

LONDON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The **Annual General Meeting** of the London Natural History Society was held at 18.30 on Thursday 5th December 2024 by Zoom Video and Teleconference.

Present:

Vice President & Chair, Maria Roberts, Secretary, Annie Wilson, Treasurer-in waiting James Lovely. When the attendance poll (Poll 1) was taken, attendees resolved as 54 LNHS members, 7 trustees and 12 visitors with the remainder abstaining from voting. More attendees joined during the meeting.

1 Welcome & Apologies for absence

Maria Roberts very kindly agreed to chair the AGM and thanked everyone for joining her. Apologies were received from Annie Sugrue, Jo Hatton, Jo Maddox, Cathy Ching and Gehan & Nirma de Silva Wijeyeratne.

2 Annual Report and Statement of Financial Activities for the period 1st July 2023 to 30th June 2024

The Secretary, Annie Wilson, gave a brief update on the past LNHS year. She thanked everyone involved in LNHS activities who generously volunteer their time and expertise, and invited new volunteers to come forward – there are plenty of varied opportunities.

She reported that the total membership for last year was 963 (down by 34), which included 98 new joiners (down by 31). The membership is still higher than pre-pandemic levels.

In March 2024, LNHS signed a data sharing agreement with GiGL (Greenspace Information for Greater London). LNHS recorders are encouraged to share their data with GiGL, to improve knowledge of London's natural environment and help planners to make better informed decisions. LNHS members can take advantage of the large data sets now available to them, and we look forward to contributing to increased support for London's nature, working on projects with GiGL.

In April we launched our digital newsletter, asking members to opt in, rather than forcing it on everyone. If you would like to 'go digital' please contact Robin (details@lnhs.org.uk). Eventually new members will be assigned to the digital option automatically.

Maria thanked Annie for presenting the report, and everyone who contributed to the society. She encouraged attendees to help recruit new society members – it would be great if we could break the 1000 barrier this year!

Acceptance of the Annual Report was proposed by Keiron Brown and seconded by Anke Marsh. Poll 3

Before presenting the accounts James Lovely, the Treasurer in waiting, introduced himself. He has a background in biology and the pharmaceutical industry, gaining financial experience managing large projects. Following his retirement, James works with Leslie at the LNHS Library.

SUMMARISED ACCOUNTS
Prepared by Mike West – Presented by James Lovely

	2023/2024	2022/2023
ASSETS at year end		
Bank & cash	32,458	28,897
Investments	338,587	323,782
TOTAL	371,045	352,679
RECEIPTS		
Subscriptions	16,804	17,790
Donations	1,801	881
Bequests (Unrestricted)	6,000	-
Bequests (Restricted)	-	26,386
Grants (Restricted)	-	3,338
Gift Aid	3,387	3,654
Investment income	10,567	8,664
Investment sales	-	-
Other	1,905	789
TOTAL	40,464	61,502
PAYMENTS		
The London Naturalist	5,257	4,464
London Bird Report	5,730	5,030
Newsletter	4,100	5,451
Mailing	10,318	11,824
Library	1,405	669
Services	4,527	4,908
Hampstead (Restricted)	2,136	4,149
Investment purchases	-	20,000
Other	3,430	3,839
TOTAL	36,903	60,334
 Surplus (deficit) in year	 3,561	 1,168

James reported that the value of LNHS investments have risen in line with general market rates during the year. There had been a slight fall in subscriptions and the corresponding gift aid, and a welcome increase in donations, mainly from Virtual Talk attendees. A legacy of £6,000 had been left to the LNHS by former members. The cost of producing The London Naturalist and the London Bird Report (LBR) has increased slightly. Newsletter costs and mailing costs appeared to be considerably lower than in the previous year, but this was because there were only three mailings instead of the usual four in the previous accounting period. Council is reviewing the cost of printing and mailing and

considering options for savings. Overall, the year's activity had generated a surplus of £3,561 compared with £1.168 in 2023.

