



The Newsletter of the Milton Keynes Natural History Society

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Vice-President	Martin Kincaid
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Deputy Chair	Paul Lund
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Treasurer	Linda Murphy
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Summer Programme	Mary Sarre
	Sue Hetherington
	Harry Appleyard
	Joe Clinch
Non-Committee Responsibilities	
Tetrad Project	Tony Wood
Magpie Editor	Julie Lane



Hairy-footed flower bee (*Julie Lane*)

Welcome to the spring Magpie and my first as the new editor (its work in progress - I am learning still!) As I write this Spring is in full flood. The garden is full of baby birds, sparrows, robins and blackbirds; my new water barrel is swarming with tadpoles rescued from my pond before the starlings got them; my pond is in constant use by the local birds for drinks and baths and two frogs are in residence under the beautiful marsh marigolds. My wildflower patch is growing apace with cowslips, fritillaries, oxeye daisies, scabious, bugle, hay rattle and meadow cranesbill attracting in loads of bees and butterflies. My two resident hedgehogs were up to no good down my side alley the other evening and making a right racket snorting and grunting so I might have the patter of tiny feet later on in the year. There is a bumble bees' nest in my woodpile and red mason bees using my bee hotel (last year it was the Hairy-footed flower bee see above). I am not saying all this to show off although I am very proud of it, but just to make the point that in my very small garden I have done what I can to provide a home for wildlife and it has moved in with alacrity. It provides me with so much pleasure and I still have a tidy but small lawn and many ornamental flowers to give me pleasure as well. I am sure many of you have equally lovely gardens but if anyone wants help or advice on gardening for wildlife feel free to ask. Thank you so much for those of you who have contributed to this edition. Please feel free to send me articles at any time of the year on any topic to do with wildlife and let's make this newsletter a really interesting joint effort for us all to read. *Julie Lane*

A Note from the Chairman

"Welcome back to the first Magpie since the bumper MKNHS 50th Anniversary Edition! Hopefully you all had a nice Spring after what felt like a rather long winter. Though it looks like we may be in for another scorcher this summer, which may feel great to be out in but there are always wildlife winners and losers with such conditions. Anecdotally this year I feel I have seen many more wasp queens searching for suitable nest sites than in previous years, perhaps this has been brought to the front of my mind due to a wasp queen attempting to build a nest in my allotment shed!

Since the bumper Magpie we have had the AGM and there have been a few changes to the Committee and Officers as a result. I would like to take a moment to thank Joe Clinch and Jane Grisdale for giving their time and doing a sterling job to support the Society as Treasurer and Secretary respectively. I would also like to thank Ian Saunders and Ayla Webb for their time and support on the Committee and Society. One final farewell is to Philip Brown who performed the role of Examiner for the Treasury accounts of the Society. Philips 17 years of service has been most appreciated and we would like to thank him greatly.

On to faces new! We would like to welcome Mervyn Dobbin as Secretary and Linda Murphy as Treasurer as well as Sue Hetherington and Harry Appleyard to the Committee. Joe Clinch was also elected to the Committee after handing over the Treasurer role.

With all the welcomes and thank yous done we can look forward to what is hopefully a good year for wildlife! Though to ensure we get an idea of year to year what our wildlife is doing we need to have the records to prove it. So if you are getting out on some of the Tuesday walks or are having your own jaunts across the parks and countryside note down the species you see, where you saw it, and when, then send it off with your name and contact to the Bucks and MK Records Centre! Our wildlife will thank you for it! "

Lewis Dickinson

Winners – 2019 Photo Competition

The standard of entries to our photo competition continues to rise with many stunning entries.

