

DRAFT/22.8.20

Minutes of the 27th Annual General Meeting of the Neotropical Bird Club

(Registered Charity Number: 1040130).

The Annual General Meeting of the Neotropical Bird Club was held on Saturday 22 August 2020 at 10.00 am at 9 Pound Close, Long Ditton KT6 5JW, United Kingdom.

Council member present*: Chris Collins (Treasurer)

Other attendee present: Raymond Jeffers (Life Member)

* The meeting was held at a time when HM Government's restrictions on public meetings were in place, hence the Attendance of only two members.

Chris Collins opened the meeting at 10.00 am. He noted that the Chairman of the NBC (David Fisher) was not present. He also noted that no business could be conducted because a quorum was not present. However, he pointed out that under the Constitution:

- if Mr Fisher was not present by 10.15 am the meeting could be chaired by a Council member nominated by Council and he had been so nominated; &
- if at 10.15 the number of members is at least two, the meeting would be quorate and business could be conducted.

Chris Collins announced at 10.15 am that Mr Fisher was not present and accordingly, he would Chair the meeting. He also announced that as two members were present the meeting was quorate.

1. Apologies for absence

None.

2. Minutes of 26th Annual General Meeting 2019

Chris Collins referred to the draft minutes for the NBC's 26th Annual General Meeting 2019, that were available at the meeting and presently published on the NBC's website.

A motion proposed by Raymond Jeffers and seconded by Chris Collins to approve the said draft minutes was put to the meeting for a vote and was passed unanimously.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

4. Chairman's Report for 2019

Chris Collins explained to the meeting that Mr Fisher had asked him to deliver Mr Fisher's report as Chairman to the meeting. Accordingly, he read out the text supplied by Mr Fisher as follows:

'The NBC had another good year in 2019, with our membership remaining fairly stable - 708 (compared to 711 in 2018). We introduced a direct debit system for subscriptions and would encourage all members with a UK bank account to switch to this, especially if still using the somewhat outdated standing order system. Full details are on the NBC website.

During the year, the NBC continued with the same publications policy of producing one large issue of *Cotinga*, our peer-reviewed scientific journal, and two issues of *Neotropical Birding* magazine. The autumn issue of *Neotropical Birding* (no. 25) was a special bumper 25th Anniversary issue, to celebrate the 25th birthday of the founding of the NBC. All issues were published on time and I'd like to thank our editors Guy Kirwan and James Lowen and their editorial teams for all their hard work on our publications.

All three publications contained many fascinating articles including, for example, in *Cotinga* papers on:

- Threats to, and conservation of, birds in Mata de Aldeia, north-east Atlantic Forest, Brazil.
- Observations of Rufous-vented Ground-Cuckoo associating with mixed-species flocks.
- Eurasian Curlew in Argentina: first record for South America.

While in *Neotropical Birding* there were articles as diverse as:

- Seeing Rufous-crowned Antpitta in Ecuador.
- Frontiers of knowledge: a quarter-century of Neotropical discovery.
- An article describing the discovery of the stunning Blue-throated Hillstar.

In 2019 we continued to offer the option to receive our publications in digital format at a cheaper rate than the normal subscription and by the end of the year 106 members had taken this option. The other major NBC activity was funding conservation orientated projects through our Conservation Awards Programme and during 2019 14 awards were made totalling £35,126 which means that over the last 20 years £176,134 has been provided to support Neotropical bird conservation projects.

The 14 2019 awards included:

- A census of flamingos at Mar Chiquita, Argentina.
- A project to study and raise awareness of the critically endangered Blue-eyed Ground-Dove.
- A project to identify the conservation actions needed to save the endangered and highly localised Goias Parakeet from extinction.
- And a project to assist with recovery work following a major fire which threatens the endangered Grey-bellied Comet in Peru.

The Conservation Awards Programme was managed by Rob Clay and Chris Sharpe and I would like to thank them both for their hard and dedicated work on the programme. Unfortunately, due to other commitments Chris stood down from this role in early 2020 and we are currently seeking a replacement for him. We are hoping to find someone from within the Neotropical region.

I should also mention that the conservation awards fund continues to be boosted significantly by very generous donations from the March Foundation in the United States and Mark and Mo Constantine. Because of their support we are able to fund far more projects than would otherwise be the case.

In addition, I would like to thank our Corporate Supporters, most of whom have been supporting us for many years now.

During the year, the NBC continued to operate a Facebook page and we now have nearly 6000 members on Facebook. We have a small team of Facebook administrators and I'd like to thank them for their hard work and support.

We also have a Twitter account which is managed by three NBC Council members and now has 1500 followers and growing.

In August 2019, the NBC had its usual stand at the British Bird Fair at Rutland Water with the main prizes in our annual raffle being a pair of Swarovski EL binoculars. The NBC would like to thank Swarovski Optik for their ongoing support in providing prizes for this annual fundraising event. And we should also thank Sunbird and Lynx Editions for donating the other prizes.

