

**Minutes of the 16th AGM of the African Bird Club
held at BTO, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 2PU
at 13.45 on Saturday 10 April 2010**

Present

The following members registered their attendance at the meeting:

Robin Atherton, Phil Atkinson, Helen Baker, Mark Barden, Janet Barnes, Keith Betton, Mike Blair, Mathew Boyer, David Brooks, Wendy Brooks, Flip Bruce Lockhart, Douglas Buchanan, John Caddick, Stephen Cameron, John Chapple, Anthony Cizek, John Cutting, Janice Darch, Clive Dickson, Janet Dickson, Steve Ecclestone, Ian Ellis, John Farnsworth, John Gale, Martin Gauntlett, Phil Hall, Christopher Hendley, Mark Hulme, Raymond Jeffers, Tony Lambert, Anthony Lancaster, Russell Leavett, Duncan McDonald, Steve Pringle, Bill Quantrill, Rowena Quantrill, Trevor Rackstraw, Bev Randall, Geoff Randall, Nigel Redman, Colin Ryall, Keith Seaton, Kabelo Senyatso, Philip Thomas, David Tomlinson, Steph Tyler, Sue Walsh, Alan Williams, Barbara Woodcock, Martin Woodcock, Noel Woodhead, Hywel Young

The following non-participating guests registered their attendance at the meeting:
Lynn Barton, Caroline Caddick, David Ewbank, Margaret Gauntlett, Ben Rackstraw

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Jane Binstead, Ruth Bray, Dennis Buisson, David Calder, Lincoln Fishpool, Colin Humpage, Paul Lascelles, Tasso Leventis, Keith Lievesley, Chris Magin, David Murdoch, Anne Nason, Geoff Orton, David Porter, Beau Rowlands, Danae Sheehan

2. Minutes of the last meeting.

The Minutes of the last meeting had been published on the Club's website and copies were distributed at the meeting. No comments were received. Geoff Randall proposed that the minutes be accepted, Alan Williams seconded and the proposal was approved unanimously.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Report of the Council

The report was presented by Keith Betton as follows:

Membership: Membership at the end of 2008 was 1244. During 2008 73 new members joined but 117 members failed to renew so that at the end of 2009 membership was 1200. In comparison with 2008 this represents a 2% increase in lapsed memberships and a 47% decrease in new memberships. There has been a cutback of the Seychelles schools scheme. Local payment schemes continue to operate in Kenya, Madagascar, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Conservation Fund: The conservation of African birds and their habitats continues to be a key objective of the Club. In 2009 the Club paid out £10,500 in support of 14 projects in 9 countries: Angola, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia and South Africa. Over £90,000 has been paid out since the club was

formed. The majority of these funds arise from sponsorship, donations and the profits from the sale of bulletins and goods. In particular projects: Tasso Leventis funded 5 projects with a total of £3750; Paul Hyde-Lascelles funded 1 project at £850; Julian Francis funded 2 projects at £1820; and the RSPB funded 1 project at £750. Particular thanks go to Steph Tyler who has chaired the Conservation Fund and who is standing down this year – and to everyone who has given donations throughout the year.

Bulletin: Feedback from members regarding the Bulletin remains very positive. 256 pages were published in 2009. It is now published in full colour and there are more photos. Following comment that the articles may be too technical, more “birding” features are now being included. Members are encouraged to submit similar articles for consideration.

Website: In 2009 over £12,000 has been received from credit card payments via the website so it is an important source of sales and funding. AFBID (African Bird Image Database) continues to be very successful. There are now over 600 registered photographers with over 12,000 images of more than 1900 species. French language has been added to species names and powerful new search facilities added. There remain 78 country checklists (at least one for each country in Africa) which have led to more than 10,000 downloads to date. The Xeno-canto/Africa database of bird songs and calls which was launched in March 2008 now has 37 contributors and 1,000 recordings of 580 species. A citation for the website was made in Birdwatching magazine.

Corporate Sponsorship: Stephen Cameron was co-opted during the year to take over as Corporate Sponsorship Officer. There were a total of 35 sponsors at the end of 2009. They were: Abacus African Safaris, Access African Safaris, Aim 4 Africa, Ashanti African Tours, Avian Adventures, Ben’s Ecological Safaris, Bird feeding Station, Birding and Beyond Safaris, Birding Africa, Birding Ecotours, Birdquest, Birdwatching Breaks, Calluna Books, Close Encounters, Crystal Safaris, Field Guides Inc, Greentours, Halcyon Gambia, Hyde-Lascelles, Jenner Expeditions, Lake Kitandara, Lawson’s Birding Tours, Limosa, Meet us in Africa, MKA Ecology, Naturetrek, Ornitholidays, Rockjumper Birding Tours, Sarus Bird Tours, Sunbird, Turaco Tours, Turtle Bay Beach Club, WildSounds, Wildwings and Zeiss. Their contributions and support during the year were much appreciated.