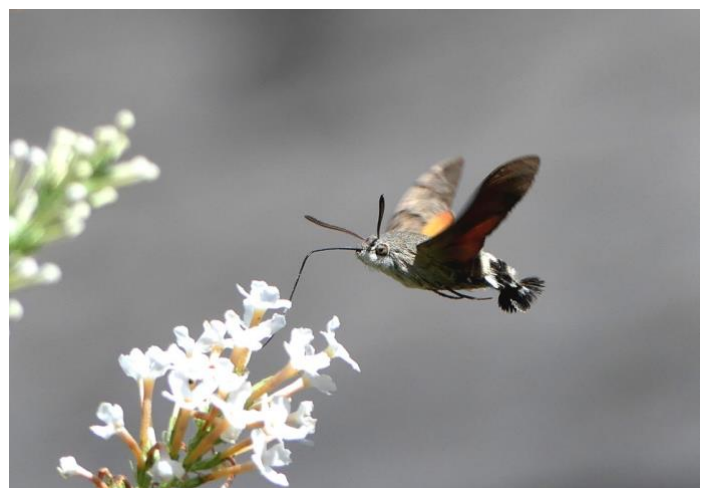
This year in first place we have Justin Long's image of Turkey tail mushrooms (*Trametes versicolor*).



In second place a backlit image of parasol mushrooms also by Justin



And in third place Janice Robertson's hummingbird hawkmoth beautifully in focus which is no mean feat as many of us know.



Wildlife around Milton Keynes Spring 2019

After a reasonable mild winter, including a warmest February day nationally on record (Woburn Sands achieving 19 degrees Celsius), the mild days returned in April with the warmest Easter break on record over the whole country. This certainly encouraged numerous wildlife sightings by our members to the Society's website.

Mammals - Otters appear to be regularly reported locally with observations this year at Gayhurst Quarry, Willen lakes, Linford Reserve, and two seen in the brook at New Bradwell. Bats such as Common Pipistrelle and Noctule were recorded in early April, and over winter a colony of Daubenton's was found hibernating under the M1 Motorway bridge at Pineham.

The mammal study group at Linford Reserve last year placed tennis balls on sticks in two areas of the reserve during their survey for Harvest Mice and were delighted to find a nest built inside one. At present they are operating a new survey for Water Shrews using tubes with mealworms inserted. Already the food has been consumed leaving plenty of droppings to be examined.

Reptiles and Amphibians – Frogs were reported in members' garden ponds by late February and tadpoles by early March, soon followed by Smooth Newts. Also, in March Great Crested Newts and mating Common Toads were observed in ponds around the area. Young Grass Snakes from the previous year appeared abundant around Milton Keynes and Slow Worms were recorded at Elfield Park and in the Blue Bridge area. Di Parsons and Mat Andrews found Adders just outside Milton Keynes at Stockgrove Park, but we are still waiting for a confirmed sighting in Milton Keynes.

Moths - Once more there is a 'Don't Panic' article about wildlife in our local paper. This time it concerns the Brown-tailed Moth *Euproctis chryorrhoea* larva that feeds on Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Dog-rose and Sallows. It would appear that the larval hairs cause severe skin irritation and they have been discovered in Milton Keynes. For more information on moths see Gordon Redford's article.

Damselflies - By mid-May members observations included the Azure, and Small Red-eye Damselfly at Linford Reserve and a Large Red-eye Damselfly at Stonepits.

Fungi - During a fungi survey in January, at the Linford Reserve, Justin Long identified a Red Banded Bracket Fungus *Fomitopsis pinicola* which was confirmed as only the second specimen recorded in Bucks.

Birds - Spring is upon us at the time of producing this summary and reports of Sand Martins, House Martins and Swallows were made in March with Swifts in late April. Apart from Cetti's and Blackcaps that were present during the winter, a male of the latter regularly seen in my garden, the warblers arrived during March and April. Other migrants seen locally included Common. Arctic, and Black Tern, Yellow Wagtail, Cuckoo, and a report in April of a Nightingale singing at the Linford Reserve.

Records from our local lakes included many Little Egret and in January up to three Great White Egrets at a time, and a sole Cattle Egret in the same month at Linford Reserve. Goosanders were present on most of our lakes during winter, and a female with young recorded on the river at Olney in April. A Bittern was recorded in February and one heard 'Booming' in the reeds at Linford Reserve in the beginning of May.

