

Carsington Bird Club



Minutes of the club's 31st Annual General Meeting

(held Tuesday 19 March 2024 in the Henmore Room,
Carsington Visitor Centre at 7pm)

COMMITTEE ATTENDIES

Gary Atkins - (Chairman and Publicity Officer)
John Follett - (Treasurer / Membership Secretary)
Chris Lamb - (Events Secretary)
Louise Sykes - (Secretary)

APOLOGIES

Rob & Jane Chadwick
Faye Follett
Dave Horsley

MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes from the previous AGM (in March 2023) were accepted as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING

None

TREASURER'S REPORT

At the year end Accumulated Funds of £7988.99 had increased by £1289.73 as a result of Income (£2472.15) exceeding Expenditure (£1182.42)

Total Income was again boosted by Fund Raising activities undertaken throughout the year by Louise and John Sykes who raised an impressive £861.00 (last year, £703.50) despite one event being called off due to weather conditions. Membership subscriptions at £600 were £35 up on 2022. Donations of £741.25 were £356.54 above the previous year and includes cash donations of £256.25 from visitors to the Wildlife Centre towards the costs of bird food. In addition to donations from club members, Chris Lamb gave a number of talks to various local groups and the Club received £130 for his efforts. Further, Donations were increased by the receipt of £250 from Severn Trent Volunteer Rangers on the closure of their bank account.

The year's Expenditure total of £1182.42 was £264.14 below the previous year despite inflationary pressures. Speakers fees of £370 were £118 lower than last year due to "in house" presentations and DOS's turn to fund the October joint meeting. Bird feeding costs of £78 were down, whilst the costs associated with CBC's online site (£64.70) increased. Promotional Costs of £64.12 aimed at increasing local awareness of club activities is included in expenditure.

CBC's year end funds were held as Cash (£314.65) and Bank Account (£7719.34). The year end cash figures include £45 of subscription payments for the new year.

The adoption of the Club's accounts for 2023 was proposed by John Morris and seconded by Dave Armitt.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Club membership numbers improved in the year. Whilst we saw non-renewals of 5 (2 single & 3 family) we were pleased to welcome 6 new memberships for the year and an additional 3 in October, bringing the years end total to 78. However, we are aware of 2 memberships not renewing in the coming year so 2024 will open with a listed 76.

One of those non-renewals is Dorothy Evans who passed away in August. A long-standing member who had undertaken several committee roles in the past and will be greatly missed by her many CBC friends.

The Committee's recommendation is that subscriptions continue unchanged, ie £7.50 for single and £10 for family membership.

RECORDER'S REPORT

The all-time species total for Carsington increased by one this year – to 238 – when, in September, a Glossy Ibis was observed by a select few. Meanwhile the wide range of breeding birds generally enjoyed a reasonable season.

My thanks go to everyone who reports their sightings via the club website or one of the social media platforms; it all helps towards producing the best annual report possible – and a special "thank you" must go to the small group of regulars who are on site most days.

This dedication has contributed to another record year where the total species numbers by month have been broken or equalled six times which for a single year is unprecedented.

Last year's Great Northern Diver stay lasted until 12th May, but there were plenty of other species making the headlines throughout the year, starting with 8 Black-necked Grebes on the 8th March, 11 Little Gulls on 21st April, Cuckoos heard on 4th and 13th May were the first since 2019, and a Garganey on 24th July was the first of its type since 2020.

We've had Spoonbills before, but never as many as the 5 seen on 4th August, and then the following month came that 'first' for the Carsington site – the Glossy Ibis.

A 'ring-tail' Hen Harrier that flew over Stones Island on 22nd October was the first here since 2006, and another scarce visitor arrived in the shape of a Short-eared Owl in late November. A site record 7 Egyptian Geese were observed on Boxing Day, just two days before 'our' Great Northern Diver book-ended the year by dropping onto the reservoir to begin its long winter stay.

EVENTS SECRETARY'S REPORT

We enjoyed a full programme of indoor and outdoor activities during 2023. Once again we were treated to a series of excellent talks by our guest speakers at our indoor meetings, all illustrated by superb photographs and featuring a variety of locations around the world as well as in the UK.

Early on in the year we asked members what they would like to see in terms of club trips. The responses were naturally quite varied, but one consistent theme was to include some places closer to home, requiring less travelling time. Individual favourites were mentioned, such as Attenborough, Wyver Lane and Willington, so we have plenty to consider for future trips. We will probably still do one or two outings outside our local patch each year, as different habitats and locations can often bring more variety of species, but we will aim to include local target sites too.

Our first members outing of the year in March did take us further afield to the Gibraltar Point reserve on the Lincolnshire coast. This reserve always offers a variety of wildlife and gave us the chance to catch up with some of our wintering birds before they depart for their breeding grounds.