Also, at Rutland, we held a 25th Anniversary dinner in Oakham the night before the Bird Fair which was very well attended and enjoyed by all. An after-dinner talk was given by Rick Simpson, CEO of Wader Quest and an ex-member of NBC council.

In addition, we gave 25 free memberships to 25 people under the age of 25 hoping to encourage their interest in birds and conservation.

We also held a joint one-day meeting with the British Ornithologists Club at the Natural History Museum in London in October, with a range of speakers including several from the region such as Luis Fábio Silveira from the University of São Paulo, Brazil and Martin Schaefer, CEO of the Jocotoco Foundation in Ecuador.

The NBC would not be able to function without the dedication of our council and I would like to thank them most sincerely, especially Chris Balchin who does the bulk of the admin work as NBC Secretary. I have already thanked our editors for their work in producing our excellent publications, but would also like to thank Eng-Li Green who designs both journals, Mike Dawson of Swallowtail Print, the company that handles our printing, Gordon Ellis who keeps the NBC accounts, Heather Tarrant who helps Chris Balchin with the membership admin, and Raymond Jeffers, who, though not on council is actively involved with NBC providing us with a wealth of invaluable advice and also is the main force behind the organisation of the NBC tour programme. And finally, thanks to the RSPB for acting as our UK postal address and for handling the mailing of our publications at a very advantageous rate, and to Maina Handmaker, for handling our US post throughout 2019.

Finally, just a quick update on the current year. Another great issue of *Neotropical Birding* was published in the spring and the digital version of *Cotinga 42* was published in June. Things are progressing well with the Conservation Awards Programme and we funded more projects earlier in the year and will shortly be reviewing the next round of applications.'

Chris Collins invited questions on the Chairman's report. There were none.

5. Treasurer's Report and presentation of independently examined accounts for 2019 and Trustees' Report

Chris Collins, in his capacity as Treasurer of the NBC, reported that from a financial perspective, 2019 was a highly satisfactory year for the NBC with total income of £73,165 which compares favourably with 2018 when the equivalent figure was £66,197.

Membership subscriptions remain the main source of unrestricted income and these increased to £22,924 during the year, a rise of almost £1,500 compared with 2018.

The other significant form of income are donations, most of which is to fund conservation awards, and he reported Council would like to thank the organisations and individuals who made donations during the year. In particular, they would like to acknowledge the support from Mark and Mo Constantine, PLJ Writings and the March Conservation Fund of Tides Foundation, whose ongoing donations make a huge difference to the number and size of conservation awards which can be funded.

Conservation grants during the year totalled £35,126 which was a new high for NBC with fifteen awards made. This took the total of grants funded over the last 20 years to £176,134.

The £22,295 spent on producing and distributing journals was the other significant expenditure which NBC incurred with this rising by £592 compared with 2018.

He wished to acknowledge the work of Gordon Ellis who maintains NBC's day to day financial records and Michael Goddard, our Independent Examiner.

He concluded that by confirming the finances of the NBC remain in a healthy state and at this point, and he did not believe that at this point the coronavirus pandemic has impacted NBC in a significant way.

He then referred to the draft accounts and trustees' report for calendar year 2019 available at the meeting and presently published on the NBC's website. He invited questions. There were none.

A motion proposed by Raymond Jeffers and seconded by Chris Collins to approve the said draft was put to the meeting for a vote and was passed unanimously.

6. Election of Chairman

A motion proposed by Raymond Jeffers and seconded by Chris Collins to re-appoint David Fisher as Chairman and a trustee until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting was put to the meeting for a vote and was passed unanimously.

7. Election of Treasurer

A motion proposed by Raymond Jeffers to re-appoint Chris Collins as Treasurer until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting was put to the meeting for a vote and was passed (Chris Collins absented himself for the vote).

8. Election of Secretary

A motion proposed by Raymond Jeffers and seconded by Chris Collins to re-appoint Chris Balchin as Secretary and a trustee until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting was put to the meeting for a vote and was passed.

9. Election of other trustees

A motion proposed by Raymond Jeffers and seconded by Chris Collins - to re-appoint the following as trustees until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting-Carl Downing, Charles Wilkins, Rob Clay, Roberta Goodall, Manuel Sanchez, Robert Williams, John Clark, Mike Dawson and John Thirtle- was put to the meeting for a vote and was passed unanimously.

10. Election of Independent Examiner

A motion proposed by Raymond Jeffers and seconded by Chris Collins to re-appoint Michael Goddard as Independent Examiner until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting was put to the meeting for a vote and was passed unanimously.

11. Alteration to the Constitution

Chris Collins drew the attention of the meeting to the resolution set out in the Notice for the meeting dated 20th July 2020 concerning a proposed alteration to the NBC's Constitution. He explained that the principal reasons for so changing the Constitution had been set out in a Notice sent to members on 1 April 2020. He invited questions. There were none.

Chris Collins proposed that the resolution be put to the meeting for a vote.

The vote was carried unanimously.

12. Any other business.

There was no other business.

Chris Collins declared the meeting closed at 10.30 a.m.