

## MARYLEBONE BIRDWATCHING SOCIETY



### Minutes of the 40th Annual General Meeting held on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> Sept 2021 via Zoom

1. **Apologies for absence:** Joyce Huggins, Andrew Peel, Helen Newnham, Barbara Luke
2. **Minutes of the last AGM held 18th September 2020:** These were published on the website. It was agreed that they were a correct record of the meeting.
3. **Matters arising from the minutes:** Nil
4. **Chairman's report on the Society's activities in the 20/21 season, Steve Ripley:** Last year's AGM was the first MBS meeting to be held on Zoom. It was not anticipated that we would still be using Zoom 12 months later. The only local outing that took place was to Cheshunt in May '21. Nightingales, hobbies and a cuckoo were seen. It seems as if nature continues as normal in spite of Covid. There were no coach trips because of the risk of Covid. There were excellent monthly indoor meetings organised by Gaye with travels as far afield as Australia. Gaye also organised our first Christmas quiz which was a great success. Heath walks were held without restrictions from July 2021. Meg Game has led the Heath walks from 2010 until March 2020 and is not able to continue with the role. Thanks were offered to Meg for her commitment to this role and the excellence she brought to the role through her knowledge of the Heath. The Heath walks will continue with informal leaders. Thanks were offered to Marion for updating the website and Facebook and importantly sending out regular newsletters to the membership. Gaye and Marion managed to keep the club going through the pandemic. Thanks were also offered to the membership for remaining positive throughout the past 18 months. In spite of the club's lack of activities, membership numbers have risen. We are now at the start of our 40<sup>th</sup> year as a birding club. We will be recognising this important anniversary at the December indoor meeting. Hopefully we can all meet as we restart local and coach outings. Our first coach trip is to Abberton Reservoir in October and the rest of the programme will be rolled out according to the prevailing Covid situation. The membership was wished 'good birding in the year to come'.
5. **Treasurer's report, Judy Powell:** Good levels of membership have been the sole source of income in the last year. There have been very few outgoings. The use of Paypal has brought increased income. In the last year we have earned a surplus of approximately £1000. Available funds are approximately £9000. The healthy finances reflect the belief in the Society by its membership.

The financial report was accepted by the membership.

6. **Election of auditor/examiner:** The examiner (Richard Campbell) will be asked by Judy to examine the accounts for 19/20 and 20/21. This was agreed by the membership

**7. Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee representative report, Gaye Henson:** The HHCC meetings have continued online. These meetings have been linked to two walks, prior to meetings. The pandemic has had a huge impact on the Heath because of increased footfall combined with poor weather. It may take 2 years to recover. However, many repairs have taken place and fences erected to protect trees and other sites. In the last year the Heath has developed improved bird nesting sites and undertaken management of wetland sites. The Heath was flooded in early August, caused by exceptionally heavy rain. The previous work on the dams was much appreciated as no serious flood damage occurred. To celebrate 150 years of the Hampstead Heath Act, seasonal information boards have been erected. The MBS contributed to the boards and the logo is shown on the boards. It was recommended that the MBS donates to Hampstead Heath Open Spaces page, specifically towards the development of the Model Boating Pond Island into a wildlife sanctuary. The suggested donation was £190, celebrating 150 years of the Hampstead Heath Act and 40 years of the MBS. Members of the MBS took part in the nesting bird survey (April – June 2021); the report has not yet been received.

#### **8. Election of the committee**

The current members are offering themselves to be re-elected to the Committee. It was proposed that the committee is re-elected by the membership. This was agreed by the membership.

**9. Plans for the 21/22 season:** We have a full programme for 21/22. This includes local outings, coach outings and indoor meetings.

Coach outings – It is planned to charge £30.00 per person (members and non-members the same price) and to run the coach at 50% occupancy. The decision to reduce capacity has been made by the Society and not by the coach company. Andersons have set in place cleaning and ventilation standards. Some members felt that the price of the trip would put people off (Nick Moore) but Marion replied that her survey of members had shown that members were willing to pay more for the extra space and were also keen to wear face masks. Decisions about each coach trip will be made according to the current Covid situation with the possibility of having higher numbers travelling and reducing prices. Mary Holden asked if those who could not afford to travel could get MBS financial support. Steve Ripley didn't think this was necessary as we are starting gently and cautiously and need to constantly re-assess the situation.

#### **10. 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the MBS**

- Donation to Hampstead Heath Charities – The donation of £190.00 was ratified by the AGM attendees. It was felt that the donation could be a photo-opportunity for the Club. Denis Herbstein has been asked to write a poem celebrating the club and it will be premiered at the December indoor meeting. Any further suggestions for additions to the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations should be made known to the committee. Steve is still looking for '3 words on what the MBS means to me' plus any lengthier memories. Photos and videos will be welcome.

#### **11. Any other business**

- The Springett Lecture will take place on 30/9/21 at Rosslyn Hill Chapel and is entitled 'Entangled lives: fungal networks, ecology and us' given by Dr Merlin Sheldrake.
- The membership was thanked for all their support throughout the last year (Steve Ripley)

Frances Tatnall, Club Secretary