Other species recorded on or beside our lakes at the beginning of the year included Oystercatchers, Black-tailed Godwits, Caspian Gull, Little Gull, Red-crested Pochard, Garganey, Ruddy Shelduck, and in May a Mandarin Duck at Caldecotte Lake. Away from the waterway's members reported seeing a Common Crossbill at two sites several months from January to April, a Hawfinch, Whinchat and Redstart at Tattenhoe, a female Black Redstart at Furzton, Brambling, and a Raven.

By the time the 'Magpie' is with you summer will be upon us and an abundance of wildlife out there. Look out for Clouded Yellow and Painted Lady butterflies and check the Common Garden Snail to see if you can discover one with a left sided spiral on its shell – they are out there.

Tony Wood

Moth Report February 16th–April 30th 2019

My mothing season started on February 16th this year with the Robinson trap in my garden and another at Linford Lakes Nature Reserve. The pattern in the past, determined by the weather, has been that maybe just a few days in February would warrant the traps going out and usually more often in March but again on only a handful of occasions. April has been the month when the traps are used pretty well on a daily basis. This year that pattern for those first 2 months has been deserted with warm periods in both February and March.

In the garden, this is my 25th year of trapping in Newport Pagnell and the trap has been out in February on 8 of those years and the most species recorded was 5 in 2004. This year 12 species were recorded. At Linford Lakes Nature Reserve, this is my 8th year of regularly trapping and never have I trapped in February before. The 16 species recorded there were a surprise in not just the number of species but also the number of moths. 897 moths were counted in February of which 715 were Common Quakers. There was 1 new record for the garden and 3 new species for Linford Lakes: The Spring Usher was new for both sites so is my “Moth of the Month” for February.

March, 2019 was my best ever for both the garden and Linford Lakes with 22 species recorded in the garden (previous best 16 in 2017) and 27 species recorded at Linford Lakes (previous best 11 in 2017).

There were no new species recorded at Linford Lakes but 4 were added to the garden list and one of those, Dotted Chestnut is my “Moth of the Month” for March but just by a whisker because Blossom Underwing, a moth that has eluded me finally appeared this year.

April, 2019 was my best ever at Linford Lakes with 27 species recorded (previous best 19 in both 2014 and 2018). The garden total of species recorded was 24 (2 short of the 26 recorded in 2011). 2 micro moths were added to the Linford Lakes species list and these were *Incurvaria masculella* and *Grapholita jungiella*. Neither has common English names and these share the “Moth of Month” for April.

Gordon Redford

Incurvaria masculella (Gordon Redford)



Groan Corner

Did you hear about the frog who was illegally parked?

He had to be toad away 😊

How do frogs make beer?

They start with some hops 😊

I used to play cards with an elephant but every time I laid a card he would trumpet 😊

Thank you *Paul Lund* 😊

Review Corner

Sapiens – A brief history of Humankind

By Yuval Noah Harari

“Earth is 4.5 billion years old. In just a fraction of that time, one species among countless others has conquered it: us.

What make us brilliant?

What makes us deadly?

What makes us sapiens?

This bold and provocative book explores who we are, how we got here and where we are going. Sapiens is a thrilling account of our history – from insignificant apes to rulers of the world.”

“Fire gave us power, farming made us hungry for more, money gave us purpose and science made us deadly”

I am only half way through this book but it is immensely readable and incredibly enlightening, it almost makes one forgive our species for the mess it is making of our world! It explains our journey from ape to modern man and the biological, cultural and historical twists and turns that have shaped us.

If you read this book you will look at our world in a completely different light.

Julie Lane

MOT with a view

I recently took my car for an MOT at Arden Park Garage Services in Old Wolverton Rd, Wolverton. I have used the garage for years for MOTs and the garage has the benefit that, as well as providing a reasonable priced MOT, it just happens to be directly opposite the Floodplain Forest Nature Reserve.

So, instead of sitting in the waiting room reading an old magazine, I spent a very pleasant hour visiting the reserve. I walked down to the Viaduct hide and then visited the Farm and Iron Trunk hides before returning using the path past the Manor Farm Court offices.

It was interesting to see the Konik ponies eating shrubs at water's edge, I'm pleased that they had read their job description!

