

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

Minutes of the AGM of the British Ornithologists' Union held on 10 April 2024 at the University of Nottingham

The meeting opened at 18:00h with a total of 20 members in attendance, four of whom were Trustees of the Union.

Dr Graeme Buchanan welcomed everyone and thanked them for taking the time to join us.

1. Apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

2. Minutes of the previous AGM

Minutes of the previous AGM held on 5 April 2023 via Zoom (published online <https://www.bou.org.uk/about-the-bou/rules-annual-reports-agm-items/>) were approved as a true record of that meeting.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Approval of the minutes was proposed by Prof Jennifer Gill and seconded by Prof Juliet Vickery.

3. Adoption of the Annual Report of Council & Approval of Accounts for 2023

BOU President, Dr Graeme Buchanan, introduced the Annual Report and BOU Honorary Treasurer, Mr Graham Appleton, the Annual Accounts.

Dr Buchanan provided a brief summary of the 2023 Annual Report, highlighting a number of key developments during the year.

In 2023, the BOU's Management Group expanded from President, Secretary, Treasurer and COO, to include both Vice Presidents (currently Prof Emma Cunningham and Dr Richard Bradbury). This larger group has broadened the expertise available and enabled tasks to be shared more widely.

The year saw Council undertake three reviews, of the BOU's direction (led by Dr Richard Bradbury, Dr Graeme Buchanan and Dr Leila Walker), of conferences (led by Dr Mark Eaton, Dr Catriona Morrison and Dr Leila Walker) and of membership (led by Prof Emma Cunningham, Dr Graeme Buchanan, Dr Tom Finch and Dr Leila Walker).

Dr Buchanan summarised the outcomes of these reviews, which included, under the direction review, the refinement of the Union's mission statement to read "*The British Ornithologists' Union will promote ornithological science across the international scientific community, support the individuals who contribute to that science, and grow understanding of that science among a wider community.*" The revised statement aims to retain the focus on scientific ornithology without limiting it to any single aspect, highlight the Union's role in supporting careers and clarify the breadth of the BOU audience.

The membership review provided the reassuring conclusion that membership has been stable post 2019 and recommended the collection of a small amount of extra information about members to inform future reviews.

The conferences review concluded that the aim of BOU conferences is "*to support the ornithological community around ornithological science*" and that the key metrics of success are conference attendance, scientific quality/attendee satisfaction, financial balance and membership recruitment. Meetings Committee will be trialling various new ideas at upcoming conferences with the aim of meeting these criteria.

Dr Buchanan highlighted two important events from 2023: the delivery of the ambitious autumn conference *BOUsci23 Global flyways*, spanning the globe over 24 hours, and the online evening of talks from students funded by the John and Pat Warham legacy.

Finally, Dr Buchanan reported that the Union's three Investment Trustees had decided in 2023 that it was time to step down, after decades of service, and he extended the Union's thanks to Mr Richard Price, Mr Nigel Crocker and Mr Stephen Rumsey. Three new Investment Trustees have been recruited in Mr Neil Bucknell, Mr Andrew Callender and Mr Ben Turner.

Dr Buchanan handed over to Mr Appleton, Honorary Treasurer, to present the review of the Union's finances.

The Union made a loss of £3,140 in 2023, which was less than predicted. This is partly attributable to the continued

strong IBIS income (£118,906 in 2023) and uncertainty about income generation due to post-Covid ways of working. Council continues to set budgets that are designed to be negative, and the budget for 2024 includes extra resources for conferences and promotion.

The adoption of the Annual Report and approval of the Annual Accounts for 2023 were proposed by Dr Helen Baker, seconded by Prof Jennifer Gill and agreed by those present.

4. Elections to Council

Council proposed that Dr Tom Bradfer-Lawrence and Ms Ros Green be elected as Ordinary Members of Council to replace Drs Sonya Clegg (as Chair of Grants Committee) and Julie Miller (as Early Career Researcher representative).

There being no other names put forward, rule 10.3 applies and the nominations are approved.

Dr Buchanan thanked Dr Sonya Clegg and Dr Julie Miller for their time on Council.

5. Appointment of Auditors

The reappointment of Azets Audit Services as the Union's auditors for the 2024 accounts was proposed by Council, seconded by Prof Juliet Vickery and agreed by those present

6. Any Other Business

There being no other business, Dr Buchanan declared the AGM closed at 18:20h, thanking members for their attendance and continued support.