Acceptance of the Accounts was proposed by Keiron Brown and seconded by Liz Andrew. Poll 4

3 To confirm the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on December 7th 2023

Acceptance of the Minutes was proposed by Maria Roberts and seconded by Linda Pryke. Poll 2

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	James Lovely PhD
Secretary	Annie Wilson
Members Representatives. (Ten may be elected.)	Robin Blades (2022 - 2026) Wendy Knight (2022 - 2026) Joanne Maddox (2023 – 2027) Peter Mantle (2023 – 2027) Noel Brock (2023 – 2027) Cassandra Lee (2024 – 2028) Liz Andrew (2024 – 2028) Tony Madgwick (nomination)
Section Representatives (elected by the Sections)	Cecilia Derrick (London Bird Club) Anke Marsh (Ecology and Entomology) Kat Duke (Hampstead Heath Survey) Maureen Parry (Botany) Vacant (Bookham Common Survey)

Vote to elect society Officers

Maria informed the meeting that the role of President is vacant and strongly encouraged nominations. If you are interested, please contact the secretary or one of the Trustees. You are welcome to attend a Council meeting as a guest. She thanked Mike West for his many years of service as Treasurer and was delighted to welcome James Lovely as the new Treasurer. Mike West is working with James to ensure a smooth transition. Maria thanked Annie Wilson for standing as Secretary for another year.

The nominees were proposed by Michael Wilsdon and seconded by Mike West. Poll 5a.

Vote to elect the ordinary members of Council. Members can elect up to 10 trustees to represent them on Council. The current representatives- Robin Blades, Wendy Knight, Pete Mantle, Jo Maddox, Noel Brock, Cassandra Lee and Liz Andrew - all agreed to continue. Tony Madgwick confirmed his agreement to stand as a Members' Representative – nominated by Keiron Brown, seconded by Kat Duke. There are still two vacancies and Maria encouraged members to consider volunteering.

The nominees were proposed en bloc by Maria Roberts and seconded by Linda Pryke. Poll 5b.

Section Representatives to Council

A representative from each of the sub-committees is appointed to Council by the members of the sub-committee. AGM approval is not required.

5. To elect the Independent Examiner

The Society's Independent Examiner is Hentons, represented by Ralph Sears. Mike West said Ralph has developed a good understanding of the Society's affairs over the years of working together and proposed that Hentons is re-appointed for the current year.

Michael Wilsdon proposed and Mike West seconded, and Ralph Sears was re-elected nem con. Poll 6

Maria confirmed that the Polls were complete and thanked everyone who stood for election, and thanked the members for voting.

6. Honorary Vice President & passed Members

Earlier in the year, Council accepted a proposal from Michael Wilsdon that Colin Plant should be appointed as an Honorary Vice President of the society in recognition of his many contributions to the LNHS. Colin is a past President and is the society's Lepidoptera Recorder. He has published many scientific papers and is a fellow of the Royal Entomological Society, and authored the first edition of The Butterflies of the London Area in 1988. Amongst his many activities following retirement, he is working on The Greater Moths of the London Area, an update to his Larger Moths of the London Area published in 1993.

Michael paid tribute to David Montier, a past President and Honorary Vice President of the Society, who joined the society at the age of 18. And Pat Sellar, also a society President and Vice President, who created a large amount of content for the British Library Nature Sound Recordings collection.

7. Reports from the LNHS Sections

London Bird Club presented by Cecilia Derrick, Secretary LBC

Cecilia thanked all the LBC post holders, field meeting leaders, sponsors and members who participate in the LBC events. The LBC bank account has been closed and the LBC Treasurer role has been discontinued. Many thanks to Nirma de Silva Wijeyeratne, who held the role and managed the close out. Amy Muiy Liu stepped down as Field Meetings Organiser and Cathy Ching has taken on the role. Thanks to both. The LBC Walks continue to be very well attended with over 30 field meetings taking place. The LBC Reading Circle, led by Cathy Ching, continues and would welcome more members. The periodicals circulated are: Ardea, Birdlife, British Birds, Dutch Birding, Ibis and Scottish Birds. The LNHS Bookmark Checklists continue to be sponsored by John Beaufoy Publishing and have expanded to include butterflies & odonata. The LBC publicises both the RSPB Central London Local Group and the Marylebone Birdwatching Society meetings and they in turn reciprocate. More effort has been made to publicise the LBC field events using Twitter (@LondonBirdClub, #londonbirds and Instagram (LondonBirdClub). LBC Twitter account has over 6,818 followers.

The London Bird Report for 2022 was published in May 2024, and the 2023 report is on target to be available in May 2025. As bird watching and logging of results has increased in popularity, the amount of data processed by the LBR has increased dramatically - LBR 2023 will report on over 1,000,000 sightings. After a successful appeal for new recruits, the London Bird Report Editorial Board (LBREB) has continued to coordinate a large team of volunteers to produce the LBR. Thanks to all involved.