I didn't have a camera with me so I've included a photo from a previous visit to this wonderful site.

Bird List

Blackbird, Canada Goose, Cormorant, Crow, Gadwall, Goldfinch, Great Crested Grebe, Grey Heron, Greylag Goose, Jackdaw, Magpie, Mallard, Moorhen, Mute Swan, Pheasant, Pied wagtail, Reed bunting, Rook, Shoveler, Starling, Teal, Tufted duck, Wigeon, Wood pigeon

Peter Hassett



Great-crested grebe (*Peter Hassett*)

**Finding swift colonies in Milton Keynes,
(year two)**

Most swifts arrive back in Milton Keynes during May. They will have flown from south of the equator, having spent our winter in areas such as the Congo basin, Tanzania and Malawi, flying and never landing but sleeping on the wing. They return with one purpose, to breed and make nests in the same area as other swifts. Local groups circle a colony area early in the morning and towards dusk, often low over houses.

Our summers provide the insect food that swifts need, much of it caught high in the sky. Our buildings provide them with the spaces beneath roofs where they can find flat spaces, such as the top of a wall, on which to build their slight saucer of a nest. Or they find holes and crevices for their nests on old buildings, including churches. But most modern buildings don't provide access to roof-spaces. Roof renovations of older buildings often exclude birds, and bats as well.

In 2014, common swifts were added to the Amber List of Birds of Conservation Concern. The British Trust for Ornithology's (BTO) evidence was that numbers of common swift in Britain more than halved between 1994 and 2017. There may well be factors about swift habitat in southern and central Africa that have contributed to this decline, and issues along their migration routes, but it is highly likely that loss of suitable nesting spaces on buildings in Britain is a significant factor, alongside declining numbers of insects over intensively-managed farmland.

The MK Swifts group was set up in 2017 to find where the swift colonies are in urban and rural Milton Keynes and to encourage local residents, property owners and developers to protect and create nesting places for swifts. Having found swift nest-sites we are in a better position to encourage people to protect them. It also gives an indication of nearby areas into which swifts might expand, where swift-boxes might be used or where new buildings could incorporate swift-bricks in their walls.

The first step for MK Swifts was to work with volunteers to find where swifts are nesting. 18 volunteers got involved with MK Swifts in 2017 and seven more during 2018. Some members of the group discovered that one of the best ways to find local swift colonies was to walk an area towards dusk looking for low-flying

groups of swifts around buildings. It often becomes clear where the centre of their flight path is, so we watched where swifts were dipping below roof height and past specific houses and other buildings. It can take many evenings of watching to detect a nest-site, but the number of swifts seen flying around the colony nest-sites gives an indication of how many nests there might be. On occasions a call can be heard from within a nest-site as another swift flies by. It takes patience to see a swift making an entry to a nest-site as, for good reasons, they are discrete about this, but also because they take time to collect hundreds of insects, which they form into a tight food-ball (a bolus) kept in a food-pouch in their throat ready to feed their young.

In 2017, the MK Swifts sightings group found 18 distinct swift colonies in the Milton Keynes area. In 2018 they found a further 5 colonies, 23 in all.

We had expected to find swift colonies in the older areas of Milton Keynes, and they were found in the towns of: Stony Stratford, Wolverton, Newport Pagnell, and Woburn Sands; but in 2017 there had been a surprising lack of finds of colonies in the Bletchley, Fenny Stratford, Olney and New Bradwell areas. The surprise has been how many have been found in New Town housing areas built since 1970. Of the 18 colonies found in the main urban area of Milton Keynes in 2017, more than half (7) were in post-1970 housing areas, which were: Bolbeck Park, Bradwell Common, Downhead Park, Giffard Park, Heelands, Oldbrook, and Shenley Church End. Several of these were larger colonies.

Areas searched in 2017 where no swift colonies had been found were, within the main urban area: Beanhill, Bradwell, Coffee Hall, Fullers Slade, Hodge Lea, Loughton, Netherfield, New Bradwell, Stacey Bushes and Tattenhoe. This left many other areas of MK to be surveyed in future years. In the wider MK area, the outlying villages in which nesting swifts had been found in 2017 were: Newton Blossomville, Sherington and Stoke Goldington; and they were found there again in 2018. No swift colonies have yet been found in Emberton or Ravenstone.

