

# MINUTES OF THE 67th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF SHROPSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY (SOS) HELD ON 5<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2023

1 **APOLOGIES:** None received.

2 **MINUTES OF LAST AGM:** The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022 had been circulated to all, and were subsequently accepted as a true record of that meeting.

Proposed: Tony Beckett      Seconded: Ian Carrington      Approved by show of hands

3 **MATTERS ARISING:** Jane Muscroft asked whether the work on the disabled car parking area had been carried out. Graham Walker responded that the work was now complete.

4 **FINANCES:** Brian Andrews presented the Financial Report for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022: SOS is managing the finances for the "Save Our Curlews Campaign" appeal. The balance at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 was £7,647. (Financial Statement attached to these minutes). There were no questions raised. The accounts were adopted:

Proposed: Tony Beckett      Seconded: Allan Dawes      Approved by show of hands

5 **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** John Arnfield presented the Chairman's Report for April 2022 to April 2023 (Chairman's Report attached to these minutes).

6 **ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

- **Chair:** John Arnfield is retiring as Chair. Proposal to elect Graham Walker to the position of Chair.

Proposed: David May      Seconded: Jane Muscroft      Approved by show of hands

Graham Walker took the Chair for the rest of the meeting at this point.

- **Secretary:** Mim Elliot-Smith to be re-elected as Hon Secretary:

Proposed: Claire Mulvey      Seconded: John Arnfield      Approved by show of hands

- **Treasurer:** Jean Rickard to be re-elected as Treasurer:

Proposed: Christine Hart      Seconded: Jock Elliot-Smith      Approved by show of hands

- **Management Committee:** Jim Almond, Tim Devanney, Sue Brealey and Helen J Griffiths to be re-elected, and John Arnfield and Claire Mulvey to be elected to the Management Committee:

Proposed: Jane Muscroft      Seconded: David May      Approved by show of hands

Annie Andrews is retiring from the Management Committee:

- **Conservation Sub-Committee:** Graham Walker to be re-elected as Chair:

Proposed: John Arnfield      Seconded: David May      Approved by show of hands

- **Publicity and Development Sub-Committee:** Sue Brealey is retiring as Chair. The post remains vacant currently. Anyone interested in the role was asked to make contact with a member of the Management Committee.

7 **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER:** James Baillie was proposed for retention as Independent Examiner

Proposed: John Arnfield      Seconded: David May      Approved by show of hands

8 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

Graham Walker thanked John Arnfield for his work as Chair over the last six years. He also highlighted that the Society has difficulty finding people to fill roles on the Management Committee, and would like to get new people involved.

It was also pointed out that there were books for sale during the meeting, money from any sales to go to the Save Our Curlews Campaign appeal.

**The meeting closed at 7.40 pm**

# SHROPSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

## Chair's Report 2022/23

On this, my last Report as Chair of this organisation, I would like to take the opportunity to highlight some of the Society's activities and achievements and thank those who have assisted in keeping the Society running smoothly over the past year.

Our **membership** continues to grow. It now stands at 939, with 5 additional institutional memberships. Since 2017/18 it has increased by about 140, which is 17% growth or about 23 new members per year. A recent BTO survey of UK bird clubs showed that their average membership was only about one-third of that of the SOS and only about a third of them were showing growth, so this is an excellent record. Thanks are due to Brian and Annie Andrews for their hard work in running our membership activities.

**Young people** continue to be underrepresented in our membership, which bodes ill for the survival of the Society and for the welfare of Shropshire's avifauna. We have recruited Ellie Micklewright to pursue youth engagement matters and have made junior memberships free. Additionally, Ellie is administering a youth birding Twitter account (which now has 127 followers) as well as building connections with the youth-oriented sections of like-minded nature- and conservation-oriented organisations. Many of you will recall Ellie from the talk she gave here in January.

There have been four issues of **The Buzzard** over the year, thanks to the hard work of the editor, Tim Devanney, and the regular contributors, including Jim Almond for his "Bird Notes" section. I would remind members that those who wish to receive their copy electronically can do so by filling in a simple form on the SOS website. So far, 17% of our membership have elected to receive their magazine in this format, which saves paper, postage, and volunteer effort, and gets the magazine to you earlier. On this topic, thanks also to the "Buzzard stuffers", the team which gets together four times a year to prepare the magazine packages for posting to members and to Annie Andrews for providing lunch. I hope you are all recycling the biodegradable packages in which the magazine arrives!

Progress on maintaining the up-to-date status of the **Shropshire Bird Report** continues and species accounts for the 2022 edition are under preparation currently. Thanks are due to the editor, Gerry Thomas, the account authors, and the rest of the editorial team. There are currently some concerns about the costs of mailing **SBR** as it has become larger and postal costs have escalated. It is likely you will be contacted for your advice about this matter in future weeks.

