



Marylebone Birdwatching Society

MINUTES

of the 33rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held on Friday 16 January 2015 at the Gospel Oak Methodist Church, Lisburne Road, London NW3 2NT.

1. Welcome and Apologies.

Gaye Henson as Acting Chairman welcomed members of whom 25 were in attendance. Apologies had been received from Meg Game and Lynette Small.

2. Election of Chairman

Malcolm Wroe, Chairman of the Society for many years, had died during the summer after a long illness.

Steve Ripley was elected Chairman in succession to Malcolm on a motion proposed by Barbara Luke, seconded by Susie Davidson, and took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

3. Minutes of the previous AGM

Minutes of the AGM held on 17 January 2014 were read and confirmed as a true record on a motion proposed and seconded from the floor.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

Hampstead Heath Dams

Continuing concern was expressed about the potential impact of this project on wildlife on the Heath, for example, on breeding kingfishers. Specific concerns such as these can be brought to the attention of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee at the regular committee meetings by the MBS representative (Gaye Henson)

5. Chairman's Report

- (i) The Chairman paid tribute to Malcolm Wroe, who had been held in deep affection by members for his warmth of personality and the distinction of his work for MBS and for youth organisations in Gospel Oak. He thanked members for endorsing his appointment as Malcolm's successor – "big boots to fill."
- (ii) He then gave a brief report on the Society's activities in the 2013 – 2014 season, drawing attention to highlights in the programme of indoor meetings, local outings and coach trips as well as to the problems which had sometimes arisen during an exceptionally wet season. The walks on Hampstead Heath, which drew in novices and members of the public, in his view embodied the MBS values. He thanked all the organisers for their work and Marion Hill for her work on publicity, and looked forward to working with them and the rest of the Committee in 2015 -16.
- (iii) an expanded version of the Report would be posted on the Society's website along with the AGM Minutes.

6. Treasurer's Report

- (i) For the first time, accounts that had already been audited were available to the AGM. A vote of thanks to the Auditor was proposed by Barbara Luke, seconded by David Davidson.
- (ii) The Treasurer reported that for the first time for some years the accounts showed a loss of some £600 over the season, in contrast to the surplus in the previous year. This was attributable to a decline in bookings for coach trips and would have been greater had the Society not had a free replacement for a missed trip. The Society's reserves (some £5000) were adequate to meet the loss but it could not be allowed to recur. MBS fares for coach trips were lower than those of other organisations and might have to be increased next season.
- (iii) Income from indoor meetings had also shown a decline, partly because of the discontinuance of the raffle, and again an increase in charges might be necessary.

7. Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee (HHCC) Representative Report

Gaye Henson explained that the function of the HHCC was advisory to the Management Committee which was the main decision-making committee. Representatives on the HHCC covered a wide range of interests and as a newcomer she had found the committee's work of great interest, in particular the walks prior to committee meetings during which experts explained what work was being done on the Heath and the reasons for it, and policy issues of all sorts were discussed. She had been reassured that the Committee was highly sensitive to issues of natural history and wildlife, which received a great deal of attention, and very willing to hear comments from the MBS. One of main agenda items of the Committee during 2014 had been the dam project. To summarise, the Heath management had a legal obligation to prevent failure of the dams. Public consultation had started in January 2014 and the results were published in March. The preferred solution for work to be undertaken was published in June. The Heath and Hampstead Society called for a judicial review in July claiming the work did not need to be done. The judicial review was heard in November when the claim was rejected and leave to appeal refused. On January 15th 2015 the planning application was heard by London Borough of Camden and approved. The aim would be for work on the project to commence as soon as possible prior to the bird nesting season.

8. Election of Committee

On a motion proposed and seconded from the floor, Committee Members were re-elected en bloc as follows:

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| Nick Moore | Secretary |
| Meg Game | Assistant Secretary |
| Jo Campbell | Minutes Secretary |
| Judy Powell | Treasurer |
| Marion Hill | Publicity |
| Gaye Henson | Heath Consultative Committee Representative |
| Gaye Henson | Indoor Meetings Organiser |
| Jean Clarke | Catering |
| Lynette Small | Local Outings co-ordinator |
| Andrew Peel | Coach Outings co-ordinator |
| David and Susannah Davidson | Coach Bookings at Indoor Meetings |
| Helen McCulloch | Membership Secretary |

9. Election of Auditor

Richard Campbell was re-elected on a motion proposed and seconded from the floor.

10. Coach Outings

- (i) Referring to the Treasurer's report, Andrew Peel said that the problem of falling numbers was not confined to MBS: some organisations had had to stop running coach outings altogether. The Committee was eager to avoid this, and any necessity to cancel undersubscribed trips. There was evidence that the arrangements for pick-up and set-down, which had served the Society well in the past, were now discouraging participation since they resulted in long journeys out of and into London, often in heavy traffic, with consequent loss of time on the reserves.
- (ii) A questionnaire had therefore been put to members and other participants setting out four options. 80 responses had been received of which more than half favoured Option C, a single pick-up point at Euston Station, which had the advantage of offering both coach parking and unrestricted car-parking on Saturdays.
- (iii) Respondents, and members at the meeting, made a strong argument for an additional stop at a tube station on the way home. AP agreed to make every effort to accommodate this but as circumstances would vary from trip to trip decisions could only be made on the day, by the leader in consultation with the coach driver. In order to maximise time on the reserves the pickup time should remain 8.00am.
- (iv) The proposal was not in itself a panacea and would be adopted in the first instance on an experimental basis for the 2015 – 2016 season. The Committee would in the meantime continue to investigate the reasons for low take-up and would look at means of reducing costs.
- (v) After discussion a proposal to adopt Option C, a single pick-up and, subject to (iii) above, set-down point at Euston, for the 2015-16 season was passed by a large majority on a show of hands.

10. Any other Business

There was none except a vote of thanks to the Committee from Barbara Luke.

JAC 17/01/15