



RSPB LINCOLN LOCAL GROUP

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - MAY 11, 2023

In the absence of the Group Leader through illness, this meeting was chaired by the Treasurer, who opened proceedings at 2055 by welcoming 41 members to the meeting.

Apologies for absence received from Ivor McNish, Susan Robey, Frank & Clare Brufton, Janette Seaman, Alan Jefferson, Steve Lovell, Peter Skelson, and Fiona McKenna.

Approval of the Minutes of the 2022 AGM

The minutes of the 2022 AGM had been made available on-line for members, and also in print at this meeting, and it was proposed by Fiona Wallace and seconded by Vera Holmes that they be accepted; all agreed.

Matters arising - no points were raised by members attending.

Secretary's Report

The Secretary first summarised the speakers who had visited the Group from September 2022 until May 2023 and the talks that they delivered, making reference to several problems encountered when a speaker had to cancel at short notice because of weather or transport problems and a replacement speaker had to be found very quickly. He reported a varied mix of talks on British and foreign birds and wildlife taking the audience from Canada to the Antarctic, and from all parts of Britain. He complimented the speakers, all of whom were making return visits to the Group, on the excellent images that they had shown and their deep knowledge of the subject in question. He referred next to attendance at indoor meetings, which regularly averaged 80-90 people before the pandemic, but this level has not been achieved since and over the past year the average was 71 per meeting, with a minimum of 53 and a maximum of 97. This compared with 61 the previous year, so a slight improvement was noted. He therefore stressed the need of all members to continue to encourage friends and family to attend and so boost numbers in order that the Group could continue to meet the ever rising hire charge for the lecture theatre. There were no questions from members on the Secretary's report.

Field Secretary's Report

The Field Secretary first thanked everyone for supporting field trips over the past year but pointed out that numbers attending were not reaching the same level as previous years. He thanked the Group Leader and the Treasurer for deputising for him in his absence recently from field trips, and he thanked Ray Daniels for his regular written reports of field trips. He then summarised the reserves visited each month, and several local evening venues, and highlighted some of the best birds seen on these trips. He referred to the trip in December to Carsington Water and the excellent Christmas lunch taken there by members, and the long weekend trip in January to Kent which produced a group total list of 72 bird species. Another excellent field trip was mentioned, namely Attenborough in February where many of the Group managed to see Pallas's Warbler, Siberian Chiffchaff, Smew, Ring-necked Duck and Cattle Egret.

The Field Secretary was thanked for all his hard work.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer began by stating that this year the accounts had not been independently audited as our usual auditor (Ivor McNish) had not been available, and he asked the audience if anyone felt qualified and inclined to check over the accounts. He next gave brief headlines of the past year, with income slightly down following the ending of bird food sales, expenditure slightly down (as no donation made to RSPB projects in that year), field meeting income increased but also field meeting expenditure because of higher coach hire charges. He thanked Heather Dowson for securing sponsorship for all our indoor meetings.

The Treasurer then displayed on screen the accounts of income and expenditure and the year-end balance, which information had been available also in print at the meeting. He informed members of the difference between the Charity Account (RSPB account) and the Holiday Account (the Group's own account).

He then went through in detail all the items of income and expenditure over the past year with relevant explanations of variances; he gave special thanks to our commercial sponsors and to our sponsoring members Carol Harvey, Margaret Lunn, Shirley Warner, Janette Marshall and those who prefer to be anonymous. He referred to the increase in payments by card at meetings and field trips, and thus he holds less cash in hand for floats. He explained in detail how the Holiday Account operates and the need to keep it well in credit for possible hotel deposits. He then stated that when Beccy Speight visits us in October, we should be able to make a considerable donation to RSPB projects and present it directly to Beccy.

There were no questions from members on this report.

Group Leader's Report

(In the absence of the Group Leader through illness, this report was delivered by the Treasurer)

He started by stating he would not refer to items already covered by other Committee members but would concentrate on other events of the past year. He first thanked all the volunteers who had lead the popular monthly walks at Hartsholme/Swanholme Country Park, and he thanked Alan Flintham who had retired after almost 20 years on the Country Park Advisory Group, which position has now been taken over by our Treasurer. He referred to the successful sales of the Group's 2023 calendar and reminded members that the 2024 edition will require images to be submitted to him by the end of July. He then referred to the continuing persecution of raptors, even here in Lincolnshire, which added to the loss of birds through avian influenza. Next he mentioned the threat by the Government to scrap environmental protection legislation though this failed with the change in government, but has not necessarily gone away. Next he reminded members that the RSPB nationally has a new president, Amir Khan, and new logo was introduced this year. He went on to talk about volunteers, and mentioned May 8 "The Big Help Out!" and stressed the need for volunteers without whom we would have no holidays, no day trips, no speakers nor any other events. He asked if anyone could give time to set up and maintain a Facebook page for the Group, give a few hours at Peregrine Watchpoint, Hartsholme walks, auditing accounts, or any other Group activity. He stressed the fact that no group can exist without sufficient volunteers. Finally, the Group Leader announced his planned retirement in May 2024 after 50 years on the committee and 39 years as Group Leader, and he urged someone to come forward to be considered for the position. He

thanked all Committee members for their hard work and thanked members for continued support of the Group.

Treasurer's Addendum to Group Leader's Report

The Treasurer extended the Group Leader's comments on the need for volunteers, stating that not only the Group Leader will retire next year, but also the Secretary, Field Secretary and Membership Secretary, and although three volunteers have expressed a possible interest in joining the Committee, the vital role is that of the Group Leader, without whom they will no longer be a Lincoln Group! As 2024 will be the 50th anniversary of the Group, he said it will be tragic if the Group folded at that time, but if a Group Leader is not found, then the Group will inevitably cease to exist.

Election of Committee

The Treasurer had already reminded the meeting that the posts of Group Leader and Treasurer are appointed directly by the RSPB and are not subject to election by members, and he announced that all existing Committee members had expressed their willingness to continue in office for one more year, and that there were no additional nominations for Committee. He therefore declared that the undermentioned will remain in office until May

Peter Skelson	Group Leader	Mel Thorn	Membership
Colin Goulding	Fundraising	Heather Dowson	Sponsorship
Stewart Foster	Secretary	Fiona McKenna	Various duties
Mike Willey	Field Secretary	Graham Mumby-Croft	Treasurer
Mike Catchpole	Publicity/Media		

2024. There were no objections from the members present.

The committee for 2023/2024 remains:

No other items were submitted to the secretary in writing for discussion at this meeting.

The meeting therefore closed at 2145.