

BARDSEY BIRD AND FIELD OBSERVATORY

Minutes of the 60th Annual General Meeting held at Prenteg Canolfan (Community Centre) on Saturday, 2nd July 2016 at 2pm

Present

David Hawkins (BBFO President) Fiona Shutler; Anne Vaughan-Owen; Mike West; Ann West;; Dai Stacey; Liz James; Bryan Thompson; Joan James; Geoff Gibbs; Kate Gibbs; John Harrop; John Roberts; Ian Wright; Margaret Wright; Jill Lawrence; Andrew Lawrence; Dianne Charles; Dale Brown. (Alicia Normand; Bob Normand; Val Archer; Steve Stansfield; Emma Stansfield; - present by telephone connection)

Apologies for Absence

Peter Howlett; Joe Brownlie; Nick Barlow; Mel Perry; Gwyn Stacey; Kevin Clement; Todd Chater; Mary McKay; Penny Condry; Patrick Charles.

Chairman's Introduction

The acting Chair, Dianne Charles, introduced BBFO's 60th AGM and made everyone welcome.

To approve the Minutes of the 59th AGM held on June 20th 2015

The minutes were on display in the room prior to the meeting and were accepted unanimously without change – acceptance was proposed by David Hawkins and seconded by Ann West.

Report by the Chairman on behalf of the Council, for the year ended 31st December 2015

This was presented to the meeting as a report from Peter Howlett read by DC and included here in full:

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My apologies to the meeting for not being with you this year – a friend's wedding means I have had to make the arduous journey to Orkney for a week.

This is my first report as Chair, having taken over from Patrick Davies at the AGM in June 2015. I would like to record my thanks to Patrick for all the time and energy he gave to BBFO in the ten years he was Chair. I would also like to thank Liz James for her time and efforts as Secretary and hope 2016 is much kinder to her than 2015. I also would like to welcome Andrew Lawrence into the role of secretary and thank him for being prepared to take it on.

Our warden Steven Stansfield returned for his 18th year, I think the second longest-serving bird observatory warden in the UK after David Walker at Dungeness. He was joined again by Mark Carter and Steffan Walton our assistants from last season. Having staff continuity like this is a huge benefit to the Observatory and helps ensure its smooth running. Talking of smooth running, the staff plus Emma Stansfield and some hard-working volunteers (you know who you are – and thank you for your time and effort) ensured that Cristin looked in fantastic shape for the season. Given the battering it gets each winter it is a testament to their hard work that it looks so good for everyone to enjoy during the season.

The ornithological highlight of the season was without doubt the occurrence of a fine male Cretzschmar's Bunting on 10 June. This was not only a new bird for the Observatory but also for Wales and only the sixth record for Britain. Amazingly three of those six have now turned up on 10 June! The bird stayed for ten days and this allowed for something the Observatory has never seen before – a full scale twitch by British birders. Due to some fantastic organisation by Lee Evans, Colin Evans and Steve a total of 500 or so birders got over to the island to see the bird. This helped provide a huge boost to the profile of BBFO in the UK birding media – the benefit of which we will hopefully see in the coming years, however, there was also a more immediate benefit in the form of some £2,000 in donations from those visiting birders. All in all an exceptional event for the observatory and we would like to thank all those involved in the organisation of the twitch.

Away from the bunting rare birds were a bit thin on the ground during the year with a Great White Egret, Red-flanked Bluetail and Pallas's Warbler the highlights. Spring did see an exceptional passage of Blackcap with a record 728 ringed and autumn will likely be remembered for the number of Yellow-browed Warbler and Coal Tit seen during September and October and the staggering 10,000+ Chaffinch logged on the 31 October.

Other island wildlife continues to be studied with work undertaken on seal pups, monitoring of any dolphins around the island and of course the moth trapping with new species continually added to the island list. Somehow Steve also managed to fit in helping with the production of 'A Bird Observatory is born' by Joan James. This delightful publication is a compilation of the musings of staff and visitors in the old 'chatty' log

kept in the early years of the observatory. It has been well received and any profit from it will go to the Observatory so many thanks to Joan and also to Steve and Emma for the work which went into producing it.

