

Carsington Bird Club



Minutes of the club's 33rd Annual General Meeting

(held Tuesday 17 March 2026 in the Henmore Room,
Carsington Visitor Centre at 7pm)

COMMITTEE ATTENDIES

Gary Atkins (Chairman and Publicity Officer)

John Follett (Treasurer)

Dave Horsley (Membership Secretary)

Chris Lamb (Events Secretary)

Rob Chadwick (Recorder)

Louise Sykes (Secretary)

APOLOGIES

None

MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes from the previous AGM (in March 2025) were accepted as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING

None

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Club's Accumulated Fund at the year-end has increased to £10833.38 due to the year's Income exceeding Expenditure by £1902.98. These funds are held as Cash, £189.23; Bank Account, £10976.15; and include £332.00 of prepaid subscriptions.

Total Income of £3179.04 was a £770 increase on last year. Membership receipts of £742 were better by £127 due to increased numbers and the effect of higher subscription rates; Donations at £463.34 improved by £197, with a £150 increase from visitors to the Wildlife Centre and a £50 donation from RSPB Notts. following a presentation by Chris Lamb; and by Fund Raising activities undertaken throughout the year by Louise and John Sykes who raised an impressive £1700.20, which bettered the previous years total by £516.

Income from indoor meetings was the only area, where takings at £256, were £76 below last year.

The year's Expenditure total of £1276.06 was £192 lower than the previous year. Speakers fees of £320 were £145 below last year, with DOS funding the October joint meeting and a further meeting being gifted by the Speaker; there were savings on Postage & Stationery of £42 despite rising costs; and Other Expenses of £111.95, lower by £119 as last year these costs included hide and bench plaques at Sheepwash in remembrance of Roger Carrington.

Expenditure increases are noted against Bank Charges at £62.01, which were not previously charged; printing costs of £351 for the Annual Report increased by £21; and Habitat Management costs of £82.80 for the purchase of gravel in an attempt to provide a nesting site for Little Ringed Plover.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

I am happy to say that membership numbers have increased steadily throughout the year, in particular since the introduction of advertising Club membership and provision of membership application forms in the four remaining bird hides.

This, combined with greater personal interaction between committee members and visiting birders around the site, including during the monthly Birdwatching for Beginners walk conducted in association with Severn Trent volunteers with CBC support, has raised the profile of the club.

More people are also becoming acquainted with the club through the "Carsington Sightings" Facebook page, which now has 896 followers, providing daily sighting reports from some of Derbyshire's top recorders.

In the general community, sales events run by Louise and John Sykes are getting the CBC name around as well as raising valuable funds.

The decision in 2024 to raise membership fees to £8 for single and £12 for families does not seem to have affected enthusiasm for joining or remaining with the club.

At the end of 2025, the total memberships stood at 91 (up from 82 at the end of 2024) – 58 individuals and 33 families, totalling 124 people.

From the end of 2024 and 2025 you may have noticed that I have begun the renewals process earlier than has been the traditional approach at CBC, but in line with other Derbyshire Bird Clubs, by sending out reminders in late December and I'm happy to say that as we move into 2026, most of those memberships had been renewed.

RECORDER'S REPORT

Species total for Carsington has increased by two this year and the breeding birds have had another reasonable season

A big thank you to everyone who reports their sightings via the club website or one of the social media platforms it all helps towards producing the best yearly report possible and a special thank you to the small group of regulars who are on site most days.

With a total of 25,181 lines in this year's data base has contributed to another record year were the total species numbers by month have been broken or equalled 6 times which for Carsington is becoming quite regular.

The regular Great Northern Diver has not appeared this year which is the first time in over a decade

Other losses include Tree Sparrows which have not been reported since June 2024

On a more positive note a few highlights from the last 12 months include

Red-throated Diver which stayed from January through to April.

A Manx Shearwater in September and a Gannet in October,

A single Cattle Egret from 15th to 28th October,

A pair of Egyptian Geese which stayed from the 29th May to 29th June,

1 ring-necked Duck stayed for all of January and February.

The lesser Scaup stayed from the 2nd of February to the 25th which allowed many to add it to their year lists and for some like myself to their life list.

Jack Snipe on 28th March

A single Twite reported on 7th November the first report since 2003

And finally a single Ring-necked Parakeet on the 30th December also a first for the reservoir but I suspect not the last.

This takes the total Species for Carsington up to 240.

EVENTS CO-ORDINATORS'S REPORT

We enjoyed a varied programme of indoor and outdoor activities during 2025. Once again we were treated to a series of excellent talks by our guest speakers at our indoor meetings, featuring a variety of locations in the UK and around the world. During the year we organised four walks and trips for our members, two of which were to local destinations and the other two to reserves a bit further afield.