In 2018 additional colony sites were found at: Bletchley, Olney, Willen Park and Fenny Stratford. At Emerson Valley, the home-owners reported that swifts had nested in their roof for many years.

At Olney, low-flying swifts had been observed near the middle of the town in the previous year, but in 2018 careful searching led to three nest-sites being found close to the main street, on: a disused building, on a church, and above a shop. One of the volunteers new to the MK Swifts project in 2018 found a colony of more than 30 swifts in the Willen Park area and five nest-sites. Other new nest sites found were in: West Bletchley, Fenny Stratford, Newport Pagnell and Stony Stratford.

The lakes and rivers of Milton Keynes provide well-used aerial feeding for swifts, as well as for the Hirundines (swallows, house martins and sand martins). Especially following the arrival of swifts at the end of April and through May the lakes provide essential feeding after a long migration journey. Willen Lake and Caldecotte Lake are well used for this, but smaller lakes too as well as the River Ouse. These sites work well as feeding stations when weather is poor and insects are less numerous high in the sky, and when there are nestlings and the adults need to find food close by. At other times the linear open spaces of MK, the 'countryside within the city', provide plenty of aerial plankton, so swifts hunt over these and much wider areas.

MK Swifts made a presentation at the BMERC Recorders seminar in March 2018, where a map of the 2017 swift colony locations was displayed with a summary of the MK Swifts project. MK Swifts volunteers have been kept in touch through a series of e-mailed Bulletins. A 'swift half' walk was held in Stony Stratford on a July evening in 2018. This concluded with drinks at The Cock pub where we were able to sit at tables in the open courtyard and watch swifts flying low above us, using some of the many swift nests on the pub's buildings. The manager and staff of The Cock were well aware of the presence of swifts and welcome them.

Several MK Swifts volunteers installed nest-boxes on their homes in time for the 2018 arrival of swifts. At Linslade swift-calls were played back without annoying the neighbours, and these nest-boxes were occupied by swifts within a few weeks. In 2018, survey visits were made to check a group of nest-bricks that had been installed in the back walls of new houses at Old Wolverton a few years back. Although house martins were nesting at the front of nearby houses there was no evidence of

swifts using the nest-bricks, perhaps because no swift call playback had been used to attract them?

Following suggestions by MK Swifts, plans were developed during 2018 to install swift nest-boxes or swift-bricks at several sites, including a school in Stony Stratford, and Parks Trust buildings. The Parks Trust has installed a group of nest-boxes on an industrial building it leases to a company on Crownhill. Another building is earmarked for nest-boxes, and a local industrialist is keen to add swift-nests to his factory. A keen group of Olney residents, supported by Julie Lane and Fiona Everingham from BMERC, has made 11 swift boxes and has been putting them up on: The Olney Centre, a home for the elderly, and at a first school. Julie now has three boxes on her house and has arranged for six installed on barns at Newton Blossomville to be moved from south- to north-facing, where swifts are more likely to use them.

Milton Keynes is one of the fastest-growing areas in the UK. With large new housing areas being built there are new opportunities for swift nest-sites. The centre of the 'city' has been undergoing a new spurt of development of mainly taller buildings for: offices, hotels and apartments. MK Swifts aims to take advantage of development to encourage property owners and developers to make provision for swift nesting on their buildings. We have met with several developers and their architects to explain the case for incorporating spaces for swifts at roof level in their new buildings.

MK Swifts is into its third year of observing the arrival of swifts. In 2018 the first sighting of a swift by one of the MK Sightings Group was on 27th April, but it seems that recent weather conditions may have slowed down their arrival in 2019. On 3rd May almost a hundred were seen by a Parks Trust ranger over Willen Lake south. By 13th May the Bradwell Common colony had increased to seven seen flying, with one pair calling loudly from within their nest. This was at a nest-site where the home-owner describes swifts as 'the Spitfires' of the bird world. Above all, watching for swift colonies is a delight. It is absorbing to stand watching swifts racing each other over a colonial area, diving and soaring, slowing and accelerating their flight, sometimes with brief contact calls, or in larger groups all 'screaming' as they scorch through the sky together.

