



The Newsletter of the Milton Keynes Natural History Society

Officers and Committee

President	Roy Maycock
Vice-President	John C Wickham
	Martin Kincaid
Chair	Lewis Dickinson
Deputy Chair	Paul Lund
Secretary	Jane Grisdale
Treasurer	Joe Clinch
Committee	Ayla Webb
	Di Parsons
	Mervyn Dobbin
Refreshments Rota	Colin Docketty
Sound Technician	Paul Lund
Webmaster	Peter Hassett
Summer Programme	Mary Sarre
Wildlife Sites	Ian Saunders
Fund-raising & Events Officer	Carol Watts
Non-Committee Responsibilities	
Tetrad Project	Tony Wood



Volucella zonaria hoverfly, Olney (J. Lane, 2017)

Welcome to this April's edition of The Magpie. It has been a turbulent last month with all sorts of precipitation, which seem to be having an effect on Spring springing! I am sure you will all be in agreement that we will be happy to see the back of these sub zero temperatures and start seeing the bustling activity of wildlife.

In this edition the resilience of moths, habitat destruction and the importance of recording, a review of the 'Field Guide to the Trees of Britain and Europe', winter wildlife around the area, the minutes from the AGM, and more. There will also be a couple of articles on the indoor programme and a MKNHS 50th anniversary edition Magpie.

As always, if you have anything you wish to include in The Magpie, from a walk around a local nature hotspot to a holiday abroad and anything in between, please get in touch with me at: lewis.dickinson91@gmail.com.

Hopefully we can look forward past this cold to a nice warm summer full of wildlife!

- Lewis Dickinson, Editor



Lesser Stag Beetle, Howe Park Wood (M. Kincaid, 2017)

A Note from the Chairman

It has been an interesting start to the year, with concerns of drought in the forthcoming season being resoundly dismissed by mother nature in the deluges of January and February followed then by some warmer bouts amongst periods of snow at the start of meteorological Spring all the way up until Easter. We can only imagine what affect this strange weather will have on the emerging wildlife at this time of year as there have already been sightings of Brimstone butterflies and some species of bumblebee.

Though we also know nature has a strong resilience so keep an eye on the numbers of different species you usually see in your gardens or out in your favourite local nature spot and whether you feel there are more or less than on the previous year. It would also be great if you could record them and send the results to BMERC. See the recording section of the MKNHS website for more details.

Since the last edition of The Magpie there have been a few changes to the committee and the officers. I would like to thank our former Chair Julie and co-Chair Linda for their time and hard work guiding and leading the Society on a number of projects. I am sure you will agree that they have provided valuable contributions and they will be missed on the Committee.

Also a big thanks goes out to Steve Brady who has stepped down as Secretary and from the Committee who has dedicated 25 and 31 years respectively to the positions, a life sentence if I ever saw one. We also have had another couple of committee members wishing to stand down, Jean Cooke and Carol Watts. They have contributed greatly to the indoor programme and fundraising for the Society.

I would also like to ask the Society to give a warm welcome to Ayla Webb, Mervyn Dobbin, Di Parsons, and Colin Docketty to the committee and Jane Grisdale to the position of Secretary. I am sure they are looking forward to getting stuck in and contributing to the Society.

As it's the Society's 50th this year, we hope you enjoyed the celebration event and the talk given by Patrick Barkham. I would like to thank Patrick for coming to give the talk to MKNHS, but also a big thanks to the Committee and Officers who put in a lot of time and effort to put on this event for the Society.

- Lewis Dickinson

The Resilience of Moths



Pale Brindled Beauty (Andy Harding)

I'm sure what I describe below is not at all unusual, but circumstances allowed for easy daily observations.


During the night of February 16th/17th a Pale Brindled Beauty moth *Phigalia pilosaria* settled close to a light positioned at around head height alongside the front porch of our house in Old Stratford. This is one of the most regular moths at this time of year, with a normal flight season of January to March. A good many moths hibernate, but this is not one of them: the adult part of its life cycle is definitely in winter. For interest, a photograph of a Pale Brindled Beauty, albeit of a different individual, taken on February 19th on a fence at the back of our house, is shown.

