Minutes of the 25th AGM of the African Bird Club held at Natural History Museum, London SW7 at 13.30 on Saturday 13th April 2019

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

1. Apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Graeme Backhurst, Mike Blair, Phil Hall, Peter Jones, Stephen Lowe, Alex Randall, Paul Roper, and Barbara Woodcock.

2. Minutes of the 24th AGM, 21st April 2018
The minutes had been circulated; Ralph Parks proposed acceptance of the minutes as a true record. Stephen Chapman 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.

The Chairman began with a brief tribute to the late Martin Woodcock, former ABC vice-President and founder member and recorded these words from Barbara, Martin’s widow:

"I would like to convey my heartfelt appreciation and thanks to ABC for the very generous donation they are making in Martin’s name to the World Land Trust.
I can remember well those early days of the beginning of the ABC 25 years ago, and am still in awe of how it developed so successfully thanks to everyone’s hard work, enthusiasm and expertise.
I am delighted that the Club should acknowledge Martin’s contribution in this way. He would have been so embarrassed and surprised - but very pleased. It is wonderful to me that people thought he was a ‘good egg’ – he only did what little he could to help, and ABC was always close to his heart”

The Chairman informed members that ABC has donated £2,500 to the World Land Trust in Martin’s memory, a cause dear to his heart. The tribute concluded with a round of applause in his memory from all Trustees and members present.

4.1 Council roles for 2018

Chairman: Richard Charles
Vice Chairman: Paul Buckley
Secretary: Phil Hyde
Treasurer: Chris Spooner
Membership Administrator: Heather Tarrant (contracted)
Conservation Officer: Chris Magin
Corporate Sponsors’ Officer: Stephen Lowe (to December 2018); Richard Charles (from December 2018 –present)
Regional Representatives Liaison Officer: Nigel Birch
Webmaster: John Caddick
Youth Representative: John Kinghorn
Members: Phil Hall, Nigel Redman; co-opted: Lynda Donaldson, David Fox.

Those standing down: Phil Hyde, Richard Charles (as Chairman).

Council roles: Succession Planning

Contact Paul Buckley, Vice Chairman (via secretary@africanbirdclub.org)

Volunteers: Welcome! May be co-opted by invitation of Trustees

Nominations: Proposer and 5 members, 3 months before the AGM

4.2 Membership

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<th>31/12/2014</th>
<th>31/12/2015</th>
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<td>31/12/2014</td>
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<td>1060</td>
<td>1242</td>
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<td>31/12/2016</td>
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<td>31/12/2017</td>
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<td>31/12/2018</td>
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<td>1399</td>
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- Members in 60+ countries
- 54 Supporting Members who finance the Supported Membership Scheme in Africa
- PLEASE HELP YOUR CLUB – RECRUIT A MEMBER!

4.3 Supported membership scheme

Criteria and demographics:
- Free membership in Africa for persons who would benefit from ABC membership but constrained by cost
- Nominated and/or cv submitted
- Receive eBulletin
- Supported by 54 Supporting Members
- Supported Members at 31/12/18 stands at 229 (now 261) from 32 countries
- One example of a supported member from the Gambia is Mariama Sanneh who was proposed by Clive Barlow, Tanji Birders in February 2018. She has gone on to be appointed to a full-time post with the Gambian Department of Parks and Wildlife Management.

4.4 ABC Strategy 2015-2020 - Year 4 delivery

Project leads: Paul Buckley and Nigel Birch.

Strategy Meeting Review: Council, November 3rd 2018

Top-level outcomes:

- External ambitions: Conservation awards
  Networking in Africa (BLI/MoU, Rainforest Trust, World Land Trust, Nature Kenya, Regional Representatives)
  ABC as a knowledge source (Website, AFBID, Birds of Africa App).

- Governance and management: General Data Protection Regulation (Privacy policy, database cleaning, permissions to contact)
  Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangement Regulations (2018) (Work with Corporate Sponsors (CS) to ensure compliance with PTR for the legal protection of both ABC and CS).
Recommendation of change to ABC’s legal structure to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

ABC is currently “unincorporated” and has no legal identity and thus there is unlimited legal liability of Trustees.

CIO is designed specifically for charities (2013) and is regulated by the Charity Commission. Limits/excludes Trustees liabilities giving them and the charity greater protection against financial risk.

CIO is relatively simple and free to set up. Council approved, & AGM will be asked to support the change to CIO in a vote during this meeting.

