

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

Minutes of the AGM of the British Ornithologists' Union held on 2 April 2025 at the University of Nottingham

The meeting opened at 18:00h with a total of 23 members in attendance, five 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

Apologies were received from Prof Juliet Vickery.

2. Minutes of the previous AGM

Minutes of the previous AGM held on 10 April 2024 (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 Dr Mark Eddowes and seconded by Prof Jennifer Gill.

3. Adoption of the Annual Report of Council & Approval of Accounts for 2024

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 2024 Annual Report, highlighting a number of key developments during the year.

IBIS continued to perform well on social media in 2024, relative to other ornithology journals, although engagement metrics were impacted by wider disillusionment with X (previously Twitter). BOU worked hard during the year to increase presence on Bluesky and decided, in late 2024, to switch to Bluesky (from X) as our parallel conference platform.

The Awards Nominations Committee oversaw the awarding of the Godman-Salvin Prize to P. Dee Boersma at the Pacific Seabird Group meeting (February), the Janet Kear Union Medal to Helen Baker at BOU2024 (April), the Early Professional Award to Wouter M.G. Vansteelant at the International Wader Study Group meeting (September), and

the delivery of the Alfred Newton Lecture by Amanda D. Rodewald at BOU2024 (April).

2024 saw the development of the new Undergraduate Summer Placement Scheme, an initiative from Engagement Committee seeking to provide financial support to undergraduate students doing summer research projects. The first round opened for applications in early 2025, particularly seeking applications from those under-represented within ornithology.

Also in 2024, Council approved Engagement Committee's proposal to recruit for an Equality and Diversity Support Officer, to help the work of the Equality and Diversity Working Group. Recruitment for this role will take place in 2025.

Two IBIS special issues were published during the course of the year, on *Avian Reproduction* and *Citizen Science*. IBIS became an online-only journal in 2024, although print copies continue to be provided to a very limited number of existing BOU members who prefer this format.

Three conferences were run during the year: BOU2024 *Urban birds* in Nottingham, BOUasm24 *Birds and net zero* in York and Zoom, and BOUsci24 *Avian conservation translocations* on Zoom.

The Small Research Grants scheme funded eight projects totalling c. £15,000, plus an additional two projects (totalling c. £4,000) funded by the Brenda and Tony Gibbs bequest. The fourth Gibbs Award of £20,000 was approved in the summer.

The Records Committee had a busy year, with eight new species being added to Category A of the British List. 2024 also saw the retirement of Chris McInerney as BOURC Secretary, following 13 years of service. In recognition of this, Chris was remotely presented with a Robert Gillmor ibis print at BOUasm24.

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

A clean audit was delivered in 2024, following the movement of our accounting system to the online platform Xero. The Union made a loss of c. £29,000, in line with Council's commitment to reduce assets. The value of our Unrestricted Funds grew over the year by c. £31,000, due to a strong rise in the value of investments and a continued healthy IBIS income. During 2024, there was a changeover of investment trustees, with Richard Price, Nigel Crocker and Stephen Rumsey handing over to Neil Bucknell, Ben Turner and Andrew Callender. The new investment trustees will be reviewing investments during 2025, while Council will continue to explore the scope for increased spend within the current IBIS contract.

The adoption of the Annual Report and approval of the Annual Accounts for 2024 were proposed by Dr Rob Robinson, seconded by Dr Allert Bijleveld and agreed by those present.

4. Elections to Council

Council proposed that Dr Mark Eddowes be elected as Honorary Treasurer to replace Mr Graham Appleton; that Dr Hugh Wright be elected as Vice President to replace Dr Richard Bradbury; and that Dr Arjun Amar, Dr Natalia Zielonka and Dr Lynda Donaldson be elected as Ordinary Members of Council to replace Dr Rosemarie Kentie (as

Chair of IBIS Management Committee), Dr Tom Finch (as Chair of Engagement Committee) and to fill the post of Chair of Awards Nominations Committee.

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

Dr Buchanan thanked Mr Graham Appleton, Dr Richard Bradbury, Dr Rosemarie Kentie and Dr Tom Finch 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 Dr Rob Robinson and agreed by those present

6. Any Other Business

Prof Bob Furness asked whether BOU had considered a name change of the journal IBIS, in light of recent journal name changes at AOS. It was reported that name changes can result in re setting of impact scores and a name change had been discussed in the past, at which time the strap-line "international journal of avian science" was incorporated.

Dr Buchanan declared the AGM closed at 18:21h, thanking members for their attendance and continued support.