We held our traditional spring walk at Carsington in April with a walk around Stones Island and the vicinity of the Wildlife Centre and had a fantastic turnout of 27 people. Our thanks again go to Simon Roddis for leading the walk and helping us to identify the birds we saw and heard.

The Idle Valley Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust reserve was the destination for our next trip at the end of May. This is a venue we had not visited before as a group, but with a network of lakes, wetland, grassland and scrub it delivered a wide variety of birds.

In September we stayed quite close to home for our first outing of the autumn with a walk at Carsington Water. The monthly Birdwatching for Beginners walks traditionally follow a route around Stones Island and on to the Wildlife Centre, so we decided to start this walk from the Sheepwash car park to explore a different end of the reservoir and see what we could find there.

Unfortunately the very wet Autumn weather put paid to a couple of trips we had planned, with visits to St. Aidan's RSPB reserve and Wyver Lane cancelled due to flooding at these sites. Both of these trips have been rescheduled in 2024.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

All in all, 2023 was a good year for the club. We continued to retain our membership at the same sort of level as pre-Covid, which must be an achievement, and have over the past couple of years re-injected and re-established our full range of events and activities, as outlined by Chris, with regular walks and outings and a winter programme of high-quality indoor talks.

The last two or three talks have surprised even us at being so well attended and this can only be good for the future as Chris develops a varied and global programme of talk topics.

Overall, the committee continues to work hard to keep members both entertained and well informed. I have also to thank John Follett for his excellent management of our funds, and his sage advice on all matters financial (and more) and his role in maintaining existing and conscripting new members. Rob Chadwick has settled into his role as club recorder. He is still one of those rare things – someone with a full-time job! – and so is unable to get down to the reservoir as often as he'd like, but has an excellent relationship with our team of recorders (at least one of whom is on site every day)

and draws on their records plus those submitted via DOS and our website and its social media offshoots to compile a complete picture of the annual sightings.

Watch out for those results in the 2023 annual report, which will be with members by or before May. Our secretary Louise Sykes, as well as keeping us in line with meeting agendas, minutes and action reminders, does a sensational job in raising funds for the club. She and her husband John attend several events each year, with a sales stand and tombola, and have raised several hundred pounds in each of the past couple of years in the name of CBC, thereby raising our bank balance to hitherto unknown heights! We do, though, have plans for those funds, so more of that later.

I'm forever grateful, too, for the selfless efforts of our webmaster Richard Pittam, who promptly posts whatever we send him, manages to keep the CBC website looking fresh and is constantly urging anyone in the club to help him mould the site into what the collective wants to read and learn. Unfortunately, much of those urgings fall on deaf ears – so if you have a story to tell, an outstanding holiday to describe, some advice or photos about great birding locations or experiences, please let Richard know (and me, for that matter, for the newsletter!) and he'll give it a prominent airing.

I must also mention our hosts, Severn Trent, with whom we have a great mutual relationship. They provide us with facilities for meetings and events (not forgetting the reservoir itself, around which we can endlessly indulge our collective hobby!), and in return we give them information and telling statistics about the birdlife around the site and occasional advice on habitat management.

That relationship has moved another notch closer recently, with a joint-initiative to improve the habitat and approach to habitat management for certain species such as the declining Tree Sparrow and star resident Willow Tit – matching our relatively healthy financial resources with Severn Trent's rangers and, most particularly, its volunteer force to conduct specific work projects. There has also been the excellent recent news that the new Sheepwash hide is on the verge of opening its doors to birders once again.

Oh, and I almost forgot about the birds. As you've heard, we're now at 238 species courtesy of our 2023 'first', the Glossy Ibis, and have had a succession of monthly records due to the dedication of our wonderful recording team. Simon Roddis is on site nearly every day – and when he's not, there are others such as Alan Stewardson, Clive Ashton, Dave Horsley and Dave Armitt who will cover his back. Rarely a day goes by when no records are submitted, and this is the core of what the club is about – so mega thanks go to them.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS OF THE CLUB

The following members of the committee were listed as standing for re-election:

Gary Atkins - Chairman and Publicity Officer
John Follett - Treasurer and Membership Secretary
Chris Lamb - Events Secretary
Rob Chadwick - Recorder
Louise Sykes - Secretary

The re-election of these officers of the club was proposed by Dave Armitt and seconded by Cath Sinclair.

CHANGE TO CBC CONSTITUTION

It was agreed that the current limit of £500 for a single item of expenditure be removed from the Club's constitution. This change was proposed by John Morris and seconded by Peter Reid.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Club subscriptions from 2025 will be increased from £7.50 to £8.00 for single membership and £10.00 to £12.00 for family membership.

The meeting closed at 7.35pm