

# Minutes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> AGM of the African Bird Club held at Natural History Museum, London SW7 at 13.30 on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017

## Present

The following members and friends registered their attendance at the meeting:

Desmond Allen, Bob Angier, Helen Baker, M J Barden, David Barker, W D Barker, Aisha Belman, Phil Belman, Keith Betton, Nigel Birch, Nik Borrow, Caroline Caddick, John Caddick, Richard Charles, Bob Cheke, Anthony Cizek, Chris Cox, Ron Demey, Lynda Donaldson, Bob Douthwaite, Clive Elliott, Fiona Farnsworth, John Farnsworth, David Fisher, Lincoln Fishpool, Wenceslas Gatarabirwa, Paul van Giersbergen, Phil Hall, Allan Harman, B Hotham, Phil Hyde, Michael Kings, Peter Lack, N Lawrence, Tasso Leventis, Duncan MacDonald, Chris Magin, Clive Mann, Andy Merritt, Geoff Orton, Jan Orton, Ralph Parks, Ruth Payne, Tony Payne, Stephen Pringle, Pat Pringle, Rowena Quantrill, Bill Quantrill, L Repangwa, Dianne Ridgley, Paul Roper, Mary Satton, Chris Spooner, Clare Stringer, Rita Swinnen, Imogen Theobald, Roger Theobald, Friedemann Vetter, John Williamson, Barbara Woodcock, Martin Woodcock.

## 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Graeme Backhurst, John Clark, Roger Dickley, Clive Dickson, Janet Dickson, Stephen Lowe, David Murdoch, Anne Nason, Bev Randall, Geoff Randall, Nigel Redman, Stephanie Tyler, and Richard Webb.

## 2. Minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> AGM, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2016

The minutes had been circulated; Geoff Orton proposed acceptance of the minutes as a true record. Stephen Pringle seconded this. The proposal was carried unanimously and the chairman signed the minutes.

## 3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising that would not be dealt with by subsequent items.

## 4. Report of the Council

In his report as Chairman of the Council, Richard Charles (RC) noted that membership at the end of 2016 was stable with little change since 2015; ABC has 1060 members in more than 60 countries with 59 supporting members financing memberships in Africa.

In October 2016 Council reviewed the ABC strategy to 2020, which was developed by Paul Buckley & Nigel Birch. Its focus remains on external ambitions (conservation awards, networking in Africa, ABC as a knowledge source) and governance & management (membership development, expansion of resources, country rep support). A major plank of ABC Strategy is to increase membership and exposure in Africa. This will be achieved by an expansion of the Supported Membership scheme.

From 2017 the Supported Membership category will change as follows:

- Supported members will remain full members, free of charge
- Supported Members have previously received a hard copy of the Bulletin by post (expensive/unreliable), but from March 2017 they will instead receive a digital version of the ABC Bulletin (eBABC).
- Recruitment of Supported Members, meeting the criteria for this membership category will be via our 'trusted partners' and is in progress.

The Supporting Members will be involved as follows:

- They will, as at present, pay an increment (≥ £12-£15) to their own membership fee. The increment will now support eBABC production & distribution. All Supporting Members have been personally contacted by Chairman to describe new scheme. Spontaneous feedback to date has been extremely positive.

The ABC eBulletin was extensively road-tested in December 2016 and is best viewed on a PC/lap-top or tablet. It can be viewed on a smartphone, but with the obvious limitations on screen size. A moderate/strong Wifi signal is needed. This will be live from issue 24.1 (March 2017).

The Chairman thanked Dr Chris Magin, Conservation Officer, and his colleagues on the Conservation Committee (Julius Arinaitwe, Phil Atkinson, Tim Dodman, Lincoln Fishpool & Peter Jones) for their hard work during the year assessing grant applications. During 2016, £30,416 peer reviewed grants were awarded, funding 17 projects in 13 countries. Since 1996, more than £293,000 in grants have been awarded, funding 213 projects in 40 countries and 4 overseas territories. Delegates attending 4 Pan-African Ornithological Conferences have also benefited.

Full details of these and all previous projects which have been funded can be found on the ABC website at <http://www.africanbirdclub.org/conservation-fund>. A big thank you is extended to our individual project sponsors during 2016. These were: Avifauna/ Daniel Bengtsson; Richard Charles; Mark Constantine; Tasso Leventis; March Conservation Fund/ TIDES Foundation; Chris Spooner. In addition, Council thanks all who have supported the Club financially in 2016 – it is much appreciated.

