



**Minutes of the 148th Annual General Meeting
of the Hertfordshire Natural History Society
held at Affinity Water, Hatfield at 4.20pm
on Saturday 7 October 2023**

1: Welcome: HNHS Chair, Peter Tallantire welcomed 37 members to the AGM

2: Apologies: Phil Attewell, Harry Bott, Ian Carle, Michael and Anna Clark, Chris Dee, Richard Dyster, Ronni Edmonds-Brown, Rupert Evershed, George Fowler, Tom and Janet Gladwin, Tricia Moxey, Christine and Denis Shepperson, Stuart Warrington, Nic Wilson

3: Minutes of the 147th AGM held on 1 October 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

Proposer: Peter Delaloye. Seconder: Chris James.

4: Matters Arising: none.

5: Report of the Management Committee for 2022/23: Copies were circulated to all members before the meeting and subsequently published in the 2022 *Hertfordshire Naturalist*. Peter Tallantire highlighted the following points:

- The Society's outdoor and indoor activities returned to normal following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions in early 2022. The Autumn Meeting attracted 40 members.
- The Gerald Salisbury Lecture, jointly organised with Welwyn Natural History Society, was given in February 2023 by Prof Brian Legg and Tim Wright of the Heartwood Monitoring group and drew a capacity audience of 90. Numbers attending the Bird Conference in March at Affinity Water's offices were also at capacity.
- The specialist groups for flora, bryophytes and invertebrates resumed their field activities. The county-wide survey of mammals, amphibians and reptiles (Herts MARA) made welcome progress and the new survey of dragonflies and damselflies launched into a successful first season.
- A setback for the year was the likely loss of Hertfordshire's last breeding colony of Tree Sparrows at Tyttenhanger. For 30 years, Herts Bird Club volunteers had been providing supplementary feeding, nestboxes and other support for the birds, but the colony size had become unsustainable in recent years
- Congratulations go to Judy England, editor of the *Hertfordshire Naturalist*, and Clifford Smout, editor of the *Herts Bird Report*, with their editorial teams for their excellent work. The Society continues to be grateful to Jack Fearnside who designs both journals in a voluntary capacity. Stuart Warrington had kindly agreed to step in as Editor of the Herts Naturalist.
- HNHS membership remained at around 500 members. In spring 2022, following the withdrawal of Virgin Money's Just Giving account, the Society had subscribed to specialist 'Member MOJO' software for organizing membership records. Continuing thanks go to Martin Ketcher, Membership Secretary, for overseeing the transition to the Society's new, online membership system.
- With sadness, the society recorded the deaths during 2022-23 of Nigel Agar, naturalist and volunteer reserve warden. David Nellist, former county spider recorder and wildlife artist Ernie Leahy.
- Thanks were due to all members of the management committee for their hard work including outgoing Treasurer, Dan Fletcher, who moved to Gloucestershire during the winter, but continued to prepare the 2022-23 accounts. The committee was grateful to Chris Ruis for agreeing to be co-opted as Treasurer from April.

The Management Committee report was approved. *Proposer: Chris James. Seconder: Agneta Burton.*

6: Annual Accounts for 2022/23: The accounts had been previously circulated to all members and were available at the meeting. The Society held total funds of £112,487 at the start of April 2023 compared with £107,777 the previous year. This comprised £60,183 in accessible funds and £52,304 in longer-term investments. Receipts for the year had totalled £16,565 and payments £8,449. Subscriptions accounted for £11,857 of the Society's receipts. Nearly half all expenditure was the cost of producing and circulating the Society's journals. This was, however, low thanks to Jack Fearnside providing his design skills for free.

The accounts were unanimously adopted. *Proposer: Roy Woodward. Seconder: George Stodulski.*

7: Constitutional Amendments: The Management Committee had received Charity Commission approval to bring forward proposals for amendments to the Society's constitution (2002 as last amended in 2007). These had been posted on the Society's website at the end of August 2023 and circulated to all members with the AGM papers. David Utting introduced each amendment and briefly summarised its purpose. Most were administrative, designed to update the Society's formal procedures in the light of current practice, and explicitly recognise the use of electronic communications, including online meetings and banking and the use of email notifications. In addition, the proposals introduced new requirements for management committee members to declare financial and other interests at meetings and the adoption of a standard clause, drafted by the Charity Commission, specifying the strictly limited circumstances in which trustees could be remunerated for work undertaken on the Society's behalf.

The constitutional amendments were unanimously approved. *Proposer: Peter Tallantire Seconder: Agneta Burton.*

8: Election of Officers and members of the Management Committee for 2023/24. Peter Tallantire reported, that Jack Fearnside and Dan Fletcher were both leaving the committee and thanked them for their much-appreciated contributions. The following officers and members were elected to serve as trustees: Chair, Peter Tallantire; Secretary, David Utting; Treasurer, Chris Ruis. Members: Agneta Burton, Ian Carle, Ronni Edmonds-Brown, Rupert Evershed, Jack Fearnside, Chantal Helm, Tim Hill, Martin Ketcher, Christine James, Alex Waechter & Stuart Warrington.

Proposer: Jenny Jones. Seconder: Elizabeth Hunter

9: Long-service Awards: The Society marked the retirement of Peter Delaloye from the Bird Club Committee with its Long-service Award. David Utting thanked Peter warmly, noting he had first contributed to the Herts Bird Report in 1984. He had joined the Bird club committee in the late 1990s, becoming Chairman from 2000 to 2005 and then Chairman of the HNHS from 2005 to 2009. A committed bird ringer, Peter had been a key contributor to the Tree Sparrow Project at Tyttenhanger. He received the Society's 1875 Award for an outstanding contribution to natural history in Hertfordshire in 2014. David mentioned that a Long-Service Award had previously been presented in May to the county's former recorder for bees, wasps and sawflies, Ray Uffen. The presentation had taken place at his care home in Knebworth.

10: Other business – none

The meeting closed at 4.51pm.

David Utting
HNHS Secretary