The external porch light is on throughout every night (and indeed whenever light levels are low) and this may be relevant to what follows. While there was some moth activity on the next three nights with a very small number of individuals being drawn to moth traps at the back of the house, the Pale Brindled Beauty at the front contented itself by moving just a few centimetres on two occasions, while remaining fully exposed to the elements on the external brickwork. Poor weather precluded moth trapping on the next few nights, but our Pale Brindled Beauty remained *in situ*. Subsequently temperatures during both day and night then dropped considerably and the wind speed increased.

After the first such night I checked on the outside of the porch and initially thought that it had disappeared. However, it had moved horizontally by about 25 cm along the front facing wall and round the corner to the inside of the brick arch of the porch. Having stayed there for two more days and with the onset of more severe wintry conditions I again thought it had gone...but no....a slightly longer crawl of perhaps 50 cm to the apex of the underside of the porch arch. Here it remained until a thaw set in from mid-day on March 3rd and through the following night, during which it presumably flew off.

- Andy Harding

<p style="text-align: center;">Review Corner</p> <p>‘Field Guide to the Trees of Britain and Europe’ by Alan Birkett</p>	
<p>We won’t all learn how to identify beetles, mosses or lichens, but we can all learn to identify common birds and trees. I first learned to identify trees from excellent Collins field guides by Alan Mitchell and more recently from the Collins Tree Guide. For more complicated tree identification there are keys – botanical and dichotomous ones – to provide more precise guidance. In any case you can use these to check identifications when you get back home, having used the field guide in the field.</p> <p>Last autumn, another field guide to trees of Britain and Europe was published. So how could this compete in the already crowded world of photographic guides to trees? It does, so here’s why I think so.</p> <p>This new tree guide is written with utter clarity, in easy-to-understand language, yet is based on sound botanical knowledge. It has a far wider range of photos about each tree species than other tree guides. Most tree guides show mainly leaves. This one has photos of leaves, flowers, fruits and seeds, buds and bark and the complete tree. The photos of leaves are larger than in most other books and under each illustration there are a few words explaining what to look for.</p> <p>Each species has a double-page spread and, at the foot of the pages, are one or two lines of a ‘Quick ID’ summary. As the author says, <i>“This guide tells you what to look for in 150 common tree species ... so helps you to learn faster”</i>. He also says that <i>“Once you have learned to identify 150 common species you should be able to go on to use the same technique to identify most of the 1,500 species you may find in the UK or Europe”</i>. He has chosen not only native plants but also other trees commonly planted in Britain. At the front of the book there is a series of eight different keys, to: broadleaf trees, conifers, buds, cones, catkins, white/pink flowers, summer fruit, and bark.</p> <p>For me, this book has sorted out some of the subtle distinctions between similar species that tended to trip me up. It helps greatly that it does this with brief and simple words alongside sharp and close-up photos of tree leaves and features.</p> <p>The author claims that <i>“Tree identification is a skill we can all learn, given enough time and effort”</i>. This book has been published in good time for you to look at newly-emerged leaves and learn for yourself what trees you are seeing.</p> <p>So who is the author of this new field guide to trees? You can see his hand many times over, as each leaf has been photographed at close quarters and with clear detail, by being held in the hand.</p>	<p>I assume that these hands are mainly those of the author. If you look closely you may even recognise some of the trees, as many were photographed in Milton Keynes. The give-away in a few photos is a highly recognisable Milton Keynes underpass in the background. The author is, of course, our own MK Natural History Society member, Alan Birkett. Congratulations Alan Birkett on a fine and useful book.</p> <p>When you have bought, used and enjoyed Alan Birkett’s ‘Field Guide to the Trees of Britain and Europe’ you can go online and would find it worth paying a modest sum to download his tree identification app for iPad, to expand your identification skills further. You might then submit records of your tree sightings in MK & Bucks to the County Environmental Records Centre, BMERC, or the county recorders particularly for less common trees.</p> <p>- Mike LeRoy</p> <div data-bbox="842 808 1161 1249">  </div> <p><i>‘Field Guide to the Trees of Britain and Europe’ by Alan Birkett</i></p> <p>[New Holland: London, 2017; ISBN 9781921517839; paperback, full price £14.99]</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">MKNHS 50th Anniversary Magpie</p> <p>As it is the 50th birthday of the Society, I thought it would only be fitting to have a special edition of The Magpie to commemorate the occasion. It would be great if we could pack this special edition out with everything that has happened this year, directly related to the 50th anniversary of the Society or not.</p> <p>So I challenge you all to leave your mark in the Society’s history and have something to be included in The Magpie. This edition is planned to come out at the end of the year.</p> <p>I know writing bits can seem a daunting prospect, which is why I would like to put on a short workshop later this year to help you put together something small or big to go into The Magpie.</p> <p>So, start saving up your experiences this year and hopefully we can make the 50th Anniversary edition of The Magpie one to remember!</p> <p>- Lewis Dickinson</p>