Organised member activities have picked up again. We seem to have worked through the post-pandemic dip in attendance at face-to-face **Indoor Meetings** here in Bayston Hill. We would encourage all of you to come to meetings to interact with those who share your interest in birds. The schedule of events is detailed in the Programme 2023 booklet you have received and is also available on our website [www.shropshirebirds.com](http://www.shropshirebirds.com), which I hope you all visit regularly. My thanks go to everyone who has helped to make these evenings such successful events, particularly Steve Dawes, Jock and Mim Elliot-Smith, Sue Brealey and, more recently, Claire Mulvey, and to those who set up and clear the hall for the meetings.

There have been five additional indoor meetings arranged by David John, secretary of the Church Stretton branch of SOS. If you are interested in attending these branch meetings, a link to the Church Stretton branch website is available on the menu to the main home page.

A full programme of **Field Trips** took place during the year, organised by Sue Brealey, and led by Sue and Mim and Jock Elliot-Smith. (Sorry if I have missed a trip leader – let me know if I have). Regrettably, despite several months of pleas, we still do not have a Field Trip Organiser. Let me again emphasize that this position requires you only to organise the trips (choose a location and find in-the-field leaders) NOT to run the trip yourself. Field trips will end in December of this year if this position is not filled, which I feel would threaten the very *raison d'être* of the Society.

SOS **Finances** remain healthy, and I would like to express my appreciation to Jean Rickard for her work as Treasurer and to Brian Andrews for the shepherding of the Society's investments.

The **Conservation Subcommittee**, under the guidance of Graham Walker, continues to be active. The "Save Our Curlews" campaign and appeal has been renewed and members are encouraged both to contribute financially and to join local projects related to this campaign. In addition, meetings on topics of mutual interest with the Shropshire Wildlife Trust have proved fruitful and efforts are currently underway to use "Birds of Shropshire" atlas data to identify hotspots for key species groups, like farmland birds. Currently, plans are afoot to involve the National Trust (South Shropshire Hills) in the management of Ward's Coppice, a small reserve in Church Stretton, although progress has been very slow.

**Venus Pool** remains one of the finest reserves in the West Midlands, attracting a wide variety of birds, butterflies, and other taxa throughout the year. Thanks are due to all those involved in the day-to-day administration of "VP", including work party participants and the volunteer wardens who monitor goings-on and assist visitors. Unfortunately, the Society's plans to expand the reserve by purchasing the adjacent quarry area proved unsuccessful due to the current owner's demands for what was deemed an unreasonable price for the site.

SOS members continue to be committed to **Bird Recording**, contributing to national surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey, the Waterways Breeding Bird Survey, the Wetland Bird Survey and Garden BirdWatch, as well as local projects such as the Red Grouse count and the Curlew and Lapwing Survey, among others. Many are also involved in bird ringing. Additionally, SOS members submit their own records to the County Bird Recorder or, preferably, to BTO's BirdTrack. The latter is now the preferred method of submitting sightings. Shropshire records submitted to BirdTrack are returned to the County Recorder for use in SOS publications and projects. Thank you to all those who have contributed in any way to bird recording in Shropshire during the year, including, of course John Martin, the County Recorder.

I would like to conclude by expressing my thanks and appreciation for the work of the SOS Management Committee and the Church Stretton branch committee during another productive year, and to all those people who contribute in any way to the smooth operation of the Society who I have not mentioned by name. Thank you!

*John Arnfield*

*(5<sup>th</sup> April 2023)*

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**SHROPSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2022**

**Page 1.**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	£	£
<b>Restricted Fund</b>		
"Save our Curlews Campaign" Appeal		
Donations 2022 Appeal	2300	5704
Donations 2023 Appeal	100	1255
Gift Aid Tax Recoverable	660	1631
Grants received	12360	11300
Interest received	15	-
<b>Total Inoming Resources</b>	<u>15435</u>	<u>19890</u>
<b>Resources Expended</b>		
Project Costs	24553	20136
	<u>-9118</u>	<u>-246</u>
<b>Balance of Fund as at 1st January 2022 Brought Forward</b>	16765	17011
<b>Balance of Fund as at 31st December 2022 Carried Forward</b>	<u><u>7647</u></u>	<u><u>16765</u></u>

**SHROPSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
BALANCE SHEET  
AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2022**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	£	£
Balance at Bank	4073	9596
Debtors		
Shropshire Ornithological Society 2005	914	2538
Grants Approved but not yet Paid	2000	3000
Tax Repayment	660	1631
	<u>3574</u>	<u>7169</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u><u>7647</u></u>	<u><u>16765</u></u>

**Representd by:**

**Restricted Fund**

"Save our Curlews Campaign"	<u><u>7647</u></u>	<u><u>16765</u></u>
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