

SHOREHAM DISTRICT ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

14th March 2024

	<p>Apologies: Celia Beresford, Lynn Beun, John Bould, Hilary Bourne, Reg Bradbury, Roy Coppard, Bernie Forbes, Phil Jemmett, Steve Lawless, Eva March, John and Shena Maskell, Kev Midgeley, Heather Myall, John Newnham, Linda Priestley, Brianne Reeve, Roger Smith, Peter Wyld</p> <p>Members Present: Richard Allan, David Battis, Val Bentley, Tony Benton, Ron Bewley, Sean and Noranne Biddulph, Val Bullen, Vic Burns, Jerry Campbell, Claire Card, Margaret Costello, Sue Crane, Alan Dickson, Mike Dixon, Sue Earnshaw, Paul Emmerson, Heather Fox, Val Garland, Ian Gifford, Trish Hampson, Libby Hartzhorne, Geoffrey Hawman, Wendy Hilsom, Clive Hope, Jenny and Tim Holter, Elizabeth Leahy, Maureen Leeves, Helena Lewis, Sue Miles, David Milton, Richard Nowak, David Park, David Phillips, John Pointing, Jo Proctor, Robin Ready, June Rushton, Susan and Maurice Saunders, Ann Taylor, Marion Taylor, Rae and David Titcomb, Audrey Wende, Jo and Andy Whiting, Lili and Martin Wilson, Mark Wright, Tony Zoppi</p>
	<p>Introduction: Tony welcomed everyone to the meeting, then handed over to Clive Hope, who directed proceedings until Council members were elected later in the meeting.</p>
1	<p>Chairman's Report: The full report has been distributed online, so not being read in full here, but will give a flavour of our performance over the past 12 months, mostly in numbers. Firstly, some personnel announcements: After more than 13 years of service, Peter Wyld is stepping down as our IT coordinator. During that time Peter has revolutionised how we use IT to help run the business of the society, modernising our website, user group, and keeping our data safe and secure. We are all greatly indebted to Peter. He will continue as an active member of SDOS still. Secondly, Brianne Reeve is standing down after completing her 3 years as our President, and on behalf of you all, I thank her for her service and support as President. As many of you will know, Brianne first joined the Society in 1966, the year of the World Cup, so it was a truly momentous year! Since then she has been a driving force, covering many roles, including that of Chair, culminating in the role of President. Brianne is known to many of you and is greatly respected, and the Society has benefited from her years of experience, enthusiasm and dedication to ornithology locally. I would like to thank her personally for the support and encouragement she has given me in her time as President. I am delighted to inform you that John Newnham has agreed to become our new President. He has a wealth of experience, knowledge, and skilful management of data trends and is also a bird ringer. I would like to thank on behalf of Council the many volunteers who support the Society, delivering our walks and talks programme, the raffle, catering etc. with at least 200 hours donated – thank you. Secondly, I would like to thank my Sdos Council colleagues who have devoted many hours over the last year, working hard behind the scenes on liaison, the business of running the Society and looking after members. There were 20 SDOS walks and a further 5 where we partnered with other organisations. There were 7 popular and successful indoor talks and we gave 3 external talks. 2 excellent newsletters were produced and the Usergroup remains vibrant and relevant. We helped to deliver nature focused activities to 90 primary school children and carried out 10 wetland bird surveys. I estimate they have devoted at least 1100 hours to all these activities I've been describing. In terms of conservation activities, I'm just going to share some of the headlines: We were instrumental in the provision of 3 interpretation panels alongside the Adur SSSI We produced 6 informative 'Where to Watch Birds' videos for social media Completed 12 surveys at Cissbury fields We marked the 70th anniversary of Sdos by publishing this excellent book And we created 8 commemorative videos to promote our 70 years anniversary.</p>

	<p>We also connect with the local community through social media, and have 102 followers on X, 123 on Instagram and over 1400 followers on Facebook.</p> <p>As I reflect on the 70th anniversary of Sdos, I think of the founder members, who included Dr John Stafford and Miss Kitty Biggs, who lived on Mill Hill, and I wonder what would they think of Sdos today? I think they would be amazed and proud that we are still here, and probably be bemused by the use of technology. Hopefully they would be delighted that Sdos has survived and is thriving. We thank them for their vision, the Society continues to move onwards and upwards thanks to you, the members and all your support.</p> <p>The Chair's report was approved by a show of hands.</p>
2	<p>Annual Accounts:</p> <p>All members have been sent the Treasurer's report and the 2023 annual income and expenditure accounts. Costs have increased – hire costs for the new hall are almost twice the costs previously. With the former hall no longer available to us, extensive research was undertaken before coming here to this venue. IT fees, speakers, and post all have rising costs. Thanks to Sue for hand delivery of the 70 years book and to all members who help deliver newsletters by hand.</p> <p>The budget endeavour is to carefully contain costs which service the Society's commitments – IT fees, Insurance, Newsletters, Speakers – so these are covered by our subscription Income, topped up by the raffle.</p> <p>A significant increase in members in recent years, (currently 286, where it used to be around the 200 mark) has helped keep membership costs down.</p> <p>Society's reserves are currently around £5000. This has funded the 70 years book, free to all members, and we have also purchased items to assist with public displays such as a laminator, tables, display boards used at Widewater and Goring recently.</p> <p>We are seeking to spend further funds contributing to public information schemes or conservation projects.</p> <p>As a result of all this, subscriptions are able to continue at the cost set in 2006.</p> <p>The accounts were approved by a show of hands. Thanks were given to David Titcomb, the accounts examiner.</p>
3	<p>Election of Offices and Council Members:</p> <p>The following members were standing for re-election:</p> <p>Tony Benton Chair Tim Holter Treasurer Sue Miles Secretary and Membership Secretary Jenny Holter Minutes Secretary Richard Nowak Outings Co-ordinator Roger Smith Newsletter editor Richard Allan council member without portfolio</p> <p>All were re-elected with a show of hands. There were no objections.</p> <p>In addition, two members were proposed for nomination for Council positions by Tony, - Sarah Hunt as legal advisor, and Jo Whiting as IT coordinator. Jenny Holter seconded Sarah and Richard Allan seconded Jo.</p> <p>Their biographies, shown below, were circulated prior to the meeting, and also shared at the meeting.</p> <p>"Sarah Hunt, a solicitor since 2006, holds a master's degree in Environmental Management earned in 2021. Passionate about environmental causes, she actively supports SDOS campaigns by providing legal and regulatory advice. Beyond her professional life, Sarah, a mother of a vibrant 3-year-old, finds joy in scuba diving, kite surfing,</p>

	<p>and leisurely walks with her beloved dog, Billy. Committed to fostering youth engagement, she strives to inspire younger individuals to join the cause”.</p> <p>"Although I am now retired, I have worked in IT in numerous financial and educational sectors for the last 40 years. I love travelling, photography, birds and wildlife and my husband and I try to combine these on our holidays. I'm also busy with our three grandchildren. Since moving to Shoreham just over three years ago, we love walking along the river and enjoying and photographing the different birdlife that we see in the area. I'm very interested in the River Adur and the SSSI and how we can raise awareness with the local community in protecting this important and fragile habitat". Jo Whiting.</p> <p>Both were duly elected to Council.</p>
4	<p>Election of Examiners: David Titcomb was re-elected as Examiner</p>
AOB	None
	Meeting closed