

# BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

## Minutes of the AGM of the British Ornithologists' Union held on 27 March 2019 at the University of Warwick

President Prof Hamer welcomed everyone to the AGM. A total of 38 members attended the meeting, four of whom were Officers of the Union.

### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Helen Baker.

### 2. Minutes of the previous AGM

Minutes of the previous AGM held on 28 March 2018 at the University of Nottingham (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 2018

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

Prof Hamer commented that 2018 had been another very good year for the BOU; continuing to publish the highest quality ornithological research in IBIS; delivering another excellent spring annual conference; two excellent one-day meetings; and our second global ornithology Twitter conference. Our Grants Committee was able to support another series of exciting research and bursary projects, including our second Warham PhD studentship awarded to the University of Tasmania, as well as launching a new annual travel grant scheme for BOU members to attend and present their work at global ornithology conferences. We also launched a new BOU member newsletter during the year, tailored to those members who prefer to read news in a printed bulletin format rather than online. During the year we also formalised our Equality and Diversity Working Group and began taking action towards setting and achieving targets that will make all our activities equally open to anyone in ornithology.

IBIS continues to be at the forefront of ornithological publishing, thanks in large part to the exceptional skill and hard work of our Editors, Associate Editors and our many reviewers. The addition of two more Associate Editors this

year is very welcome and he was delighted with how well our new Editor in Chief, Dominic McCafferty, has settled into his role. He was also delighted with the success of our new initiative to award a prize for the best paper published in IBIS each year, with an early career researcher (ECR) as first author. He said that any journal rests on the quality of its papers and he was very grateful to all those who contributed papers or gave their time to review papers for IBIS during the year.

The continued efforts of the Meetings Committee and conference organizers in delivering events that so successfully highlight current research and facilitate discussion and development in the field were also greatly appreciated. This year saw us run two very successful one-day scientific meetings on 'The ecology and conservation of grassland birds' (as part of our IOC activities in Vancouver) and 'Seabirds: towards sustainable futures for renewable energies' (our autumn scientific meeting). Our second global ornithology Twitter conference was also a tremendous success, further consolidating our position as a world leader in the online delivery of ornithological information via social media.

Prof Hamer thanked our conference organisers and the participants in all our events for helping to make them each so successful, and recognised the continued efforts of both the Meetings and Engagement committees.

We continue to grow our social media presence and #theBOUblog (part of the BOU website) continues to go from strength to strength. The BOU Twitter account now has more than 14,000 followers, maintaining our position as by far the largest ornithological society and journal on Twitter. In addition the BOU has a rapidly-growing following on Facebook and Instagram, and our first full year on the Chinese social media platform, Weibo, has been very rewarding.

The BOU's international profile and penetration in North America were further enhanced by a wide range of activities conducted and led by BOU staff, most notably our Chief Operations Officer, Steve Dudley, who initiated and ran a social media booth at the 27th International Ornithology Congress (IOC) in Vancouver. This was the first

ever such event at a major ornithological conference and was a great success.

We awarded several honours again during the year. At our annual conference, former IBIS Editors Andy Gosler and Paul Donald were presented with Honorary Life Memberships, in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the BOU, especially during their respective tenures running the journal; and the Alfred Newton Lecture was delivered by Prof Hugh Possingham. In August, Kathy Martin was presented with the Union's Godman Salvin Prize at her home IOC in Vancouver, recognising Kathy's outstanding contribution to ornithology and to the avian science community.

We were delighted to welcome Emma Cunningham to BOU Council this year, and I thank Barbara Helm for her time with us on Council. My sincere thanks also to Steve Dudley (Chief Operations Officer) and Angela Langford (Journal and Office Manager) for the excellent service that they once again provided throughout the year in the running of the BOU.

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

Mr Appleton informed the meeting that he had a sore throat so his item would be brief. He advised members that they could read his financial review in full in the annual report on BOU website.

He said his job as Hon Treasurer was easy to do because Steve Dudley was a canny negotiator on behalf of the BOU, and he received excellent support from our Investment Trustees.

He stated that the accounts appeared to show a surplus of £87,000 for 2018. This figure is distorted by a generous legacy of £134,000 from Tony Gibbs which was not available for general expenditure. Council was working out how best to spend this money in support of tracking and migration studies, as Tony had wanted.

Excluding other unusual transactions, such as Leica sponsorship and the poor performance of our investments (in common with everyone else's investments in 2018), the BOU made an underlying loss of £3,466. This is in line with BOU policy to reduce reserves.

Council remains keen to spend reserves to support ornithology and ornithologists, especially in the current tricky economic climate.

Thanks to our members and those supporting IBIS, we are still able to support and advance ornithology:

- we were delighted to have the BOU's first Warham PhD studentship with us at this conference;
- we are still supporting ornithologists through grants and bursaries;
- we continue to help early career researchers whenever we can.

Going forwards, BOU Council will need to take account of a changing publishing environment but, with your help and support, it is business as usual.

The adoption of the Annual Report and approval of the Accounts for 2018 was proposed by Prof Jenny Gill and seconded by Dr Rosemarie Kentie.

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 Juliet Vickery be elected as President, to replace Keith Hamer; Tony Fox be elected as Vice President, to replace Juliet Vickery; Neil Bucknell be re-elected as Vice President (for a further term of two years); that Francis Daunt be elected as an Ordinary Member of Council, to replace Darren Evans as Chair of the Meetings Committee; that James Gilroy be elected as an Ordinary Member of Council, to replace Andrew Harrop (co-opted) as Chair of the Records Committee; that Rowena Langston be elected as an Ordinary Members of Council, to replace Graeme Buchanan; and Rosie Trevelyan be elected as an Ordinary Members of Council.

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

The President welcomed new members Tony Fox, Rowena Langston and Rosie Trevelyan, and thanked retiring member Darren Evans, Andrew Harrop and Graeme Buchanan for their time with us 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 and seconded by Dr Nigel Clark.

## **6. Any Other Business**

Before closing the meeting, Prof Hamer was presented with a framed limited edition print of Robert Gillmor's ibises – the artwork which adorns the cover of our journal – by incoming President, Dr Juliet Vickery. Dr Vickery asked Prof Hamer what were his highlights during his terms as President? Prof Hamer replied that he had enjoyed his many years working with the BOU, not just the last four as President, but he was however particularly proud of being able to advance some of the work already put in place by previous Presidents, including further strengthening the

BOU's support for our community, in both providing increased funds to assist their research and in leading the way in educating and assisting them with communicating their science. The latter overlaps with the BOU's great conferences, and he was pleased to see the increased inclusion of early career researchers at the heart of our meetings. Lastly, he highlighted the setting up of our new Equality & Diversity Working Group, whose activities were so evident at this meeting, and will continue to be important in driving equality and inclusiveness of all BOU activities in future years.

There being no other business, Prof Hamer declared the AGM closed at 18:20h and thanked members for their attendance.