

# BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

## Minutes of the AGM of the British Ornithologists' Union held on 28 March 2018 at the University of Nottingham

President Prof Hamer welcomed everyone to the AGM. A total of 34 members attended the meeting.

### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from William Banage, John E Cooper and Ken Heron.

### 2. Minutes of the previous AGM

Minutes of the previous AGM held on 29 March 2017 at the University of Warwick (published online <https://www.bou.org.uk/about-the-bou/rules-annual-reports-agm-items/>) were approved as a true record of that meeting.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

### 3. Adoption of the Annual Report of Council & Approval of Accounts for 2017

President, Prof Keith Hamer, introduced the Annual Report and Honorary Treasurer, Mr Graham Appleton, the Annual Accounts.

Prof Hamer commented that 2017 had been another very successful year for the BOU, highlighting our journal, IBIS, continuing to publish the highest quality ornithological research from around the world, an excellent annual conference, our first Twitter conference, the Records Committee publishing the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the British List, and the Grants Committee awarding the first John & Pat Warham PhD scholarship.

We saw some major changes within the IBIS editorial team this year with Dr Paul Donald standing down as Editor in Chief, and after 11 years with IBIS. We thank Paul for his sterling service and warmly welcome his successor, Dr Dominic McCafferty. We also saw a large increase in the number and diversity of Associate Editors for IBIS, increasing the overall editorial board by around 25%. The continued success of IBIS is thanks in large part to the exceptional skill and hard work of our Editors, Associate Editors and our many reviewers, and we thank everyone who helps to deliver such a successful journal.

The annual spring conference, *From Avian Tracking to Population Processes*, held at the University of Warwick,

and the first in many years to be held away from the University of Leicester, was one of our largest ever events attracting researchers from around the world. We continue to support the attendance of many early-career researchers (ECRs) as well as providing them with increasing number of dedicated ECR events around our annual meetings.

This year also saw the BOU deliver the first ever global general ornithology Twitter conference, which was likewise a tremendous success, with over 60 presenters and 'delegation' of over 3,000 participants and further consolidated our position as a world leader in the online delivery of ornithological information via social media.

The BOU Twitter account now has more than 12,000 followers making us, by some margin, the largest ornithological society and journal on Twitter. We also have a growing following on Facebook and Instagram, and towards the end of the year launched a BOU/IBIS account on Weibo, the largest social media platform in China. This global online presence and our increasing support of the ornithological community, together with our continued presence at major North American ornithological conferences, led by our Chief Operations Officer, Steve Dudley, and our continued development of our own conferences, website and blog, continues to increase our international profile on multiple fronts.

Prof Hamer thanked our conference organisers and the participants in both events for helping to make them each so successful, and recognised the continued efforts of both the Meetings and Engagement committees, in particular our four Support Officers, Dr Cat Horswill, Dr Leila Walker, Dr Nina O'Hanlon and Dr Christina Ieronymidou, and BOU staff, for continuing to develop and deliver such excellent events.

Prof Hamer asked Mr Appleton to review the Union's finances.

Mr Appleton expressed his gratitude to the outgoing Treasurer, Julianne Evans, who stewarded the Union's finances for the previous five years. She also provided support for a full review of the Union's finances that took

place over the course of 2017. There were a number of changes to the Union's income between 2016 and 2017, the most significant were:

- We lost income from the British Ornithologists' Club, with the end of the contract to provide administrative services.
- IBIS income increased by £11,676, as a result of strong sales and a weak pound.
- Member subscription income dropped by 7.7%, due to a decrease in the number of full members.

The value of the Union's investments increased by 8.3%, as a result of strong global growth and shrewd stewardship by the Union's investment trustees; Nigel Crocker, Richard Price and Stephen Rumsey. Much of the income was used to fund research grants.

For some years there has been a strategy of spending accumulated funds in ways that align with the charity's objectives. Having seen projections for the next three years, Council concluded that we needed to increase income in order to reduce the rate of decline of these reserves. To this end, subscriptions were increase for the first time since 2005.

At this point, it looked likely that Council would also have to reduce expenditure in areas such as grants and awards and plans to do this were discussed. However, as the year came to a close, Steve Dudley negotiated a sponsorship deal with Leica that will support the Union's activities through to 2020. This timely intervention enabled Council to continue to support the full range of the Union's existing activities.

Council will continue to look at ways to diversify income, thereby reducing reliance on IBIS, which contributed over three times as much as membership subscriptions in 2017.

Rawlinsons, who are now responsible for our accounts and audit, have been recently taken over. Council is asked to note that the accounts were prepared and audited by the Rawlinsons team but that the Baldwins Audit Service Ltd are the signatories on the annual report.

The adoption of the Annual Report and approval of the Accounts for 2017 was proposed by Dr Rob Robinson and seconded by Prof Jenny Gill.

Finally, Prof Hamer thanked members of Council, the Union's committees and the BOU's staff for their valuable work over the year.

#### **4. Elections to Council**

Council proposed that Dr Helen Baker be re-elected as Honorary Secretary and Dr Emma Cunningham be elected as an Ordinary Member of Council.

There being no other names put forward (rule 10.3), the nominations were approved.

The President welcomed new member Emma Cunningham, and thanked retiring member Barbara Helm for her time on BOU Council.

#### **5. Appointment of Auditors**

The reappointment of Rawlinsons, as part of the Baldwins Group, as the Union's auditors was approved, proposed by Mr Appleton proposed and seconded by Dr Paul Donald.

#### **6. Any Other Business**

Prof Gill led applause from the floor to show the Union's appreciation of its Chief Operations Officer, Steve Dudley's, 20 years outstanding service to the BOU.

There being no other business or questions, Prof Hamer declared the AGM closed at 18:24h and thanked members for their attendance.