

LONDON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The **Annual General Meeting** of the Society was held at 18.30 on Thursday 7th December 2023 by Zoom Video and Teleconference. There were 54 attendees at the start of the meeting – 37 LNHS members, 5 trustees and 12 non-members with some attendees joining later, when there were 61 LNHS members present.

Present:

Vice President & Chair, Maria Roberts, Secretary, Annie Wilson, Treasurer, Mike West, Minutes Secretary, Angela Linnell.

1 Apologies for absence had been received from Mavis Pilbeam, Marion Hill, Jo Maddox, Cecilia Derrick and Eric Clement. Mike West apologised on behalf of the new Treasurer, Lydia Gallyer-Barnett, for her absence.

2 To confirm the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on December 8th 2022

The Minutes were proposed by Liz Andrew, seconded by Tony Madgwick and approved *nem con*. There were now 981 members of the LNHS, of which 130 were new members and this was a higher number than before the pandemic. Maria thanked all the LNHS volunteers for their hard work.

3 Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the period 1st July 2022 to 30th June 2023

The Secretary, Annie Wilson, said there had been many successful field meetings, the virtual talks attracted a large audience with good numbers of non-members and the regular society publications had been issued. She thanked all the volunteers involved in keeping the Society going and invited new volunteers to come forward.

Acceptance of the Annual Report was proposed by Kat Duke and seconded by Keiron Brown.

SUMMARISED ACCOUNTS

Mike West - Treasurer

	2022/2023	2021/2022
ASSETS at year end		
Bank & cash	28,897	27,729
Investments	323,782	314,491
TOTAL	352,679	342,220
RECEIPTS		
Subscriptions	17,790	18,919
Donations	881	1,068
Bequests (Restricted)	26,386	-
Grants (Restricted)	3,338	5,562
Gift Aid	3,654	3,552
Investment income	8,664	7,920
Investment sales	-	7,500
Other	789	871
TOTAL	61,502	45,392

The Treasurer, Mike West, reported that the value of LNHS investments had risen but not by as much as was hoped, given that we had purchased additional units to the value of £20,000 in the year. There had been slight falls in income from subscriptions and donations. A generous legacy of £26,000 had been left to the LNHS by former member and LN Editor Keith Hyatt, specifically to finance the publication of research by members. A further grant instalment of £3,338 was received from the City of London Corporation for the survey of flora on Hampstead Heath.

The cost of producing *The London Naturalist* and the *London Bird Report (LBR)* had fallen slightly. Newsletter costs and mailing costs appeared to be considerably higher than in the previous year, but this was partly because there were only three mailings instead of the usual four in the previous accounting period. Council was reviewing the cost of printing and mailing and considering options for savings. Overall, the year’s activity had generated a surplus of £1,168 compared with £7.460 in 2022.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Anke Marsh and seconded by Kennedy Cruikshank. Maria Roberts thanked Mike for all his hard work as Treasurer over many years.

4. To elect Officers and other members to serve on Council for 2024

The LNHS Council consists of 3 officers, up to 10 elected Members’ Representatives and 5 sub-committee representatives.

Role	Nominee(s)
President	No nominations received
Treasurer	Lydia Gallyer-Barnett
Secretary	Annie Wilson
Members Representatives. (Ten may be elected.)	Jan Hewlett (2020-2024) Ian Woodward (2020 - 2024) Robin Blades (2022 - 2026) Wendy Knight (2022 - 2026) Joanne Maddox (2023 – 2027) Peter Mantle (2023 – 2027) Noel Brock (2023 – 2027)

Vote to elect society Officers

Maria informed the meeting that the role of President is vacant and welcomed nominations. She thanked Mike West for his many years of service as Treasurer and said she was delighted to welcome Lydia Gallyer-Barrett as the new Treasurer. Mike West said he will work in tandem with our new Treasurer for this financial year to ensure a smooth transition. Maria thanked Annie Wilson for standing as Secretary for another year.

