

119th Annual General Meeting of the British Naturalists' Association

Saturday 22nd June 2024 at 2.15pm by zoom

Meeting opened at 2.18pm

Present:

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

Members of Council:

Mr. M.R. Demidecki-Demidowicz

Mr. M. Dudley

Dr. C. Gibson

Mr. S.R. Jones

Mr. S. Rutherford (Chairman)

Mr. R. L. Stewart

Officers (other than those officers who are also Members of Council named above):

Hon. Website and Publications Editor: Mrs. P. Rutherford

Others:

Brian Sims

Peter Floyd-Spong

Catherine Artindale

Andy Young

Jean Young

Nick Austin

David Skydmore

Jean Panniker

Richard Panniker

Stephen Wharton

Gillian Foster

The Agenda

1. Welcoming remarks.

As with tradition, the Chairman offered the Chair to President Roger Tabor who thanked him but declined. The Chairman asked for all members to please keep their hands raised when voting to allow the votes to be counted.

Notification of AGM was sent out with the March 2024 edition of British Naturalist. As indicated Notice of the AGM including details of how to register to attend the meeting, the Agenda, Minutes of the last AGM, Proxy voting form, and Proxy voting instructions could and can still be viewed on the BNA website.

Proxy votes. None

2. Apologies for absence.

John Curwen
Paul Guymer
Endymion Beer
Dianne Farrar

Please note, only fully paid-up members are entitled to vote on resolutions at this AGM, these are:

Ordinary Members
Family Members who are at least 18
Honorary Members
Student Members
Life Members
Associate Members
Registered Members
Fellows,
and Honorary Fellows (honoris causa)
(Youth Members and Corporate Members do not qualify)

3. Minutes of 118th AGM.

Ordinary Resolution – To agree the minutes of the 118th AGM as a fair and reasonable record.

Proposed – Roger Tabor

Seconded – Roy Stewart

Resolution agreed and passed.

4. Matters Arising. None

5. Consideration of the report of Council of Management and accounts for the year ended 30 September 2023.

Our report and accounts for last year have been available for everyone to see on our website.

John Curwen, our Honorary Treasurer, is unable to be with us today, but has asked me to point out the main features.

In particular, there was a deficit in income of £2800, a little more than the previous year but this was not unexpected.

We have substantial cash reserves and can run a small deficit with no immediate financial concerns.

That said, the Council of Management is still aiming to balance the books to ensure we remain viable in the long term.

This year, we are generating much more interest from our cash savings and we are seeing a big rise in donations which will go a long way toward reducing this annual deficit.

Unless anyone has any questions, I suggest we formally receive the report of the Council of Management and accounts for the year ended 30 September 2023.

Ordinary resolution: To receive the report of the Council of Management and accounts for the year ended 30 September 2023.

Proposed – Chris Gibson

Seconded – Mark Dudley

Resolution agreed and passed

6. **Independent Examiner’s report to the Council of Management for the year ended 30 September 2023.** This is found in the report and accounts and precedes the Statement of Financial Activities.

Ordinary resolution: To receive the Independent Examiner’s report to the Council of Management for the year ended 30 September 2023.

Proposed – Pauline Rutherford

Seconded – Simon Jones

Resolution agreed and passed

7. Election of Council members

In accordance with 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: Mr. J. Curwen, Mr. M.R. Demidecki-Demidowicz; Mr. M. Dudley, Ms. E. Beer, Dr. C.C. Gibson, Ms. S. Holt, Mr. S.R. Jones, Mr. N. D. Redgate, Mr. S. Rutherford (Chairman), and Mr. R. L. Stewart.

All have indicated they are eligible and willing to stand again for Council. Council has not recommended that anyone else be elected and no notice of intention to propose any other person for election has been received.

Ordinary resolution: To elect to the Council of Management all those retiring members of the Council of Management who have offered themselves for re-election.

Proposed – Roger Tabor

Seconded – Richard Panniker

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 – Catherine Artindale

Resolution agreed and passed

9. Chairman's concluding remarks and discussion.

John Curwen has held the position of Honorary Treasurer for 20 years, and has decided to step down from that role, although he will continue as a Trustee. The Chairman thanked John for his support over his time as Treasurer and for the astounding job he has done- he has undertaken a huge amount of work for the Association. The Chairman also paid tribute to John personally and thanked him for his help and support.

