**DRAFT/csb/rg**

**Minutes of the 26th Annual General Meeting of the Neotropical Bird Club.**

The Annual General Meeting of the Neotropical Bird Club was held on Saturday 17th August 2019 at 18:30 in the “Harrier” Marquee at the British Bird Fair, Rutland Water,

**Council members present:**

David Fisher (NBC Chairman and Chairman of the meeting), Chris Balchin (Secretary) Chris Collins (Treasurer) John Clark, Mike Dawson, Carl Downing, Roberta Goodall and John Thirtle.

The Chairman opened the meeting and noted there were sufficient members present for the meeting to be quorate.

**1. Apologies for absence.**

The Chairman reported apologies for absence from the following:

Vaughan Ashby, Clive Byers, Rob Clay, Henry Cook, John Cutting, Gerard Gorman, Manuel Sanchez, Chris Storey, Tom Stuart and Paul Varney.

**2. Minutes of 25th. Annual General Meeting**

The Chairman referred to the draft minutes of the 25th AGM (2018) prepared for the meeting.

**A motion proposed by David White and seconded by Anna Hughes to approve the minutes of the 2018 AGM was put to the meeting for a vote and was carried unanimously.**

**3. Matters Arising.**

There were no matters arising.

**4. Chairman's report for 2018.**

David Fisher (Chairman) delivered his report for 2018. As follows:

*“The club had another good year in 2018, although we saw a 10% fall in membership of 70 over the 2017 level bringing the club’s membership for 2018 to 711. Chris Collins, our treasurer, will shortly give further details of the club’s finances.*

*During the year, the NBC continued with the same publications policy of producing one large issue of Cotinga and two issues of Neotropical Birding. The journals were produced on time and I’d like to thank our editors Guy Kirwan and James Lowen for all their hard work on our publications.*

*2018 saw the introduction of the option to receive our publications in digital format, the idea being that this might be attractive to members in countries within the region where postage is unreliable. While take-up of the digital version has been fairly popular and we now have 131 digital subscribers the take up in the region has not been as good as we hoped – so far at least. But it’s still relatively early days and we hope this will increase as word spreads.*

*All three publications contained many fascinating articles including, for example in ‘Cotinga’, papers appeared on The status of Ocellated Crake in the coastal mountains of Venezuela; High elevation records of Harpy Eagle in Peru; and aggregations of Spectacled Petrels in Argentine waters. While, in Neotropical Birding, there were articles as diverse as how to see Blue-bearded Helmetcrest in Colombia, an update on the Hooded Grebe conservation programme, and a visit to Robinson Crusoe Island in the Juan Fernadez archipelago.*

*The other major club activity was funding conservation orientated projects through our Conservation Awards Programme and during 2018 eleven awards were made totalling £24,435, which means that over the last 19 years £143,800 has been provided to support Neotropical bird conservation projects.*

*The eleven 2018 awards included:*

*A project on the endemic Cuban Parakeet*

*A study on the ecology and conservation of the Wattled Curassow in Brazil*

*A project to develop a conservation management programme for Saffron-cowled Blackbird in Argentina*

*A census of Ringed Storm-petrel colonies in Northern Chile*

*The Conservation Awards programme was managed by Rob Clay, Alex Lees, and Chris Sharpe and I would like to thank all three of them for their hard and dedicated work on the programme.*

*We’ll come to the election of council members a bit later in the agenda, but this might be a good moment to thank the only member of NBC council who is retiring this year and that is Tom Stuart. Tom has been a member of council since 1998, serving for two decades during which time he has been an invaluable member of the Conservation Awards Programme team, essentially running it single-handed for many years, and we must thank him most sincerely for all his hard work on behalf of the club. Tom isn’t here tonight but let’s give him a big round of applause to show our appreciation.*

*During the year, the club continued to operate a Facebook page and we now have 5345 members on Facebook.*

*We also now have a Twitter account, which is run by Roberta Goodall and we have 1200 followers and counting. I’d like to thank Roberta for her efforts running this.*

*In August 2018, the Club had a stand at the Rutland Bird Fair, with the club's main prizes in its annual raffle being a pair of Swarovski EL binoculars. The club would like to thank Swarovski Optik for their ongoing support in providing prizes for this annual fundraising event. And we should also thank El Septimo Lodge and Lynx Editions for donating the other prizes.*

*In March 2018, the US bird tour company Legacy Tours organised a highly successful tour to Mexico on behalf of the club with those who participated seeing many of the country’s specialities. The tour generated $6,000 for the club’s Conservation Awards programme and I’d like to thank Michael Carmody who organised and led the tour.*

*I should also mention that the conservation awards fund continues to be boosted significantly by very generous donations from the March Foundation in the United States and from Mark and Mo Constantine. Because of their support we are able to fund far more projects than would otherwise be the case.*

*It might be appropriate to mention here the support of our Corporate Members, most of whom have been supporting us for many years now. My thanks to all of them.*