<h2>Habitat Destruction and Recording</h2>	
<p>I went for one of my favourite local walks the other day. It takes me up above Olney, through the Barn Field which is a wonderful Local Wildlife site created from a field of grass about 15 yrs ago and nowadays teaming with all sorts of wildlife. I then walk down through the fields to the river and round back to my house.</p> <p>When I got to the fields however I was horrified to see two diggers in ripping up the beautiful hedges that edge these fields – it was a scene of utter carnage with big piles of broken hedge in the centre of the field. These were wonderfully thick hedges–alive with yellowhammers, whitethroats (amongst others) in the summer and I regularly record common blues, skippers, meadow browns, ringlets and small coppers in the fields adjacent. The diggers had dug a deep ditch on the inside of the hedge ripping out half of its width in the process leaving battered, scraggy remains that will support very few living things.</p> <p>It is heartbreaking to see an area you love destroyed so violently and so quickly. Nothing can be done as the hedge still ‘exists’. If it had been taken out completely then the farmer would have needed to apply for permission to remove it but in this case no permission was needed. He has put a fence on the inside so I suspect he will put lots of sheep in the field (there were cattle there originally) so their grazing will reduce the fields to a desert as well.</p> <p>I was talking to the conservation officer at the Council about this site and also about some other local planning applications that will affect wildlife if they go through and one thing she said really made me think. She said that this sort of destruction highlights just how vitally important it is that we all submit records so that it gives people like her and the planners ammunition when these applications do come in to remove hedges etc. Without records they don’t have a leg to stand on to refuse the application!</p> <p>Last year we had a big push in the Society to get the process of recording species clearer for us all (see the recording information on our website). We also tried to build recording events into our summer walks and had several talks trying to encourage us all to get out there and do our bit.</p>	<p>I made quite a big effort myself and put lots of local records on iRecord last year. However when it came to actually submitting the records I didn’t get round to it, there always seemed to be something more urgent to do!! BMERC will eventually catch up with the records on iRecord but they are so very busy that it might take a while to get them all verified. Ideally, to get these records into the system fast, you should submit them to the county recorders or local recording scheme (see website) and they verify them and send them to BMERC. So now I have an urgent job to do – no more prevaricating!</p> <p>If we want to keep our beautiful landscapes and wildlife we need to keep getting those records in so that those that work on our behalf to protect it all have the proof they need when they need it.</p> <p>- Julie Lane</p>
	 <p>Wood Mouse, Tattenhoe (H.Appleyard, 23/01/18)</p>
	<h2>Groan Corner</h2>
	<p>Two male rooks are sitting in a bar. One says to the other, 'Bred any good rooks lately?'</p> <p>Q. What owl is common in people's homes?</p> <p>A. The teat owl!</p>

Help Needed! Indoor Programme

As of this summer, I have taken back the job of putting together the indoor programme from Jean Cook. I would like to thank Jean for the brilliant job she has done for the past six years of coming up with a full and varied programme. Hers is a tough act to follow.

I will need your help. With around 32 indoor meetings each year to arrange, the task doesn't get any easier. I would welcome suggestions for subjects to include in the programme and ideally possible speakers and their contact details as well. But not to worry if you don't have contact details, I am pretty good at tracking people down! So what would you like to hear about? For example, in the 25+ years I have been a member, I can't recall us ever having a talk on the subject of sharks – so I will be doing my best to find someone who can talk about sharks. I have one or two lines of enquiry.

Some of the best talks are those given by our own members, whether on their own particular interest or a site or country they have visited. So please don't be shy in coming forward, even if you feel you don't have enough content for a full evening. Your Natural History Society needs you!

