) is about 10% of the BNA member base. The YNs also have a badge scheme where they can write and have articles published which all counts to gaining these badges, which is great to see them getting involved in nature and joining in. Endymion contacted Chris Page an ITV weather presenter from Norwich, who is very supportive to the YNs with their weather project, and has been writing updates and information to be published in the Gazette. He is quite keen and proactive, giving the children inspiration and linking more walks of life together.
- I have been in touch with a member of staff at the British Trust for Ornithology, to see if the YNs can get involved with a recording scheme they are running. And I am also looking at offering the students and YNs days or weekends on a nature reserve, getting some of the BNAs experts along to help teach them recording and ID skills, which will be nice to get them all together and move forward with that.
- At the moment we have no national events arranged for 2024 as this would need a team of people to help organise them. If anyone has any ideas on where we could meet up, or would like to help organise them, email your suggestions to me.

## **Discussion**

**Chris James** – suggests the Field Studies Council (FSC) to use for courses, and as we have a substantial amount of money, can we offer bursaries which will give financial assistance to students?

**Chairman** – says these points are for Council to discuss and he will take them to the next Trustees meeting. I will keep Chris informed on this.

**Gillian Foster** – agrees the FSC does wonderful weekends all over the country, with staff who can teach a wide range of subjects. And agrees sponsoring the young members is a great idea.

**Andy Holtham** – FSC also does Zoom courses which are cheaper.

**Chairman** – this might be another way for some people.

**10. Date and venue of next meeting** - To be arranged in due course, via Zoom.

Thank you everyone for contributing and being part of the 118<sup>th</sup> AGM. My thanks go to Endymion and her team, Pauline for all her help and Roger for his constant support, as well as the BNA Trustees.

Meeting closed at: 14.58

The address of the registered office of the Association is  
27 Old Gloucester Street, London, England, WC1N 3AX.

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