

Treasurer's Report for Shoreham District Ornithological Society Annual General Meeting on 14th March 2024

The annual accounts for the **year ended 31 December 2023**, 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. (*Provision of an email address for Society administrative purposes is separate from membership of our members' e-mail User Group forum, which is optional*).

This report comments on significant features concerning income and expenditure.

Principal costs:

Over recent years **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. Speakers fees are likely to increase.

Information technology costs are higher due to our recent new website and our computerised commercial database.

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 we thank members who have assisted with hand deliveries. In 2023 we had the exceptional task of delivering all but two dozen 70 year books by collection and hand delivery which saved a considerable postage expense. We must thank Sue Miles for cost effectively co-ordinating this distribution.

Income:

With the exception of donations which are set aside for special projects, our **income** is principally from membership subscriptions. This is augmented by members who attend evening meetings purchasing raffle tickets. This contributed £300 in 2023 and we thank Margaret Costello for selling the tickets. Also we thank Marion Taylor, Rae Titcomb and their team for serving refreshments which contributed £125. And interest rates have risen resulting in an eightfold interest increase to £81.

Concerned at the impact of increased costs, a detailed budget review was conducted for our Council meeting in September 2022. As Treasurer I keep a close eye on the position to ensure subscription income covers the cost of servicing membership commitments. However, over the past three years our membership has increased resulting in subscription income adequately covering the cost increases.

For several years, our membership was peaking at 200 individuals whereas, as at 27 February 2024 it is 289. This may decrease by about 12 after outstanding membership renewal reminders and new membership applications are concluded. This is 30 higher than comparable figures at the 2022 and 2023 AGMs.

'Shoreham Birding', our Facebook site inaugurated in June 2020, now has over 1,400 members, up from 1,000 at this time last year. This facility, together with our recently revamped Website, public engagement events, personal introductions and new 'business' cards, Instagram, X and You Tube will have contributed to awareness of our Society resulting in an increased level of new Society membership application.

Reserve funds

The balance carried forward on 31st December 2023 is £8,304.80. This is prior to receipt of all 2024 renewal subscriptions. Your Treasurer allows £3,000 of this to cover membership commitments leaving approximately £5,500 surplus funds.

During 2023 we resorted to our surplus funds to purchase display facilities for use at events: A table, trestles, boards and equipment to laminate photographs, posters, etc.: £175.47.

We are considering the funding of information panels at strategic birding localities.

Also reserves covered the £1,445 cost of our "Rare Birds and Rare Events" publication celebrating our 70th anniversary. This has been issued free to existing members and will form part of our new members pack whilst stocks last in place of our periodic Newsletter. Copies are available for members to purchase for £3 each. We are also exploring retail sales opportunities.

Conclusion

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 subject to ongoing reviews and careful control of expenditure.

On behalf of SDOS Council I thank all members for your continuing subscription support.

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