Sales: Merchandise sales slightly increased during 2009 with a total of £2,067. The sale of Bulletin back issues increased to £1,470. Bev and Geoff Randall, who had been handling all the sales, are stepping down at April 2010. Many thanks go to Bev and Geoff for their work in handling this big task over the years. A new Sales Officer has not been found to replace them. As a result sales will take place mainly at the Bird Fair and at the AGM. Online sales will cease apart from the trip reports and back copies of the Bulletin. The original paintings by Martin Woodcock from *Birds of Africa* will be offered for sale via the website.

Country Representatives: ABC now has representatives in 41 countries (32 in Africa). Representatives are still required for 28 African countries. Recent representative appointments were for Cameroon, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and USA. Representatives are encouraged to

submit periodic reports to Council and these are now included in the Country Pages of the website. A full list of present representatives and of countries for which we still require representatives is shown in the bulletin.

Council: Geoff Randall stood down as a Council member in December and Steph Tyler is retiring at this AGM. New Council members standing for election are Stephen Cameron, Danae Sheehan and Sue Walsh. The new Council members were co-opted to Council during the year. Stephen has been acting as Corporate Sponsor Officer and Sue as Secretary. The re-organisation of Council roles following these changes – and subject to election at this AGM - are: Vice Chairman - John Caddick; Secretary – Sue Walsh; Treasurer – Alan Williams; Membership Secretary – Danae Sheehan; Conservation Officer – Chris Magin; Corporate Sponsor Officer – Stephen Cameron.

Questions: One member asked where the AGM would be held next year. No firm plans have been made. The policy is to hold the meeting in different locations to meet the needs of members living around the country so it will probably be held somewhere else next year. However, the BTO facilities suit our needs well and are offered to the club free of charge so it is likely that some future meetings will be held there. Members were invited to get in touch if they know of any other suitable premises.

5. Presentation of the Accounts for 2009 and the Treasurer's Report

Copies of the Summarised Accounts included as an attachment were distributed at the meeting. John Caddick presented the accounts and reported that 2009 had been a good year for the Club's finances. Income at £41,310 was down due to three main factors: because the Club had fewer members subscriptions were down; low interest rates meant smaller investment income; and because the Club had no substantial prize to offer during the year no major raffle had been held. Expenditure had decreased overall during the year. The cost of goods had increased because more had been sold and some old stock had been written off. Less was paid out in grants during the year although funds were waiting to be paid out on certain projects. Bulletin costs had increased but other costs were down partly due to one-off costs incurred in 2008 to improve the website. Net income for the year had increased to £5,552 from £4,197 in 2008. The net assets at the end of 2009 had increased to £32,963 from £27,411 the previous year. The Club is in a healthy financial position. It is hard to predict what will happen over the coming year. The economic climate is improving and the impact on the Club remains to be seen.

The acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Martin Woodcock, seconded by Steph Tyler and approved unanimously.

6. Election of Trustees

Two trustees are leaving Council. Geoff Randall stood down as Secretary in November. He has had a number of roles including Vice-Chairman, but it was as Secretary that he was invaluable for the last 4 years. Also Steph Tyler is standing down. As Chairman of our Conservation Committee since 2002 she has been key to making sure that we help good projects by providing support. In the time that she has been in that role, ABC has assisted nearly 60 projects which is an incredible

track record. Both were thanked for all that they have done for the Club over the years.

The following Trustees agreed to stand for re-election: Phil Atkinson, Keith Betton, John Caddick, Clive Dickson, Chris Magin, Nigel Redman and Alan Williams. John Caddick is standing down as Treasurer but is going to remain on Council and succeed Phil Atkinson as Vice Chairman. He will use his extra free time to make even more improvements to the website. Alan Williams is going to become Treasurer – a job that he undertook before becoming Membership Secretary.

The Trustees proposed the following three new Trustees: Stephen Cameron; Sue Walsh; Danae Sheehan. All were co-opted during the year. Stephen is already running the Corporate Sponsor programme. Sue is going to take over as Secretary and Danae is going to take over as Membership Secretary.

All of the above were proposed by Phil Atkinson, seconded by Russell Leavett and unanimously elected as Trustees of the Club:

7. Election of Executive Officers

The following were proposed by Martin Woodcock, seconded by Bill Quantrill and unanimously elected as Executive Officers of the Club: Chairman: Keith Betton; Vice Chairman: John Caddick; Treasurer: Alan Williams; Secretary: Sue Walsh.

8. Appointment of Independent Examiner

John Caddick proposed, Stephen Cameron seconded and the meeting unanimously confirmed Michael Goddard as Independent Examiner for 2010.

9. Any other Business

There were no other items of business raised.

10. Close of Meeting.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 14.15.