Vote to re-elect the nominees for ordinary members of Council. In addition, there are up to 10 trustees representing the members at large. The current members were Jan Hewlett (2020 - 2024) Ian Woodward 2020 - 2024) Robin Blades (2022 - 2026) Wendy Knight (2022 - 2026) Pete Mantle (2023 - 2027) Jo Maddox (2023 - 2027) and Noel Brock (2023 – 2027) were all nominated again. The nominees were proposed en bloc by Maria Roberts and seconded by Tony Madgwick. Each was listed separately in the poll and all were duly elected. There were still three vacancies and Maria said new volunteers were very welcome.

Section Representatives to Council

These are appointed by the members of the appropriate section so no vote was required. The representative for the Ecology and Entomology group is Anke Marsh, for Botany Maureen Parry, for

the London Bird Club Cecilia Derrick and for the Hampstead Heath Survey Kat Duke. There is still a vacancy for the Bookham Commons Survey.

Voting was conducted by online polls, and only LNHS members were allowed to vote. Due to the operation of Zoom polls, the five people designated as hosts (Maria Roberts, Anke Marsh, Annie Wilson and Keiron Brown and Tony Madgwick) declared their votes in advance. The results of all votes are summarised on the last page.

5. To elect the nominated Independent Examiner

The Society's Independent Examiner is currently Ralph Sears who had worked for Meyer Williams accountants in Hertford for several years. The firm had merged with another and now operates as Hentons. Mike West said Ralph Sears had a good understanding of the Society's affairs, they had always worked well together and proposed his re-election for the current year. Michael Wilsdon seconded and Ralph Sears was re-elected *nem con*.

A question was asked on whether the independent examiner's fee would remain the same. Mike West replied that it probably would and that it compared favourably with the fees of other firms.

Mike West reaffirmed that he was happy to work with Lydia Gallyer-Barnett during the transition period to the end of the Society's year in June 2024.

6 Honorary Vice President

Michael Wilsdon reported that Council had decided to recognise the great contribution to the working of the LNHS made by Mike West by inviting him to become an Honorary Vice President. Michael said Mike had worked very hard for the LNHS as Treasurer for more than thirty years. He had assisted the Society over the years in several roles on various committees and offered much wise advice. He had suggested many improvements to the LNHS and had always been a pleasure to work with.

7. Reports from the LNHS Sections

Library

Leslie Bolsover had taken over as Librarian from Julie Berk. She said the Library had acquired in depth reports on kingfishers, London botany, Hampstead Heath bird lists and general entomology and bird reports. There were few visitors and only eleven very active users out of 980 members. The library had subscriptions to some expensive journals which could be of great interest. Books could now be loaned for 60 days, which would help users travelling from a distance. Leslie also reported that there had been a very successful book sale organised by Liz Andrew and Julie Berk, kindly hosted by Heath Hands. *[In the talk following the AGM, the speaker Bob Gilbert, mentioned that he himself had found the Library very useful in his research.]*

Virtual Talks

Maria said that again there had been very successful virtual talks in 2022-2023 with up to 150 viewers. The recordings were now also available on YouTube and attracted a considerable audience. There is now an option for attendees to make a donation. About 100 recordings were now available to both members and non-members as part of our educational role. However, both she and Anke Marsh wished to step down from their role as hosts for the Zoom talks before long so new volunteers were needed.

Ecology and Entomology Section

Keiron Brown, the Chair, said that this section covers all but birds and botany and drew attention to a new planthopper which had been discovered in our recording area, *Kelisia monoceros*. Keiron thanked

all the Ecology and Entomology recorders and those who sent in their records. David Bevan was stepping down from his role as Conservation Officer and Keiron thanked him for all his hard work over the years. Elliot Newton has taken over this role and was welcomed.

Botany Section

George Hounsome said that they had held 31 field meetings. A new Indoor Meetings Secretary had been appointed - Saba Rokni. The Committee had welcomed some new members too. Mark Spencer, the Vascular Plants Recorder was developing Axiophyte and Red Lists for Greater London, and working on a Rare Plants Register for Middlesex. These would provide a framework for the London Flora Project.