4.5 Conservation Fund

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<th>Peer reviewed grants</th>
<th>Conservation Committee</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards</td>
<td>£33,485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries</td>
<td>13</td>
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* Award maxima increased to £3K & £4K from 2017

Since 1996 more than £375,000 has been awarded to 252 conservation projects in 40 countries and 4 European African Overseas Territories, and ABC has provided support to 4 Pan-African Ornithological Conferences.

4.6 ABC 25th Anniversary - major conservation grant

ABC Council has undertaken a major consultation process to determine which project would most benefit from a financial contribution to mark the 25th Anniversary. BirdLife International, Rainforest Trust, RSPB and World Land Trust have all been consulted. Council has conducted an objective review of the options with regard to project quality and oversight, and to ensure the greatest effectiveness of an ABC grant. Trustees cast their votes by e-mail to the vice-Chairman. The result is that two important projects at African IBA’s will be supported:

  Manage and restore key Miombo habitats. Park has 471 bird species recorded including breeding African Pitta, and other ‘threatened’ species.

- Kenya – to be announced.
  This will assist NatureKenya with land purchase at one of the most important and critically threatened sites in the country. Negotiations ongoing and a joint appeal is to be launched with WLT. Details will be announced as soon as this process is concluded.

4.7 Taita Hills Land Lease

ABC gave £25,000 to help lease an area of the Taita Hills in 2014. Our speaker in the afternoon session, Sarah Havery, will give full details in her presentation this afternoon (to be available on YouTube after the AGM)

4.8 Donors to individual projects in 2018

Sincere thanks from all on ABC Council to all of these donors in 2018:

Avifauna/ Daniel Bengtsson  John Caddick  Richard Charles  Mark Constantine
Andrew Cramb  Tasso Leventis  Stephen Pringle  Chris Spooner
March Conservation Fund of the TIDES Foundation
Noel Woodhead Memorial Fund (Mrs Hilary Woodhead)
4.9 Corporate Sponsors in 2018

A very big thank you to all of our Corporate Sponsors in 2018, who were as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Gold</th>
<th>Silver</th>
<th>Bronze</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avifauna</td>
<td>Birding Africa</td>
<td>Ashanti African Tours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birding Ecotours</td>
<td>Letaka Safaris</td>
<td>Birdfinders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iGoTerra</td>
<td>Limosa Holidays</td>
<td>Birdquest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rockjumper</td>
<td>Safari Consultants</td>
<td>Field Guides</td>
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The effects of the new Package Travel Regulations (PTR) 2018 on our Corporate Sponsors from 2019 forwards has seen the resignation of the following companies:

Letaka Safaris; Ashanti African Tours; Field Guides

Two other African companies, Madagascar Birds & Birding and Venture Uganda, have also resigned as Corporate Sponsors but are happy to be converted to “donor and supporter” status.

4.10 ABC App of “Birds of Africa”

This is to be a free App for African Ornithologists, birders, field workers and naturalists. The Birds of Mauritius has already been released and has had >1000 downloads to date as well as publicity on Mauritian radio, newspapers and MWF website. The current work concerns birds of Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Ghana and involves loading photographs, calls, maps and texts for around 1,000 species.

ABC reminds everyone that this is a major project and offers of help will be much appreciated. Please discuss with John Caddick or e-mail john@caddick.com.

4.11 Website: AFBID

This resource is curated by John Caddick and Paul van Giersbergen and now uses IOC taxonomy thanks to Paul. To date there are 24,766 photographs of 2,280 species.

4.12 ABC digital e-Bulletin

This is available as an option for all members from edition 26(1). From 26(2) it will additionally be available as a free downloadable Bulletin App for both iOS and Android devices, to allow both “on the go” and “offline” reading.

4.13 ABC on social media

- ABC Facebook has 5,119 members, an increase of 15% from 2017.
- ABC Twitter (@Africabirdclub) has 895 followers, an increase of 25% from 2017.
- The ABC Yahoo discussion group has 1,162 members, an increase of 1% from 2017.
- A reminder that all six of the speaker’s presentations will be viewable on YouTube in the near future.