*As always, we are looking for new members to join our council. If you would be interested in helping us run the club by joining council and taking on a specific role, please speak to one of the Chrises or to me after the meeting.*

*The club would not be able to function without the dedication of our council and I would like to thank them most sincerely, especially Chris Balchin who does the bulk of the club’s admin work as NBC secretary. I have already thanked our editors for their work in producing our excellent publications, but would also like to add thanks to Eng-Li Green who designs both journals, and Mike Dawson of Swallowtail Print, the company that handles our printing, and Raymond Jeffers who, ‘though not on council is actively involved with NBC providing us with a wealth of invaluable advice and also is the main force behind the organisation of the NBC tour programme. And finally, thanks to the RSPB for acting as our UK postal address and for handling the mailing of our publications at a very advantageous rate, and to Maina Handmaker, who handles our US post.*

*Finally, just a quick update on the current year. Another great issue of Neotropical Birding was published in the spring, the digital version of Cotinga was published in June. Things are progressing well with the Conservation Awards programme and we funded more projects earlier in the year and will shortly be reviewing the next round of applications. We have a number of 25th Anniversary events and promotions taking place, and we have planned another joint one-day meeting with the British Ornithologists Club at the Natural History Museum on Saturday 26 October – I hope to see many of you there. So, as you can see there has been a lot going on behind the scenes.”*

There were no further questions from the membership.

**5. Treasurer's Report and presentation of independently examined accounts for 2018 and Trustees' report 2018.**

Chris Collins (Treasurer) referred to the draft accounts and report prepared for the meeting. He reported that the Club’s finances were in a satisfactory state with overall income increased from £50,029 to £59,491, though pointed out that a significant part of the clubs income was held as restricted funds, i.e. only available for Conservation Awards, a consequence of which is that council has less flexibility to invest in the club. He thanked the all the Club’s sponsors but especially The March Conservation Fund of the TIDES Foundation and Mark & Mo Constantine for their significant donations.

In conclusion he said the Club had plenty of money in the bank but a declining membership and asked all members to encourage friends and colleagues to join the Club.

There were no further questions from the membership.

**A motion proposed by Charles Wilkins and seconded by Kay White to approve the independently examined accounts for 2018 and Trustees' report 2018 was put to the meeting for a vote and was carried unanimously.**

**6. Election of Officers.**

The Chairman advised the meeting of those members who had agreed to stand for election

**A motion proposed by Roberta Goodall and seconded by Kay White to re-elect David Fisher as Chairman was put to the meeting for a vote and was carried unanimously.**

**A motion proposed by Carl Downing and seconded by Roberta Goodall to re-elect Chris Collins as Treasurer was put to the meeting for a vote and was carried unanimously.**

**A motion proposed by Carl Downing and seconded by Roberta Goodall to re-elect Chris Balchin as Secretary was put to the meeting for a vote and was carried unanimously.**

**7. Election of Council.**

The Chairman advised the meeting of those members who had agreed to stand for election for the first time, for re-election and to undertake specific roles (if any).

**A motion proposed by David White and seconded by Chris Collins to elect the following as members of Council was put to the meeting for a vote and was passed unanimously: Rob Clay (Conservation), Mike Dawson, Carl Downing, Roberta Goodall, Manuel Sanchez, Charles Wilkins, Robert Williams (Representatives) John Thirtle and John Clark.**

**8. Election of Country Representatives.**

The Chairman advised the meeting of those members who had agreed to serve as NBC Regional Representatives pursuant to Clause 21 of the Club’s Constitution.

**A motion proposed by Roberta Goodall** **and seconded by John Thirtle to appoint the following as NBC Regional Representatives** **was put to the meeting for a vote and was passed unanimously:**

***{Argentina:*** *Ignacio Roesler;* ***Belgium:*** *Dr Johan Ingels;* ***Brazil:*** *Andy Foster;* ***Chile:*** *Manuel Marin;* ***Colombia:*** *Diego Calderon;* ***Denmark:*** *Morten Heergaard;* ***Ecuador:*** *Manuel Sanchez Nivicela****; France and French Guiana:*** *Nyls de Pracontal;* ***Italy:*** *Guiseppe Micali;* ***New Zealand:*** *Detlef Davies;* **Panama**: Michael S Roy; ***Paraguay:*** *Paul Smith;* ***Peru:*** *Rob Williams;* ***Uruguay:*** *Agustín Carriquiry**and* ***Venezuela:*** *David Ascanio.}*

**9. Election of Independent Examiner.**

The Secretary advised the meeting that Michael Goddard was willing tobe re-appointedas independent examiner**.**

**A motion proposed by Charles Wilkins and seconded by Chris Collins to re-appoint Michael Goddard as independent examiner was put to the meeting for a vote and was carried unanimously.**

**10. Any other business.**

There was no other business.

**The meeting closed at 19:02**