Mike LeRoy and Martin Kincaid (MK Swifts)

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

MINUTES OF THE 50th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 5th MARCH, 2019 IN THE CRUCK BARN, BRADWELL ABBEY.

Present: Matthew Andrews, Harry Appleyard, Anthony Barker, Philip Brown, Joe Clinch, Bob Coeshall, Jean Cook, Lewis Dickinson, Mervyn Dobbin, Jane Grisdale, Peter Hassett, Andy Hetherington, Sue Hetherington, Frances Higgs, Martin Kincaid, Anne Lambley, Joan Lancaster, Mike LeRoy, Paul Lund, Roy Maycock, Peter Meadows, Di Parsons, John Prince, Viola Read, Gordon Redford, Janice Robertson, Phil Sarre, Mike Sheridan, David Slach, Carol Watts, Ayla Webb, David Webb, Michelle Welborn, Helen Wilson, Tony Wood, Kate Wyatt.

The meeting was commenced at 8.00 p.m. when the President Roy Maycock took the Chair and welcomed members to the 50th AGM.

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE;** Steve Brady, Colin Docketty, Andy McVeigh, Jenny Mercer, Linda Murphy, Alan Piggott, Linda Piggott, Saffron Summerfield, Margaret Wickham.
- 2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM HELD ON 20TH MARCH 2018;**

Mike LeRoy informed the members that his name had been incorrectly spelt twice on the recorded minutes. This was noted. These minutes were taken as read and accepted as a true and accurate record, proposed by Joe Clinch and seconded by Peter Hassett. Approval carried.

- 3. MATTERS ARISING;** No matters arising noted.
- 4. COMBINED OFFICERS REPORT;** This report (see attachment) was read by Lewis Dickinson. In this report it was proposed to make Roy Maycock an Honorary Member of the Society. Proposed by Jean Cook, seconded by Paul Lund, and passed unanimously with acclamation.
- 5. TREASURER'S REPORT AND STATEMENT OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTS (INCLUDING GORDON OSBORN BEQUEST FUND)**

The outgoing Treasurer, Joe Clinch, reported as follows:

The annual accounts 2018 are presented to the AGM for adoption.

They are presented in the name of the Treasurer and Examiner and come with the recommendation of the Committee. As in the case of the two previous annual accounts that I have presented my warmest thanks to Philip Brown the Examiner for his expertise and patience, and to Ann Strutton my predecessor as Treasurer who has continued to assist by maintaining the Society's financial spreadsheets. What follows is a brief summary of highlights.

Income and Expenditure Account January to December 2018

The Income and Expenditure Account is a measure of operational financial activity in 2019: both have risen significantly in 2018 (largely as a result of the activities associated with the Society's successful 50th anniversary celebrations and donations for future asset replacement) as set out below (2017 figures in parenthesis):

	2018	2017
Income	£5719.56	(£3727.46)
Expenditure	£3914.03	(£3377.30)
Excess of Income over expenditure	£1805.53	(£350.16)

The highlights of the detail of the Income and Expenditure Account can be summarized as follows:

- Donations, Sale of Donated items and Raffle have together contributed £2153.20 to Income thanks to the generosity of members (£755.32 in 2017).
- Membership Subscription Income (and the number of members) has again increased resulting in income of £2480.00 (£2285.00 in 2017) and 109 members (95 in 2017)
- Visitors and Refreshments have contributed a further £433.72 to income (£405.72 in 2017)
- 50th Anniversary special lecture and 50th Birthday Magpie added to costs which were more than met by ticket sales and donations explicitly for those activities
- Costs well controlled

As in previous years the Society's activities are only made possible by the voluntary efforts of individual members. These are not costed but do form an essential element of its success and viability. To all of them renewed thanks.