Our first outing of the year in March was to the Brandon Marsh Warwickshire Wildlife Trust reserve near Coventry. This was a place we had not visited before as a group, but the members who made the trip were rewarded with a good variety of birds. We held our traditional springtime birdsong walk at Carsington Water in May. Star bird of the morning was not a songbird at all, but an Osprey which gave us fantastic views as it flew over the reservoir. Our thanks again go to Simon Roddis for leading the walk.

Staying relatively close to home again, the Drakelow Derbyshire Wildlife Trust was the venue for our next trip later on in May, and by this time our summer visitors were in full voice as we walked around the reserve. In October we returned to the Burton Mere Wetlands RSPB Reserve on the Dee Estuary in Cheshire, a favourite destination of ours which we have been to a few times.

It has been very encouraging to see that the number of members joining us for our walks and trips through the year has steadily increased and we hope that this positive trend will continue this year.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Most aspects of club life was on the up during 2025. Membership numbers increased and participation at these meetings, trips and walks edged higher. I'm grateful to Chris Lamb for once again providing a rich and varied diet of activities for us ... and, so, am concerned at Chris's decision to leave the committee (effective from this evening, though he has kindly pledged to round things out smoothly – including already having in place most talks for the 2026-27 indoor season). Thanks to Chris for a decade of sterling service.

The management of events is probably the most time-consuming committee role, and realistically we probably need more than one person to support the various activities. Thankfully, we do have one person who has kindly offered to support ... but more of that shortly.

Every committee member has proved a huge help this year. John Follett's kept our finances in good order, but here we have another worry as John has signalled his intention to leave the committee this time next year. Treasurer is a key position, of course, so we will need to replace him; John stresses that you don't need to be a financial whizz to do the Treasurer's role, so if there's someone out there who can pick up this role – WE NEED YOU!

Meanwhile, it's no coincidence that our boost in membership numbers arrived with the more hands-on approach of Dave Horsley. He introduced some initiatives that have attracted new members, and his zealous reminders have ensured we now have 2026 paid-up renewals from virtually all those indicating they wish to stick with us, something that never happened by March in the past.

Louise Sykes has kept the committee on track with meetings and some of the tasks that fall out of those meetings, but much more than that, she and husband John have done a great job once again at various community events and charity fund-raisers around the county, bringing a staggering £1,700 into the club's coffers as well as raising the club's profile.

Rob Chadwick has kept his finger on the pulse regarding bird sightings, overseeing the accumulation of records from all manner of sources, producing monthly Bird Notes and working, as he is now with Simon Roddis and others, in moulding this mass of information into detailed reviews, lists and charts for the Annual Report.

Richard Pittam has kept the club's website as fresh and interesting as possible, and the posse of regular recorders (spearheaded by Simon Roddis), while choosing the outdoors over indoor committee tasks, have all played an important role in maintaining one of our key goals as a club – to produce accurate records for all bird species year-on-year.

Sadly we lost a couple of members in 2025, notably founder member and long-time Recorder Eddie Walker, who died aged 79. Though he spent the latter 20 years of his life living part-time in Spain, he remained a club member and invariably returned to the UK (often to escape the extreme heat) for lengthy periods and would resume his friendships during visits to local birding hotspots including Carsington and Wyver Lane.

As we have no club premises, we maintain a symbiotic relationship with Severn Trent, using their facilities for committee and club meetings, while doing what we can to support the water company's commitment to habitat and environmental concerns. Those links have, if anything, strengthened as we hold quarterly meetings with management and ranger staff to discuss what events are coming up, what advice we might offer on specific habitat issues of relevance to wildlife and on practical conservation projects.

During 2025, for example, we provided a quantity of pebbles to construct a 'beach' on one of the islands that it was hoped would attract nesting Little Ringed Plovers and are now negotiating how we might provide financial support for any replacement for the Janet Ede Hide that unfortunately had to be dismantled.

And what of the birds – the underlying reason we all enjoy visiting Carsington. Well, early in the year we had birders turning up in droves for the 'Big Five' – Greater and Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked Duck, Red-throated Diver and Great Northern Diver. We also had a Swallow in December, our first ever Ring-necked Parakeet, and an exclusively seagoing Manx Shearwater that must have misplaced its GPS.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS OF THE CLUB

The following members of the committee were re-elected:

Gary Atkins - Chairman and Publicity Officer

John Follett - Treasurer

Dave Horsley - Membership Secretary

Rob Chadwick - Recorder

Louise Sykes - Secretary

Cath Sinclair was elected as a new member of the committee.

The election of these officers of the club was proposed by Jane Chadwick and seconded by Nicole Lamb.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

The meeting closed at 7.30pm