Hampstead Heath Survey presented by Liz Andrew, Chair

Liz thanked everyone who made the section's activities possible. She reported that 11 public survey walks had taken place on Hampstead Heath, attended by on average 10 people per walk, and approx. 50 on one occasion. Some exciting new discoveries had been made, including an *Araniella inconspicua*, which is nationally scarce and only the second record for Middlesex. Liz gave a brief update on the Millennial Flora Revisited project, which continues surveys of the heath's vegetation in collaboration with Heath Hands, following the award of a grant from City of London in 2022.

Botany Section presented by George Hounscome, Chair

George reported that the new committee is working well, and thanked Andrew Planet for his contribution. He was sorry to report that Paul Bartlett, a long-term excellent colleague, had recently passed away. The section has held 31 field meetings, some in collaboration with other organisations. The 3 regular events – the Harringay Fungus Foray, Plants in Flower in Deptford on 1st December and Botany Quiz Night – all took place as normal. And the group held its first New Year's plant hunt.

Library presented by Leslie Bolsover

Leslie reported that the Library Team of herself, James Lovely and Ron Dionne has been in place for a year and is working very well. Thanks to both for their volunteer time. The team's goal has been to increase library usage. 20 new titles have been added, and over 100 good quality donations have been received. A Current Journal display has been created, and journals can now be borrowed. The library has hosted 14 workshops and Study Days which proved very popular. Heartfelt thanks go to Cathy Ching for organising an AMC based Book Club which helps to shed light on the LNHS Library. In a nutshell, Leslie and her team have worked hard to increase borrowing and raise awareness of the collection. In addition to an increase in book borrowing, journals are also being borrowed and the collection is being used regularly for research and identification. Members are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this very valuable asset.

Virtual Talks by Maria Roberts

Maria reported that virtual talks continued to prove very popular with up to 150 viewers. She thanked everyone who had made a donation. About 100 recordings are now available on YouTube to both members and non-members as part of our educational role. However, the current volunteers wish to step down from their role as hosts for the Zoom talks before long so new volunteers are needed.

Ecology and Entomology Section by Keiron Brown, Chair

Keiron clarified that this section covers everything but birds and botany, and drew attention to Leslie Williams' soon-to-be published Butterflies of London and early bird saving opportunity at <https://www.naturebureau.co.uk/bookshop>: more from Leslie in the following talk. He informed the attendees that Invertebrate Study Days at the library had proved very popular and would continue in the new year – the next 8 sessions have been posted on Eventbrite and are open to experienced and less experienced recorders alike! Do join the Waiting List if the events are full. The committee is also planning regular outdoor Invertebrate Field Recording Days in 2025. Keiron thanked all the Ecology and Entomology recorders and those who send in their records.

11. Any Other Business

Following enquiries about LNHS Social Media, please contact the Secretary if you are interested in getting involved.

The AGM closed at 7.30pm.

The AGM was followed by a talk on *The Butterflies of London* by Leslie Williams, in line with the publication of the *LNHS Butterflies Atlas*.

Poll results for the 2024 AGM

Poll 1 Attendance

There were 54 ordinary members and 7 trustees, plus 12 visitors. More attendees joined during the meeting. The quorum is 25. The numbers attending ensured that ordinary members could outvote trustees.

Attendees were informed that voting would be conducted by online polls, and only LNHS members were allowed to vote. Due to the operation of Zoom polls, the six people designated as hosts (Maria Roberts, Anke Marsh, Annie Wilson, Keiron Brown, Leslie Williams and Tony Madgwick) declared their votes in advance.

Poll 2 To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 7th December 2023

50+6 for, 0 against, 4 abstentions

Poll 3 To adopt the Annual Report of the Society for the period 1st July 2023 to 30th June 2024

52 +6 for, 0 against, 1 abstention

Poll 4 To adopt the Statement of Financial Activities of the Society for the period 1st July 2023 to 30th June 2024

53 +6 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions

Poll 5a To appoint LNHS Officers

James Lovely PhD as Treasurer

52+6 for, 0 against, 2 abstentions

Annie Wilson as Secretary,

53+5 for, 1 against, 1 abstention

Poll 5b To elect Members' Representatives

Robin Blades 57+6 for, 1 abstention

Wendy Knight 55+6 for, 2 abstentions

Jo Maddox 55+6 for, 2 abstentions

Peter Mantle 52+6 for, 2 abstentions

Noel Brock 51+6 for, 3 abstentions

Cassandra Lee 53+6 for, 1 abstention

Liz Andrew 54+5 for, 1 abstention

Tony Madgwick 40 + 6, no objections (vote by show of hands)

Poll 6 To elect Hentons as the Independent Examiner, represented by Ralph Sears

52 +6 for, 2 abstentions