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2018

The Balance Sheet is an annual snapshot of the Society's overall financial position including GOBF (Gordon Osborn Bequest Fund). It is very satisfactory. The **Present Worth of the Society** at year end was **£4891.71**. Note that of the Society's **Present Worth** £900.00 has been donated for specific purposes and is carried forward for future expenditure (Asset Replacement £800.00 and Website £100.00). The **Estimated Net Worth** of the Society is a more conservative measure of the Society's position based on the **Present Worth** less estimated expenditure up to the end of April 2019 (£1360.00) on the assumption that there is no income during that period. **This stands at £3531.71.**

The **Present Worth** of GOBF at year was **£3151.49**. During the year the GOBF investment in Treasury Stock was redeemed at the end of its 5 year term. The Committee decided to re-invest this sum together with the capital element of the GOBF in the Lloyd's Bank linked Savings Account (a total capital sum of £2733.98) in the Teachers Building Society 90 day account currently paying 1.2%. Under the terms of the original bequest the capital sum itself cannot be spent: it is only the interest arising from this capital. There was no expenditure from the Fund in 2018 and the balance of the Fund £417.51 remaining in the Savings Account is available for allocation by the administrators for approved projects.

The 2018 annual accounts as recommended by the Committee be adopted by the AGM. Proposer Mike LeRoy, Seconder Peter Hassett and passed unanimously.

5a) APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINER.

Philip Brown is stepping down after 7 years as Examiner. Ann Strutton had volunteered to put herself forward as a nominee for his replacement of which the Officers support. The Officers are further recommending that the role be re-titled Accounts Examiner since its function is to review the accounting records and to sign off the annual accounts.

Roy Maycock, President, offered further words about the position of Examiner. Roy told us that from the Report by the Officers that the Treasurer states that the annual accounts have been examined to ensure accuracy. Philip Brown has done this for the Society for the past 7 years (after having been Treasurer for 10 yrs) Such an appointment has not been formulated in the past, but as membership has increased, there has been rather more to do. The Officers have now agreed that such an appointment be made as the Accounts Examiner. Ann Strutton (a Treasurer in the past) is willing to take on the role and has now been accepted.

The AGM agreed the appointment and the change in the title.

Roy said thank you to Philip for 17 years of service to the Society. He then presented Philip with a framed photograph of a bullfinch, taken by Harry Appleyard, as a token of the work he has done for the Society.

Roy added that the Society is also in need of a new Treasurer.

6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

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

President Roy Maycock proposed by Lewis Dickinson, seconded by Tony Wood, elected unanimously. *Vice-president* Martin Kincaid. proposed by Roy Maycock and seconded by Joe Clinch. *Chairman* Lewis Dickinson. No election required for this position as this is the second of Lewis's two year post. *Treasurer* Lewis informed the Society that Joe Clinch will be stepping down as treasurer. He informed us that no one had come forward to step into this position and encouraged someone with the appropriate skills to consider helping the Society in this role. Lewis also added that it may be possible to split the duties of the role into two separate functions. Joe Clinch informed the Society that he is willing to support the new person in this role until they feel competent to take over on their own and is willing to act as Treasurer until an appointment is made by the committee. No volunteers offered their services. *Secretary* Mervyn Dobbin was proposed by Roy Maycock this was seconded by Martin Kincaid. This nomination was carried unanimously.

7. ELECTION OF OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

Joe Clinch was proposed by Mervyn Dobbin and seconded by Sue Hetherington, Sue Hetherington was proposed by Joe Clinch and seconded by Di Parsons. These were carried unanimously.

Jane Grisdale, Ian Saunders and Ayla Webb stepped down from the committee and were thanked for their efforts. All other committee members indicated they were willing to continue in post. These positions were proposed *en bloc* by Martin Kincaid and seconded by Frances Higgs.

The first meeting of the new committee will take place on Monday 13th May at 19:30 hrs. Location to be arranged.

8. MEMORIAL TO JOHN WICKHAM BY ROY MAYCOCK. PRESIDENT OF THE MILTON KEYNES NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY.