And finally – even if you are not able to speak at a meeting or provide a speaker, you can assist with the indoor meetings in another way. We constantly struggle to fill our tea & coffee rota for Tuesday meetings. This job is not onerous if we all chip in so please try and let Colin know when you are free to go on tea duty this coming autumn. If nothing else, it is a good way to get chatting to members you might not know so well.

Thank you

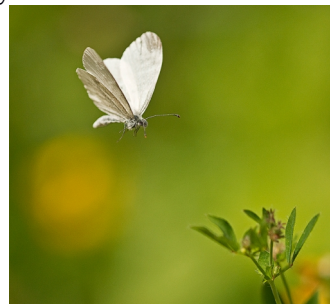
- Martin Kincaid



Sepedon sphegea, Howe Park Wood (J.Robertson 07/09/2017)

Winners – 2018 Photo Competition

We have the winners of the 2018 photo competition. In third place we have Paul Lund's Wood White in flight at Bucknell Wood, taken with a NIKON D800E on the 8th July 2017.



Wood White, Bucknell Wood (P. Lund 08/07/2018)

In second place a vibrant *Laccaria amethystina* (common name: amethyst deceiver) fungus taken by Peter Hassett with a Canon EOS 7D on the 1st November 2014 at Bow Brickhill.



Laccaria amethystina, Bow Brickhill (P. Hassett 01/11/2014)

The winner of the 2018 photo competition was the stunning capture of a Brimstone nectaring on a Sainfoin at Pitstone Quarry by Peter Hassett using a Canon EOS 7D Mark II on the 28th May 2017.



Brimstone nectaring on *Sainfoin*, Pitstone Quarry (P.Hassett 28/05/2017)

We would like to thank everyone that entered the competition and we are looking forward to next years entries!

Wildlife Around the Area – Winter 2017-18

This winter we have `enjoyed` heavy rain, floods and a visit from the `Beast from the East`, and shortly afterwards the `Mini Beast` that provided low temperatures and snow; and claimed to be the coldest February for five years. However, this obviously did not deter our members braving the elements and reporting on the local wildlife.

Mammals – The otters were recorded in December at Tongwell and near Lakes Lane at Newport Pagnell. In January one was reported as a road casualty near Bancroft and one occupant in Willen woke up to find some of his koi carp partly eaten and left beside his garden pond. On checking his CCTV system he confirmed that the culprit was an otter. In February one was seen at the Linford Wildlife Reserve. Other mammals recorded included Chinese Water Deer between Gayhurst and Haversham in January, a badger at Linford Reserve in February and a Roe Deer beside the Haversham Road in March together with the lone male at Elfield Park. In January there was a report of two polecat/ferrets dead on the A509 at the Emberton/Sherington intersection.



Daubenton's Bat, Pineham (A. Strutton 11/08/2017)

Plants – The cold weather did not deter the flowering plants locally with records of Hazel catkins out in January, primroses, snowdrops, coltsfoot and bluebells in February and dog violet in March.

Insects – Early records were understandably rare. However, a Buff-tailed Bumble Bee was seen in Olney mid-February and by mid-March members reported seeing White-tailed and Red-tailed Bumble Bees, Brimstone, Red Admiral, Comma and Small Tortoiseshell Butterflies. A few of our members used their moth traps during March and moths such as Common Quaker, Hebrew Character, Clouded Drab, Dotted Border and Oak Beauty were recorded.

Amphibians & Reptiles – The first report of frogs was on February 3rd in the ponds situated in the Linford Reserve with Great Crested Newts at the same site later that month. Frogspawn was discovered at several sites by mid-March and during the same month the first record of a slow worm was at Elfield Park.

Birds – During the winter period from December to March Goosanders and a single Great White and Cattle Egret have been regularly reported from various sites locally. During December the Hawfinches, mentioned in the autumn `Magpie`, made several appearances. Other unusual species during December included Goldeneye and a Mealy Redpoll at Linford Nature Reserve, several Brambling at Lathbury, Pintail and a Goshawk at the Floodplain Forest, Old Wolverton, a pair of Ravens flying over New Bradwell and Red-throated Diver at the Blue Lagoon.

January attracted Pintail, Woodcock, Long-eared Owl, Bittern, a Barn Owl at the Linford Reserve, a Black Swan at Haversham Sailing Lake and 8 Goldeneye at Willen Lake.

