

## **Minutes of Annual General Meeting for North West branch of RSB held on 30 September 2020 by Zoom**

**Introduction and welcome** – by Harriet McAra

**Apologies for absence** – Linda Martin

**Review of committee roles** – re-election of Geoff Holroyd as treasurer, election of Elisabeth Green as secretary proposed by David Wareing, seconded by Jean Wilson.

**Elect new committee members** – Helen Whitehead, Alice Kirkpatrick and Liam Blacklock elected “en bloc”.

**Chair’s report** – Michael Clapham

On October the 10<sup>th</sup> last year at Manchester Sealife Centre we had the first of our busy years programme of events, a most fascinating lecture on cephalopod biology and intelligence by renowned cephalopod expert Dr Sarah Zylinski. This certainly made us think about the meaning of intelligence, imagine each of your limbs having autonomy of action!

This was to be followed by a lecture on turtles and a follow up series of 7 ecology days, with a change of theme from last year, and in preparation for a second ‘Bioblitz’ in 2021. In June we would have had our 21st schools quiz. But covid 19 had other ideas! All cancelled.

However, not to be deterred, we decided to replace the 7 ecology days with a video presentation on various aspects of invertebrate collection, identification and recording; a full day of recording at Wyre Estuary Country Park (with full covid precautions) has produced a Youtube presentation freely available through our RSB. Who thought our committee members were budding film stars and documentary makers?

A frustrating year all round and still on-going, so even more ingenuity will be required if we are to have anything like a full programme of activity into 2021,

So we are only too eager to welcome our new committee members, lots of fresh ideas and enthusiasm please!

**Treasurers report** – Geoff Holroyd

Please find attached annual return and bank statement of the North Western Branch for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

I need to highlight a concern regarding this year’s return as they do not reflect the true financial activity of the branch.

In October 2019 we held an extremely successful event for World Octopus Day at the Sealife Centre, Trafford Park Manchester. This event raised considerable funds as a result of an unexpectedly large demand for tickets. Some of the ticket sales were collected within the previous financial via the central bookings system and we received £150 of these on 18/9/19. These were to be carried over to the next financial year as my return for the year 2018-19 noted. When the annual allocation was made in December 2019 this was not included and our closing statement balance of 2019 ( £878.21) was simply topped up to the £1250.00 allocation (371.79 paid 5/12/19) meaning we lost this £150 ticket value for the above 2019-2020 year event. In addition we have never received the remaining funds from this event, which as can be seen below, equated to £392.50.

This has been a very unusual year and I appreciate the difficulties we have all faced. In addition I realise that at this point in the financial year this is all academic. However, it concerns me that these funds have not been recognised as generated through our region, we have not had the opportunity to use these for additional regional purposes and overall the funds appear to have been ‘lost’ in central accounts. It is only because of the

unusual nature of this year that the branch had sufficient funds available to honour the costs incurred in the Octopus day event.

I would appreciate this being investigated carefully so that funds collected centrally for regional branches do not 'go missing' in the future and, within a reasonable time frame, are made available to the branch concerned

<b>Royal Society of Biology Branch Return 2019-20</b>			
	<b>Year Ending:</b>	<b>30 Sep 2020</b>	
<b>Branch Name:</b>			
	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
	<b>Gross Income (£)</b>	<b>Gross Expenditure (£)</b>	<b>Net Funds (£)</b>
Cash Balance @: 30 Sep 2019			£878.21
Branch AGM	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Branch Events	£0.00	£1,028.32	-£1,028.32
Other Events	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Branch Administration		£0.00	£0.00
Branch Committee Travel		£187.07	-£187.07
Other Expenditure		£5.00	-£5.00
RSB Branch Allocation	£371.79		£371.79
Other Income; e.g. Sponsorship	£0.00		£0.00
Bank Charges		£0.00	£0.00
Bank Interest	£0.00		£0.00
Total Income / Expenditure	£371.79	£1,220.39	£29.61
<b>Cash Balance @: 30 Sep 2020</b>			<b>£29.61</b>

Laminated posters, guides and keys for future Ecology days have been purchased before this year end from remaining funds.

David Wareing asked why surplus money created from events seem to be penalized, yet if an event makes a loss the branch would not be subsidized.

Harriet stated that if the branch needed additional funding £500 supplementary is available from HQ. Philip Day asked what amounts other branches asked for, Harriet replied that we are about average in amount of money allocated compared to other branches.

#### **Future events –**

Jean Wilson (Vice-Chair)

- Following the very successful presentation by Deborah Burn, marine biologist, at the Blackpool Sealife in 2019, we are looking at Deborah doing a live or recorded lecture from Australia. Deborah is researching coral bleaching and the susceptibility to bleaching with regards to spatial variability on the Great Barrier Reef. The advantage of a live Zoom meeting is that the audience would have the opportunity to interact and be able to ask questions, the disadvantage is identifying a suitable time with regards to the time difference. David Wareing will be the contact and find out when Deborah is available.
- We are hoping to produce a Biology Christmas Quiz based on the very popular and successful style of question that Michael Clapham presents at the Annual Schools' Quiz. Michael's questions eliminate the opportunity to access the internet for the answers as the answers are within the images that he selects from his considerable collection of personal photographic images.
- If the virus is still inhibiting events next summer, then we are hoping to present the 'Virtual Schools' Quiz' in June next year. The 10 questions, probably pre-recorded would be delivered in 10/15 minute

slots by each member of the committee to teams of 4 year 12 students, a school could enter more than one team. The quiz will obviously exercise the committee's creativity in question design, maybe even sending out supporting packs prior to the day, giving demonstrations asking students' to analyse the results. Start time 10 am, results by 2pm.

- Ecology Days Poster

Due to the cancellation of the 'Ecology for All' programme for the spring and summer 2020, as reported by the Chair, we are hoping to build on this excellent resource by producing a few more videos concentrating on the different Taxa of invertebrates, starting in the spring with the 'Order Diptera' and Sub-Phylum Crustacea. We see the value of these ageless and advanced resources to a number of target audiences including individuals who have passionate interest in invertebrates, groups who have a mission to accurately record species for local and national records, support BioBlitzes by training potential entomologists, schools who have embraced the new GCSE in Natural History or students on ecology-based degree courses which include surveying.

Finally we are open to any suggestions from members who have ideas for events, remotely or actual, thank you.

Any ideas are most welcome, particularly from our new committee members.

Gary Hogben stated that he would be very willing to give his postponed Turtle talk at a Sealife centre and record it for members to view. Gary forwarded his contact details to Elisabeth Green.

It was pointed out that we find it difficult to liaise with branch members as due to data protection we do not know who they are. Social media is used by many branches to overcome this and to engage with the public.

Helen Whitehead volunteered to run the social media accounts for this branch.

Harriet sends out monthly update emails with names but not contact details. The membership directory can be used for cross referencing.

Helen Whitehead is an ornithologist and will help identify birds at the Bioblitz. She is based at Salford and will liaise.

Liam Blacklock specializes in Molecular and Cell biology.

The meeting closed at 19.45

22 people participated.

The meeting was followed by informative talks by Harriet McAra about her background and role and activities at RSB, also by Professor Nigel Brown and his role within the Society.

Harriet was thanked for her invaluable help these past few months.