Corporate sponsors continue to give significant support to ABC and these are as follows:

**GOLD** Birding Ecotours; Rockjumper

**SILVER** Birding Africa; Letaka Safaris; Limosa Holidays; Safari Consultants

**BRONZE** Akamba African Bird Walks; Ashanti African Tours; Birdfinders; Birdquest; Field Guides Inc.; Lawson's Birding Safaris; Safariwise; Sunbird; Venture Uganda.

Council thanks Stephen Lowe, ABC Corporate Sponsor's Officer for his efforts during 2016.

John Caddick, ABC IT and Technical Support Officer, is developing an African Birds Field Guide App for Smartphones. This will be free for African ornithologists, birders, field workers and naturalists, many of whom are not able to afford a traditional field guide. It represents an ABC asset, which meets the Club's strategic objectives of education, communication and conservation of Africa's birds. The long-term vision is to include all **species and major subspecies** from the African Region. The initial version will contain photos, sounds, text and maps for the birds of Mauritius and Rodrigues (available later in 2017) and future versions will be developed on a country-by-country basis as resources allow. **This is a major project and offers of help will be much appreciated. Please discuss with John Caddick or e-mail him at [john@caddick.com](mailto:john@caddick.com).**

ABC donated £25,000 to a Taita Hills (Kenya) land lease in 2014, along with the RSPB and World Land Trust. The progress report, provided by RSPB as stipulated in the grant contract, is summarised as follows:

- Land lease at Msidunyi was finalised in December 2016
- Nature Kenya (NK) now has secure management of 6.28ha of indigenous forest fragment for 25 years
- Supports 5% of the world population of Taita Apalis
- 89 birds colour ringed; 2016-17 breeding success under analysis
- Severe drought has threatened habitat use and forest restoration
- NK purchasing further 12ha corridor fragment.

During 2016 ABC jointly developed a Code of Practice with the other regional bird clubs (OSME, NBC & OBC) in response to reports of undesirable practices in the field. A generic document was drafted, which could be edited for purposes of the specific Club. The basic tenet of the CoP is 'The welfare of the bird comes first'. It is a voluntary code of best practice and is commended to all who visit birds in the wild. The full document is downloadable at <https://www.africanbirdclub.org/club/about>.

ABC media-related resources continued to grow in 2016. The ABC Yahoo discussion group has 1141 participants, ABC Facebook page has 3962 followers and the ABC Twitter account (@Africabirdclub) has 549 followers. All of today's lectures will be available on YouTube within the next month.

ABC was well represented at PAOC 2016 in Dakar, Senegal, 16th – 21<sup>st</sup> October 2016. Its theme was '*Global challenges: threats and opportunities for birds in Africa*'. Chris Magin gave the ABC Plenary lecture and ABC sponsored two student presenters from within Africa. ABC prizes were awarded for the best two posters, adjudicated by Dr. Colin Beale, Chair, PAOC Scientific Committee.

At the BirdFair in 2016, Paul Buckley gave the ABC lecture entitled "*Vleis & Vultures – future for Africa's threatened birds*". Richard Charles, on behalf of ABC, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with BirdLife

International, represented by Patricia Zurita, CEO of BLI. This provides for closer collaboration on work of mutual interest in Africa. Martin Woodcock's original painting of a Grey-necked Rockfowl, *P. oreas*, was auctioned for £800, with all proceeds donated for the benefit of the ABC Conservation Fund. Our thanks once again to Martin for his generosity.

Upcoming events in 2017 are the BirdFair, August 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, at Egleton, Rutland (UK), when the theme will be *IBAs in Africa*. The ABC fundraising tour, organised and sponsored by Birdquest, is to Sao Tome and Principe, January 14<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> 2018 and is fully subscribed. Anyone interested though may contact BirdQuest to get the up-to-date position in case any parties withdraw.