The death of John Wickham recently has been a loss to the Society. Following school John did his National Service in the army. He then went to work at Coopers (as it was) the fly-spray people. Whilst there he took on the task of taking a London external degree and became head of his department. Sometime later he and his wife Margaret moved to Bletchley and somehow he was invited to give a talk to the Society, which he did late in the year the Society started. Thereafter he was a regular attendee at meetings. At the first AGM he more or less wrote the Constitution and in the second year he became Chairman and remained there for 7 years. Thereafter the current arrangement for a maximum of 2 parts of 2 years (i.e.4 years at a time) were instigated. In 1998 he became our only Vice-President (at the time). For the Society he took on several roles and was frequent at a wide range of activities. Howe Park Nature Day was his idea and has developed over the years. It is likely that some form of acknowledgement, together with Bernard Frewin, will be made this year. The reports of the Hazeley Wood projects, together with the Parks Trust were largely put together by John. Some of the 'Where to Go' places for the Society were developed by John and prepared for computing. In the early days a moth trap was set up in Howe Park Wood - a first in a woodland and somewhat isolated. Collections were made daily and John began identifying the catch, but later all records went directly to Rothamstead. A range of insects, not surprisingly, were his main interests. When a Board of Trustees for Bradwell Abbey were selected John was chosen and remained in one job or another on the Board - most recently with the Friends Group as their chairman. Whatever was going on for the Society you could be sure John Wickham would be there as was his wife Margaret for a long time. We shall miss him. Roy Maycock. 2019.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

John Wickham. Martin Kincaid added to the comments made by Roy about John Wickham. Martin informed the Society that Nature Day will be held at Howe Park Wood again on Saturday 6th July, and as in previous

years, the Society will have a presence there and a full display. It isn't widely known that it was John Wickham himself who first approached The Parks Trust suggesting this event be held at Howe Park Wood, largely in memory of Bernard Frewin and also in recognition of MKNHS work at Howe Park Wood in the 1970s and 1980s. For this reason, we want to honour the memories of both Bernard and John at this year's Nature Day and have a display informing people about them. If any members have photographs of either Bernard or John that they would be willing to lend for this display, please let Martin know.

Society's Website. Mike LeRoy spoke about the importance of the Society's website, especially the sightings feature. Mike remarked that most of the recordings were taken from the Bucks Birders site. He encouraged Society members to add their own sightings to the web site. He thanked Peter Hassett for the sterling work he has done in maintaining the website. Mike also called for consideration for the position of Society Archivist on the committee for 2019/20. He suggested that the Society journals could be archived. Roy informed the Society that this has been done and that the records are kept in the County Records Office at Aylesbury and that they will accept other items. Roy encouraged long standing members to send him any information they deemed worthy of archiving. He will be pleased to receive anything.

MK City Discovery Centre Event. Peter Meadows inquired if the Society is to be involved in the MK CDC Nature Fest Wildlife Event to take place on 26th May. Martin Kincaid indicated that the Society had not been approached by CDC, but if we were we would be happy to support through a Society information stand.

Thanks Offered. Mike Sheridan offered thanks to John Prince for his power of recall and memory as demonstrated on the Members Evening when John discussed his work on Dormice.

Attracting Younger Members. Mike Slach, visitor, asked about what the Society was doing to attract younger people to the group. Martin Kincaid replied to say that other groups like the Young Explorers Group at the Parks Trust were going from strength to strength. Martin expressed his opinion that until we had a presence on Social Media we will find it difficult to connect with young people

Walk Leaders. All planned walk leaders were asked to contact Mary Sarre for details of these events.

There being no other items to discuss the AGM was drawn to a close and members were offered refreshments at the conclusion of the meeting.

Harry Appleyard; after the close of the meeting Harry Appleyard reconsidered his position. He was then nominated by Martin Kincaid to be co-opted to the committee, seconded by Lewis Dickinson and agreed by the other officers.

The committee now consists of; Harry Appleyard, Joe Clinch, Lewis Dickinson, Mervyn Dobbin, Colin Docketty, Peter Hassett, Sue Hetherington, Martin Kincaid, Paul Lund, Roy Maycock, Di Parsons and Mary Sarre.

Jane Grisdale, outgoing secretary, 2018/19.