Past, present and future

Last year the BNA Young Nats completed a project looking at the weather in their gardens by using a maximum thermometer and a rain gauge so they could do weekly recordings there. This project was sponsored by the Wentworth Garden Centre, who kindly donated the equipment. It was led by our Hon. Youth Officer Endymion Beer and supported by ITV Weatherman Chris Page who wrote an introductory article for the Nature Gazette, and kept in touch with messages of support throughout the project.

This year our Young Nats are looking at recording bees and butterflies in their garden. It has been wonderful that Professor Ted Benton has been encouraging them by writing an opening article for the Nature Gazette and answering their questions about bees. Work on these projects will go towards the Young Nats BNA Recorders Badge.

The BNA is looking at ways that we can help our Student members in the future, and a sub group from the BNA Council is looking to see how this can be developed. The first part of this process has been to set up a WhatsApp group for the students with help from Roy Stewart, Steph Holt and Chris Gibson, however other ideas and thoughts are being looked into by the sub group on how we can develop this. As previously mentioned, the BNA has a substantial amount of money, which the Association is duty bound to protect as well as all funds received from members in the future. Therefore, the funding of Student and Young Nats projects has been helped by the Wentworth Garden Centre who agreed to us having collection pots at the centre, and through the Chairman's sponsored walk in May. Over the last year to date, these donations have raised a total of £1739.00. If anyone can think of how to fund raise in different ways please do get in touch with me. That money too will be used to promote the study of natural history by young people.

The BNA is starting to get ready for the Encaenia (5th October) which will be held at the Natural History Museum in London again. Please do come along, it was lovely to see everyone last year and to socialise. The 2023 Encaenia was a great success, with tours around the NHM in the morning, and talks and presentations in the afternoon. This year will offer a similar format and include a tour around the NHM gardens.

But for now, I would like to thank Roger as President of the Association, and Hugh Warwick who gave the talk prior to this meeting, and to thank everyone else for turning up.

Discussion

Simon Jones mentioned the Selborne Field day on 3rd August, to be held at Gilbert White's house and garden in Hampshire. I would recommend people to join in as it is another opportunity to get together. There will be a charge for tickets with information on how to get them available on the website. Steph Holt who has organised this is planning during the event to put a moth trap out and for us to do some sweep netting.

Another possible future field day could be held at The Lovell Quinta Arboretum, where David Skydmore is a trustee, in Swettenham in Cheshire. The arboretum, set up by Sir Bernard Lovell the radio astronomer, has

three national collections of oaks, pines and ash and the lake has been recently refurbished. It would be nice to look at getting a few members over there and to meet either on a single day or over a weekend. We have an array of interests in the BNA and going out with these more experienced naturalists to see how they work and what can be found is great to see.

South Yorkshire branch has a repeat visit to Brandon Marsh this month. It was a huge success when we had last year's weekend meeting there and gave the Wildlife Trust an extensive species list which we had put together. This additional visit has been opened up to a few of those members who attended last year.

Brian Sims spoke about the blister packs which most people of a certain age seem to use a lot of! His rotary club has been collecting the empty packs. There is a waste management company called Teracycle who will recycle them as local councils don't have the facilities to do this. This company uses the packs to turn into a variety of objects including garden furniture, playground surfaces, storage containers etc. Superdrug the pharmacy chain will accept these packs and send them to Teracycle for recycling. Brian has written an article in the Young Nats Nature Gazette about this, and maybe this should be repeated in the BN to reach a larger audience, and get more of us doing this.

Brian mentioned too his branch's recent visit to Dorset with lots of sightings and places to visit. Steve said SY branch are planning a visit to Dorset next year too.

Finally Steve mentioned that David C. Wareham, a member in Dorset, has submitted a book for the series of "How to Begin the Study of" on the subject of Reptiles, which Pauline is just finalising now, and hopefully this will be followed with another on the subject of Amphibians.

10. Date and venue of next meeting to be announced

Meeting closed at 15.01