

Treasurer's Report for Shoreham District Ornithological Society Annual General Meeting on 14th March 2023

The annual accounts for the **year ended 31 December 2022**, together with explanatory notes, have been provided in advance of the AGM to all members with e-mail addresses and by post to members without email addresses. **If e-mail addresses are available this minimises our society's postage and stationery expenses**, especially as costs continue to rise.

This report comments on significant features concerning income and expenditure.

With the exception of donations which are set aside for special projects, our **income** had been solely from subscription income during the Covid-19 meeting restrictions period and whilst we arranged a new venue for our evening meetings. With meetings restarted from October 2022 a raffle once again augments our income.

Recently, **costs** incurred in order to service our commitments to members have risen, principally in respect of information technology and hire of our new meetings venue. However, over the past two years subscription income has covered these increases due to a 25% increase in memberships.

Principal costs:

Information technology costs are higher due to our new website and computerised commercial database. Also, during Covid-19, we paid fees for a Zoom facility and an AGM on-line voting system. The latter now reverts to voting at a physical meeting as hitherto.

Hire of Hall: For many years we enjoyed the use of St. Peter's RC church hall but since the Covid-19 crisis the church are retaining the hall solely for their own use. Since October 2022 we are holding our meetings here at St Nicolas and St Mary C E Primary School where the cost to hire is higher. **£420 per annum. (£60 per evening) Previously £245 (£35 per evening).**

Postage: Potentially a cost increase due to higher postage stamp costs. However, we endeavour to minimise the impact by distribution of mail at indoor meetings and hand delivery by members attending indoor meetings.

Income:

Subscription income needs to cover the cost of servicing membership commitments which can be seen in the annual accounts. Concerned at the impact of increased costs, as Treasurer, I conducted a detailed budget review for our Council meeting in September 2022. Subject to ongoing reviews and careful control, SDOS Council decided, for the time being, to continue with the annual subscriptions based on the level set in 2006.

This is possible as subscription income is higher as, for several years, our membership was peaking at 200 individuals whereas it was 258 at the time of last year's AGM. Some were not renewed for various reasons but since then have been replaced by 25 new members. Currently we have **259** members of which **17 renewal subscriptions are awaited**; 9 are doubtful.

'Shoreham Birding', our Facebook site inaugurated in June 2020, now has over **1,000** members, up from 775 at this time last year. This facility, together with our recently revamped Website, public engagement events, personal introductions and new 'business' cards, will have contributed to maintaining the number of Society memberships.

Your Treasurer continues to closely control costs. Fortunately, our reserve balance of approximately £6,000 enabled us to cover expenditure over-runs during the Covid-19 pandemic restriction. This surplus is available to support appropriate projects. In recent years small sums have been spent on bird nesting boxes or feeders in local churchyards and Brooklands and the Barn Owl box at Bramber Nature Reserve. The last major financial outlay was two bird information panels at Widewater Local Nature Reserve.

The balance carried forward on 31st December 2022 is £9,069.03. Your Treasurer allows £3,000 of this to cover membership commitments. Providing membership numbers are maintained at the current level our financial position overall is healthy and membership fees can continue at the 2006 rate for the time being but subject to review for future years. **On behalf of SDOS Council I thank all members for your continuing support.**

Finally my thanks go to David Titcomb for examining the accounts. David is agreeable to continuing as accounts examiners for another year.