During February records included Redshank, Goldeneye and Cetti's Warbler at Willen Lakes, Siskins, Merlin, Oystercatcher and two Egyptian Geese at Linford Reserve, a Peregrine, Ruff, and a Caspian and Yellow-legged Gull at Caldecotte, a Jack Snipe at Stony Stratford Reserve, a Merlin and 40 Barnacle Geese at Olney and an Oystercatcher and Pink-footed Goose at Gayhurst Quarry.

Records in March included a Little Owl and two Egyptian Geese at the Floodplain Forest, a Caspian Gull, Oystercatcher, and a Knot at Caldecotte, a Mediterranean Gull, Kittiwake. Spotted Redshank and Goldeneye at Willen Lakes, a Pink-footed Goose at Linford Reserve and a Merlin at Olney. Also, in March a Common Crossbill was observed beside Woburn Golf Club.

Finally `spring has sprung`, a Swallow and two Sand Martins were recorded flying over Willen Lakes on the 13th of March.

So, at last the weather is improving, so there is no excuse not to visit the many sites locally that attract wildlife during the spring and summer. Record your sightings, pass on the highlights through the Society's website if possible, but most of all – ENJOY.

- Tony Wood



Sparrowhawk, Shenley Church End (P. Hassett 17/01/2018)

<p>MKNHS Group Wildlife Holiday!</p> <p>Many years ago, this society organised overseas wildlife trips for its members and these were enjoyed by many.</p> <p>The last couple of years Nature Trek, a company I have travelled with for nearly twenty years, have been organizing wildlife trips for R.S.P.B. groups and Natural History Societies. In fact, I understand that the local R.S.P.B. group's latest trip to Poland was arranged through Nature Trek. They advised this Society that as long as there would be at least eight members making up the group they can create a trip to cater for the interests of the participants.</p> <p>At this time of the year most people have arranged their holidays so It may be too late to organise such a trip, but if you are interested for future wildlife trips please let me know. You can check the existing holidays on their web site www.naturetrek.co.uk.</p> <p>- Tony Wood</p>	<p>The last known site in Milton Keynes in recent years has been the Blue Lagoon, though there have been only a handful of sightings in the last few years.</p> <p>The flight time for the Grizzled Skipper is usually April to May, so please keep an eye out for the species and let me know if you see any. Nationally the Grizzled Skipper had in 2016 its worst year since 1975. The similar Dingy Skipper is faring a little bit better.</p> <p>If you picked up a leaflet and freepost envelope for the Wood White at a Society meeting you can submit your records using that instead of by email. Butterfly Conservation would like to know of sites surveyed with your sightings.</p> <p>- Colin Docketty</p>
<p>Butterflies in Buckinghamshire</p> <p>The Wood White urgently needs help. To identify it its feeble flight and relatively long narrow rounded forewings seperate it from other white butterflies in flight, but to be certain take note that it always rests with its wings closed. If you can see the top side of the wings it is another species. With the Wood White observe the long forewings and the way the grey smudge crosses the wing veins. The wing margins are unmarked as is the central portion of the forewing.</p> <p>Butterfly Conservation desperately need help surveying the edges of woodlands and thickets, as well as alongside thick hedges and patches of rough grass In search for colonies of the Wood White in North Bucks and Milton Keynes, records from these areas are very sparse. The best time to survey for Wood Whites is from May to July, which is their usual flight time.</p> <p>If possible any sightings should be supported by a photograph, to assist verification, when submitted.</p> <p>Any sightings should be emailed to Nick Bowles (Wood White champion) at woodw@talktalk.net.</p> <p>The Grizzled Skipper is another species where records are needed. Like the Wood White records for this area are very sparse.</p>	

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting – 20th March 2018

Present: Carol Allen, Steve Brady, Joe Clinch, Jean Cooke, Steve Cousins, Lewis Dickinson, Colin Docketty, Jane Grisdale, Peter Hassett, Andy Heatherington, Martin Kincaid, Julian Lambley, Julie Lane, Mike LeRoy, Paul Lund, Linda Murphy, Di Parsons, Alan Piggott, Linda Piggott, John Prince, Viola Read, Gordon Redford, Chris Roberts, Janice Robertson, Ian Saunders, Carol Watts, Helen Wilson, Tony Wood

The meeting was commenced at 8.03 p.m. when the Vice-President, Martin Kincaid, in the Chair, welcomed members to the XLIXth AGM.