4.14 ABC at BirdFair 2018

- ABC Lecture: Keith Betton (ABC vice-President) gave a lecture on “Africa’s Best Birds – The Top 30”
- ABC was represented in the Bird Brain of Britain quiz by Adam Riley (Rockjumper) with “International Birds and Birding” as his specialist subject. He won first prize and £1,000 for ABC!
- Keith Betton represented ABC again in the new “Best Days with International Birds” debating competition
- BirdQuest presented ABC with a cheque for £2,000 for the Conservation Fund
4.15 ABC helpers in 2018

A big thank you to all those volunteers who gave up their time to help us in various ways in 2018. These were as follows:

- **Events**: Helen Baker, Caroline Caddick, Charles Gallimore, Bill & Rowena Quantrill, Geoff & Bev Randall, Steph Tyler
- **Bulletin**: Ron Demey, Guy Kirwan, Nigel Redman, and Lionel Sineux
- **Website content**: John Caddick, Paul van Giersbergen, Phil Hyde
- **Thanks to RSPB** - for mailing our Bulletins
- **Thanks to BirdLife** - for acting as our mailing address, and for collaboration under our MoU

4.16 John Caddick – special award

Council have proposed John Caddick for Honorary Membership of the African Bird Club, recognising his:

- Outstanding intellectual contributions, notably to the website, AFBID, and development of the Birds of Africa App.
- Tireless work in support of Council and the wider Club
- Sustained service since the earliest years of ABC
- Unfailing ability to turn problems into solutions, all with the very best of good humour!

A big ‘thank you’ John!

5. Recommendation of change to ABC’s legal structure for approval of members

The details of the CIO conversion had been presented earlier by the Chairman (section 4.4) and he asked for a vote to confirm this Council recommendation. The motion was proposed by David White, seconded by Ralph Parks and passed unanimously by all members present.

6. Presentation of the Accounts for 2017 and the Treasurer’s Report for 2018

The Treasurer presented two sets of accounts: the final accounts for the year ended 31st December 2017 that were not available for last year’s AGM and draft accounts for the year ended 31st December 2018. He explained that the 2018 were draft as at this stage they had not been seen or approved by the Trustees however no material changes were anticipated. The following matters were highlighted:

- Awards at £55,630 were the highest in the history of the club that is in no small part due to continued support from the March Conservation Fund of the Tides Foundation and ongoing support from our President.
- Total income was in line with last year at £82,000 and expenditure was up by £30,000 due to increased awards, work on the website and payments to support the App development. As a result, total funds at the end of 2018 were down some £15,000 on prior years.
- Members were made aware of the accounting treatment used in respect of the App development where expenditure was capitalised net of contributions principally from Rockjumper £5000 and Tasso Leventis $10,000.
- The only other item of note was the increased expenditure on the website to upgrade it and also deal with a virus that had infected the site.
- The Chairman asked members to approve the 2017 accounts and the draft 2018 accounts. Kay White proposed the motion that was seconded by Stephen Pringle and members present voted unanimously to accept the 2017 and 2018 accounts.
7. Election of Trustees
The following Trustees have agreed to stand for election
Nigel Birch, Lynda Donaldson, David Fox, Chris Magin, Stephen Pringle

The following Trustees have agreed to stand for re-election:
Paul Buckley, John Caddick, Phil Hall, Nigel Redman, Chris Spooner

The following Trustees are standing down:
Phil Hyde, Richard Charles (as Chairman)

The Trustees propose the following Trustees are co-opted to Council
Richard Charles (as Immediate Past Chairman, Corporate Sponsors Officer), Stephen Lowe

These were proposed by Chris Balchin and seconded by Keith Betton and unanimously confirmed by those members present.

8. Election of Executive Officers for 2019
The following have agreed to stand for re-election/election as Executive Officers of the African Bird Club:

Chairman
David Fox (election)
Vice Chairman
Paul Buckley
Secretary
Stephen Pringle (election)
Treasurer
Chris Spooner

These were proposed by Keith Betton and seconded by Richard Webb and unanimously confirmed by those members present.

9. Appointment of Independent Examiner
Michael Goddard was recommended as the Independent Examiner for 2019. This was proposed by Stephen Chapman and seconded by John Caddick. Those members present unanimously confirmed the appointment.

10. Any other Business

10.1 ABC member Ralph Parks proposed a vote of thanks to outgoing Chairman Richard Charles for his hard work and contributions during his term of office.

10.2 At this juncture RC officially handed over the Chairmanship to his successor David Fox (DF). DF paid tribute to RC’s excellence in his role as Chair and presented him with an original painting by the late Martin Woodcock of Martial Eagles. DF publicly invited RC to become a Vice-President of the Club, the invitation was accepted and RC has been duly elected as such.


(Signed electronically ___ April 2020)