The financial security of the BBFO is never far from the thoughts of the trustees so the signing of another five year agreement with Natural Resources Wales to give funding for the scientific monitoring projects undertaken by our staff is most welcome. The funding received shows how much value NRW place on the work undertaken by our staff and also emphasises the need to maintain the high standards we have come to expect. The new agreement also gives us the opportunity to offer Steve and Emma some stability and we have agreed a five year contract with which will see him through to the end of this agreement – notwithstanding any financial disaster of course.

Steve and Emma are tireless in their efforts to come up with new fund-raising initiatives. For this season Steve has refined the guided walks on offer and the Island tours by Steffan and Meet the Manxie events were extremely popular with all those visiting and staying on the island – they also proved profitable too. The items offered for sale in the shop also received a makeover and saw the addition of high quality items with a low procurement cost which meant a very good year for the shop.

During 2015 another three years' worth of data was uploaded to the BTO's BirdTrack database and BBFO now has the largest single-site dataset lodged with the BTO. It is gratifying to see that following the path set by BBFO and a huge amount of effort by Steve that the addition of data from the other UK observatories is finally gathering a good head of steam.

Finally I would like to thank everyone involved in making 2015 another excellent year – it was certainly a relief to see the increase in visitor figures after last year's appalling low. The Observatory benefits from the help of a large number of volunteers throughout the season and I thank you all for your time and efforts. I would also like to thank Mark and Steffan for the work they put in during the season, they put in a huge number of volunteer hours over and above what they get paid for. Lastly I would like to thank Steve and Emma for the extraordinary effort they put into ensuring that the Observatory runs smoothly, that all the scientific work is undertaken, the NRW report is produced on time and on top of all that another fantastic edition of Bardsey's Wildlife is somehow produced as well.

I hope that 2016 is just as good and just as enjoyable for staff and visitors alike.

Peter Howlett

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Liz James proposed a vote of thanks for Peter's work over the year.

Adoption of the Trustees' Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2015

The Annual Report to The Charity Commission had been previously circulated and was on display prior to the meeting.

The Accounts had been previously circulated and were also circulated on paper during the meeting. The balance sheet was explained in outline and DC noted that the main increase in income was from donations (Bunting twitch) and from visitors and from sales. Running expenses were at a similar level to that of 2014 resulting in an increase of income over expenditure .

A question was asked about the grant from National Resources Wales and DC explained that this did not include money for the Manx Shearwater survey which was a separate item, running from 2014-14. Geoff Gibbs asked about an expenditure of £67, DC responded that this was for improvements to the shower room. GG also asked about the Bardsey Flora account and what were the plans for this money - SDS noted that there was a hold up in obtaining historic data from Anne Connelly. Ian Banner and Ian Wright to address this. Tony Fletcher to obtain data on lichens and an update on the situation to be placed in the future Beacon.

The adoption of the Accounts was proposed by Geoff Gibbs and seconded by Mike West and accepted by the floor. DC asked that Stephen Craig be thanked for auditing the accounts for 2015.

Election of Trustees and Officers

DC reported the resignation of Nigel Brown and Gwyn Stacey from the Trustees and the co-option of Joe Brownlie since the last AGM, and handed the chair of the meeting to our President, David Hawkins, who listed those people for whom nominations for Trustee-ship had been received for the forthcoming year: Peter Howlett (Chair); Dianne Charles (Treasurer); Andy Lawrence (Secretary); Alicia Normand (also, Bookings Secretary) and Joe Brownlie – all were accepted *en bloc*.

Liz James was coopted to the Advisory Council for 2016.

AOB

- a) Thanks were proposed to Tony John for the work he has done over the last decade both in proof-reading and latterly as editor of “Bardsey’s Wildlife”, the annual report on the natural history of the island.
- b) Geoff Gibbs asked about the situation regarding the Editor for The Bardsey Beacon- DC responded that Alison Hill to take this over for the next issue.
- c) Mike West expressed thanks to the Trustees for the work over the last year, and Kate Gibbs recorded thanks to all of the staff of the Obs, who make a stay there such a pleasure.
- d) Geoff Gibbs reported that Peter Hope-Jones sent his best wishes to the meeting.

The raffle raised a total of £37 for Obs’ funds.

Meeting closed at 2.40pm

DRAFT