1) **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Received from Phillip Brown, Mervyn Dobbin, Sue Heatherington, Frances Higgs, Jennifer Huggett, Anne Lambley, Roy Maycock, Peter Meadows, Paul Moon, Jenny Mercer, Kate Redford, Mary Sarre, Phil Sarre and John Wickham

2) **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM, HELD ON 14TH MARCH 2017**

These minutes were taken as read and accepted *nem. con.* as a true and accurate record, proposed by Joe Clinch and seconded by Ian Saunders.

3) **MATTERS ARISING.**

There were none.

4) **COMBINED OFFICERS' REPORT.**

This was delivered by Julie Lane as in the attached text including the President's, Chairman's and Secretary's reports. The Combined Officers' Report was adopted on a proposal by Mike Le Roy, seconded by Peter Hassett, and passed unanimously.

5) **TREASURER'S REPORT AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS (INCLUDING GORDON OSBORN FUND).**

The Treasurer, Joe Clinch, reported as follows:

The annual accounts 2017 are presented to the AGM for adoption.

They are as agreed with the examiner Philip Brown. They have also been reviewed by the Committee (an innovation for recent year) and the Committee now commends them to the AGM. To Philip Brown who unfortunately has been unable to attend tonight) my warm thanks and also to Ann Strutton my predecessor as Treasurer who continues to assist by maintaining the Society's financial spreadsheets. Joe would also like to add his thanks to Julie and Linda as they complete their term of office as joint-chairs for inducting me to the ways of the Society and its committee, and for all their advice and support during my two years as Treasurer.

Balance sheet

The Balance Sheet is an important annual snapshot of the overall financial position of the Society including the Gordon Osbourn Bequest Fund (GOBF). **Present Worth** of the Society at year end was £3086.18 and that of GOBF £3102.50 making a Combined Worth total of £6188.68. Note that the capital element of GOBF is not available for allocation, it is only the Accrued Interest of £368.52 that can be spent. The **estimated Net Worth** of the Society is an indicator of uncommitted funds based on the **Present Worth** at 31.12.17 less known commitments to the end of April and on the assumption that there will be no new income during the January to April period. This measure has fallen in 2018 compared with 2017 on account of the commitments made for the 50th Anniversary special meeting on 27th March in particular the cost of hiring the Chrysilis Theatre and higher speaker expenses than usual (and it is relevant mention here that donations of £350 have been received towards these extra costs and that ticket sales are on course to meet the balance).

Income and expenditure account

The Income and Expenditure Account is a record of financial performance in 2017.

The highlights of the Income and Expenditure are as follows:

- An encouraging small Increase in membership subscriptions to £2285 (95 members) as compared with £2105 (89 members) in 2016
- Display Materials Project successfully completed with £400 of the total costs of £629 met by Milton Keynes Community Foundation grant of £200 and GOBF grant of £200.
- Income from Donations, Sale of donated items, and Raffles at an encouraging level of £555 (excluding Display Materials Project see above) (and Joe would like to add his thanks to Carol Watts for her role in organising Raffles and Sales of donated items)
- Expenditure lines and total within estimates agreed by the committee
- Surplus for the year of £350

The Society's activities are only possible with the huge amount of voluntary time put in by Society members. These is not costed and does not therefore form part of the annual accounts but Joe would like formally to acknowledge the enormous contribution it makes to the viability and success of the Society.

The accounts were adopted as a true statement of the Society's finances on a proposal by Lewis Dickinson, seconded by Viola Read, and passed unanimously

6) ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

The President yielded the Chair temporarily to the Chairman who then conducted the Presidential election.

<i>President</i>	Roy Maycock	proposed by Steve Brady, seconded by John Prince elected unanimously.
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Julie Lane then took over the Chair to conduct the Vice-Presidential election

<i>Vice-presidents</i>	John Wickham	proposed by John Prince seconded by Lewis Dickinson elected unanimously
	Martin Kincaid	proposed by Colin Docketty seconded by Jean Cooke elected unanimously

Martin resumed the Chair and thanked Julie and Linda for their sterling work as co-chairmen.