The Chairman concluded by thanking those who have helped in various ways during the year:

**Events:** Helen Baker, Caroline Caddick, Charles Gallimore, Bill & Rowena Quantrill, Geoff & Bev Randall, Steph Tyler and Alan Williams. **Bulletin:** Guy Kirwan, Ron Demey, Nigel Redman, and Lionel Sineux. **Website content:** John Caddick and Phil Hyde. **AFBID:** Kevin Vang, Paul van Giersbergen, & Wojciech Dabrowka of Bird Explorers.

Thanks also to the RSPB for mailing our Bulletins and to BirdLife International for acting as our mailing address.

The Council roles for 2015 were: Chairman – Richard Charles; General Secretary – Phil Hyde; Membership Secretary – Heather Tarrant; Treasurer – Chris Spooner; Conservation Officer – Chris Magin; Corporate Sponsor Officer – Stephen Lowe; Country Representatives Co-ordinator - Nigel Birch.

## 5. Presentation of the Accounts for 2016 and the Treasurer's Report

Copies of the Summarised Accounts were distributed at the meeting. Chris Spooner presented the accounts, which were summarised as follows:

Financial Overview		
(££)	2015	2016
Fixed assets	5,958	8,398
Stock	991	744
Cash	80,236	87,022
Debtors	317	1,058
Creditors	(26,747)	(17,839)
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>60,755</b>	<b>79,383</b>
Unrestricted	29,192	32,305
Restricted	31,563	47,383
<b>Total</b>	<b>60,755</b>	<b>79,688</b>

Income (£)	2016	
	Club	Voluntary
Donations & Sponsorship	3,495	50,498
Gift Aid	874	6,720
Sales / Raffles	4,365	
Interest Income	606	
Subscriptions	20,918	
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,258</b>	<b>57,218</b>
Expenses (£)	Club	Voluntary
Cost of Goods etc.	1,793	
Printing & Postage	16,075	
Birdfair & Meetings	4,254	
Website	5,245	
Governance	844	
PAOC	4,275	
Administration	4,046	
Grants Payable		32,316
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,532</b>	<b>32,316</b>
<b>Net income</b>	<b>(6274)</b>	<b>24,902</b>

The Treasurer advised that a full copy of the formal accounts would be on the ABC and Charities Commissioners websites once signed by the Chairman, Treasurer and the Independent Examiner after the meeting. The Treasurer took the audience through the Financial Overview explaining the categories and that the main reason for the significant in the net assets was a large donation late in 2016.

The income and expense items were discussed in detail split between those relating to the running of the Club and those relating to donations and grants. This demonstrated that the Club, without the support of donations and gift aid, would have incurred a deficit a situation which supported the need to increase subscriptions effective 1/1/17.

There was also a brief discussion on the benefits of Gift Aid and the tax efficiency of making appropriate legacy provisions.

The acceptance of the accounts was proposed by John Caddick, seconded by Stephen Pringle and approved unanimously.

#### **6. Election of Trustees**

The following Trustees stood down Chris Abrams and Josie Hewitt.

The following Trustees agreed to stand for re-election: Bruktawit Abdu, Nigel Birch, Paul Buckley, Richard Charles, Tiwonge Gawa, Phil Hall, Phil Hyde, Stephen Lowe, Chris Magin, Geoff Orton and Chris Spooner.

The Trustees propose the following new Trustees: John Kinghorn, representing youth birding, John Caddick and Nigel Redman.

All of the above were proposed by Martin Woodcock, seconded by Clive Mann and unanimously elected as Trustees of the Club.

#### **7. Election of Executive Officers for 2016**

The following have agreed to stand for re-election/election as Executive Officers of the Club: Chairman: Richard Charles; Vice Chairman: Paul Buckley; Treasurer: Chris Spooner; Secretary: Phil Hyde.

These were proposed by Geoff Orton, seconded by Stephen Pringle and unanimously elected.

#### **8. Appointment of Independent Examiner**

Chris Spooner proposed that ABC continue with Michael Goddard as Independent Examiner for 2017 and Stephen Pringle seconded the appointment. The appointment was unanimously confirmed.

#### **9. Any other Business**

RC thanked the whole of the ABC team for their help and support during the year. He concluded by asking all present to consider asking one or more friends and associates to take up ABC Membership.

There was no other business

**10. Close of Meeting** - The meeting closed at 14.30.

**11. Date and time of the 2018 AGM** – **Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> April 2018** at the Flett Lecture Theatre, Natural History Museum, London.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.C. Charles". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

21st April 2018