Hampstead Heath Survey Liz Andrew said 13 public survey walks had taken place on Hampstead Heath. There are up to 20 people attending these walks. John Egginton had stepped down from the Committee and Jeff Waage was now the Chair and Kat Duke the Council Representative. The City of London had given the LNHS a grant for study of the plants of the heath including updating the 2002 Flora survey. Some exciting new discoveries had been made and progress had been made on the Millennial Flora Project but work would continue for at least six more months. Liz said the Heath needed regular surveys and asked for more volunteers.

Bookham Commons Survey

Maria Roberts said Ian Swinney, the National Trust representative at the site, had been a great help to the LNHS. However, he would be retiring soon and Sam Valente would be taking over. He was keen to continue the work with the Society. The Section needs people to join the Committee and attend regularly to carry out survey work.

London Bird Club

Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne said that Cecilia Derrick is Secretary and now also our Instagram editor. He wanted to thank all the LBC post holders, field meeting leaders, sponsors and members who participate in the LBC events. The LBC is publicising both the RSPB Central London Local Group and the Marylebone Birdwatching Society meetings and they in turn reciprocate. There are no plans yet to resume in-person LBC Talks at Burgh House, mainly due to the hybrid working model post Covid which is affecting attendance. It will take a huge amount of effort to re-establish audiences to a level where it benefits an invited speaker. He noted the committee would be more open to the idea of resuming the LBC Talks at Burgh House if a volunteer could be found to be the new LBC Talks Organiser who was also local to the venue. Meanwhile, the committee is happy to support the LNHS Zoom meetings programme and noted that the talks on birds are attracting good audience numbers. The LBC Reading Circle continues and would welcome more members. The periodicals circulated are: Ardea, Birdlife, British Birds, Dutch Birding, Ibis and Scottish Birds. The LBC bird walks continue to increase in popularity – some have attracted more than 20 people. Many newcomers to birdwatching are surprised to learn that about 40 species may be seen on a typical London walk. The *London Bird Report* for 2021 was published in May 2023, and it is hoped to issue the 2022 report in May 2024. The LBR receives over 200,000 records each year and it is an enormous amount of work led by the London Bird Report Editorial Board (LBREB) to coordinate a large team of volunteers to produce the LBR. A number of key members of the LBREB committee will be stepping down after the publication of LBR 2022. It may not be possible to produce another *London Bird Report* unless replacements are found to fill the roles. Gehan asked for any members who are interested to get in touch with the LBREB.

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The AGM closed at 7.45pm.

The AGM was followed by a virtual talk on Zoom on *The Missing Musk and the Underground Mosquito* by Bob Gilbert.

Poll results for the 2023 AGM

Attendance

At the start of the meeting there were 37 ordinary members and 5 trustees, plus visitors. However, more members and visitors joined later. By the end of the meeting 61 LNHS members were in attendance. The quorum is 25. The numbers attending ensured that ordinary members could outvote trustees.

Only LNHS members were entitled to vote.

Poll 1 To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 9th December 2022

48+5 for, 0 against, 2 abstentions

Poll 2 To adopt the Annual Report of the Society for the period 1st July 2022 to 30th June 2023

50 +5 for, 0 against, 2 abstentions

Poll 3 To adopt the Statement of Financial Activities of the Society for the period 1st July 2021 to 30th June 2022

50 +5 for, 0 against, 2 abstentions

Poll 4 To appoint LNHS Officers

a) Annie Wilson as Secretary,

53+5 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions

b) Lydia Gallyer-Barnett as Treasurer

53+5 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions

Poll 5 To elect officers and other members

Jan Hewlett 47+5 for, 1 abstention

Ian Woodward 48+5 for, no abstentions

Robin Blades 48+5 for, no abstentions

Wendy Knight 47+5 for, 1 abstention

Jo Maddox 48+5 for, no abstentions

Peter Mantle 48+5 for, no abstentions

Noel Brock 48+5, for, no abstentions

Poll 6 To elect the nominated Independent Examiner Ralph Sears [Single Choice]

56 +5 for, 0 abstentions