<i>Chairman</i>	Lewis Dickinson	proposed by Linda Murphy seconded by Julie Lane elected unanimously
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<i>Secretary</i>	Jane Grisdale	proposed by Steve Brady seconded by Peter Hassett elected unanimously
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<i>Treasurer</i>	Joe Clinch	proposed Martin Kincaid which proposal being from the Chair required no seconded elected unanimously
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7) ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

Two of the current committee, Jean Cooke and Carol Watts, wished to stand down together with our former co-chairs Julie Lane and Linda Murphy. The sad passing of Arthur Allen has left another Committee vacancy. The Vice-President thanked them all for their service on behalf of the Society. The remaining committee members, Peter Hassett, Paul Lund, Mary Sarre and Ian Saunders were prepared to carry on if re-elected. Their re-election *en bloc* was proposed by Steve Brady, seconded by Mike LeRoy and carried unanimously. Colin Docketty was proposed by Martin Kincaid and seconded by Mike Le Roy, Mervyn Dobbin was proposed by Julie Lane and seconded by Ian Saunders, Di Parsons was proposed by Linda Murphy and seconded by Steve Brady, and Ayla Webb was proposed by Julie Lane and seconded by Gordon Redford. All were unanimously elected.

The committee therefore consists of *Joe Clinch, Lewis Dickinson, Colin Docketty, Mervyn Dobbin, Jane Grisdale, Peter Hassett, Martin Kincaid, Paul Lund, Roy Maycock, Di Parsons, Mary Sarre, Ian Saunders, Ayla Webb and John Wickham.*

The first committee meeting will take place at the Linford Lakes Nature Reserve building on Monday 23rd April at 8pm.

8) RAISING INCOME FOR THE SOCIETY

The Treasurer, Joe Clinch, addressed the meeting as follows:

Background

The committee had a number of discussions in 2017 on how best to increase the Society's income and asked me to write an article for the *Magpie* based on the committee's conclusion. This appeared in the November edition. It invited feedback from members. None were received other than two most generous anonymous donations totalling £800!

To recap and summarise the main conclusion of the Article, the Society has invested in assets (mainly equipment) over the years purchased mainly through donations and these will need replacing at some future date. The committee estimates that there is a need to set aside about £300 a year for this purpose in order to build up a 'replacement fund'.

The recent donations certainly help but do not remove the problem on a continuing basis and at a practical level it does mean that the committee has been able to set budgets for 2018 in knowledge of them.

What is the proposed solution?

The committee looked at a number of options. Increasing membership is of course much the best way of increasing income and as Joe reported under the annual accounts 2017 the Society ended up with a small increase in the number. But numbers are no higher than a few years ago so we cannot rely on this. The committee reviewed the position on 26th February in light the latest information and its recommendation is that **members be given the option of including a regular voluntary donation to the Society in addition to their Membership Subscription.** If adopted by the AGM this would be for introduction in April 2019 (although donations are always welcome at any time!).

The AGM welcomed Joe's additional voluntary contribution suggestion and agreed that we shall adopt this going forward/

9) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) Foreign Wildlife Tours: Tony Wood has been in contact with Naturetrek who would be willing to run these for us. Anyone interested should contact Tony. The local RSPB have used them to go to Poland this year. Tony will put it in the *Magpie*.
- b) Committee Roles: will be arranged at the next Committee meeting.
- c) Donations: Viola Read observed that she would have liked the opportunity to donate money had the Society let her know we needed it. In the past the generosity of Committee members have covered any need.
- d) Magpie: Lewis said the deadline for next issue is end of this week. This year we plan a 50th Anniversary Edition, either in August or December.
- e) Next Week's Meeting: at the Chrysalis Theatre Willen.
- f) 60th Anniversary: The Vice-President announced that Paul Lund had reached this degree of antiquity. Carol Watts gave him a cake with 1/30th of the correct number of candles. The Society sang – or attempted to sing - Happy Birthday to him.

There being no other business for the good of the Society the Vice-President brought proceedings gracefully to a close at 8-50 p.m. and all fell to devouring the repast of nibbles and Jennyfer Huggett's Welsh Cakes laid before them.

Steve Brady, Secretary Emeritus, 21st March 2018