

## **RSPB NOTTINGHAM LOCAL GROUP – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2011**

The Annual General Meeting of the RSPB Nottingham Local Group was held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2011 at the Nottingham Mechanics, North Sherwood Street, Nottingham.

**Present, Committee** – Penny Cross (Chair), Terry Adams, Chris Blunsdon, Paul Daft, Sandra Denham, Dave & Jan Goodwin, Doreen Markam, Ursula Reynolds and 39 members.

**Apologies – Committee** – Andrew Griffin – **Members** – Peggy Fenner, Hilary Nice.

Group Leader Penny Cross opened the meeting by introducing Committee members and their specific roles followed by a welcome to all especially new members.

Thanks were offered to those who signed up to the “Letter for the Future” campaign handed to the Government in March, reference was given to the new campaign “Stepping up for Nature” with targets up to 2020.

Announcements followed encouraging volunteers to assist Danielle Sample with “A Date for Nature” at Wollaton from May to September and Love Nature Week in June. Reminders were given on the programme of outdoor activities involving organised walks and outings during the summer.

### **1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM:**

Minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated to those present, they were featured on the Local Group Website and in an earlier edition of The Knot.

### **2. MATTERS ARISING:**

There were none, the minutes were accepted as a true record proposed by Ken Ingall, seconded by Audrey Loach.

### **3. COMMITTEE ELECTIONS:**

Sandra Denham was standing down, two new nominations had been received, Giselle Sterry for Minutes Secretary and Graham Sadler for Sales who will be assisted by his wife Kim. All existing Committee members were standing again, the list of names and nominations was available to view on the notice board. Endorsement was invited from those present. There were no objections, - proposal was offered by Ken Ingall, seconded by Barry Nelson. A welcome was offered to Giselle, Graham & Kim. It will be good to have new blood on the Committee.

### **4. HONORARY MEMBERSHIP:**

In line with the group Constitution the Committee awards members for long and continuing active support. Not surprisingly Dave and Jan Goodwin were welcomed as Honorary Members. Jan gave thanks for this.

### **5. CONSTITUTION UPDATE:**

The Constitution underwent a revision this year resulting in a few minor alterations to the 2008 version. Under Group Administration the position of Deputy Group Leader is not an RSPB defined role but remains a role that this group finds useful and Andrew Griffin continues at present. The Constitution will be reviewed again in January 2013. Proposal was offered by Ken Lee, seconded by Brian Smith. The revised Constitution is on the Local Group Website [www.notts-rspb.org.uk/](http://www.notts-rspb.org.uk/) or contact the Group Leader to request a copy.

### **6. ANNUAL REVIEW – LEADER’S REPORT:**

After shadowing Andrew Griffin for several years Penny Cross marked her first year as group leader by thanking all the Committee for their hard work and continuing support and effort in trying to keep Nottingham Local Group an active and vibrant association. One Committee member was retiring. Sandra Denham had given so much of her time and energy to many group activities over a number of years. She was thanked for her exceptional support and commitment.

Penny also wanted everyone to thank June Baines for her tireless efforts in running a raffle at our meetings; June wished to take a well-earned rest. She will be a hard act to follow but Ken Lee has volunteered to take up this valuable role. June and Sandra were presented with gifts. Penny thanked those who, as partners of a committee member or, as one of the many who regularly donate their time, or through their own initiatives create funds which they donated to the RSPB.

The committee could try its utmost but it is members of this group and the RSPB itself who are its lifeblood. We can draw together an excellent programme of speakers and trips, which we do in the hands of Ursula Reynolds and Dave and Jan Goodwin, but that is only of value if the activities are supported by the members and we thank you warmly for this.

Along with many societies, groups and charities generally, the group is feeling the impact of harder times as families review what they can afford to support. Membership of this group is down to 280, a significant drop over the past couple of years, please help to assure our membership secretary, Chris Blunsdon, that this is not his doing!

There is also reduced attendance at meetings – the impact of this is discussed in the financial report. We urge you all to encourage others to add their voices to the RSPB and, as existing members, let us know what you value about the group as it is, but more importantly, put your minds to ideas for the future that we might develop or that you might like to be involved in.

These could be quiz nights, auctions, bring and buy stall at meetings, members evening with photo image sharing, the development of a calendar – put on your thinking caps and give us your ideas. This could help us to retain more of our resources to donate to the important environmental and conservation activities of the RSPB to benefit wildlife and ourselves.

The growth and development of our newsletter The Knot under the editorship of Paul Daft is welcomed. With an abundance of excellent articles as well as a selection of colour images – keep contributions coming in. We do receive some sponsorship to offset production costs but would welcome ideas for additional sponsorship. Our independently credited group web site is highly regarded.

Thanks go to Graham Sadler and Kim for distributing the newsletters and with the election of Graham to co-ordinate sales we can start to develop that facility again. He will want your input in guiding what format might be followed for the future.

Doreen Markam our fund raising co-ordinator, has a very busy time these days, not only organising the collections you often support but also co-ordinating the sale of pin badges and collection boxes over our area. In particular, she had the idea of encouraging Notts County FC to sell magpie badges with a good result. Thank you to Doreen for all her work.

We have tried to ensure that the bulk of what we raise is steered towards reasonably local sites. A number of us have been fortunate in visiting Langford Lowfields and it is good to see how much progress is being made and to know that some access is likely within the next couple of years.

Two other RSPB initiatives have been welcome in our area. The Date with Nature activities at Wollaton Park continue this summer. Also after many years with few activities for children we are pleased to see the development of a WEX group in Notts – Ashplorers. Groups like this are important in encouraging children to develop a passion for wildlife – their programme is available at, [www.rspb.org.uk/groups/ashplorers](http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/ashplorers) or contact the leader, we have the details.

Locally we, through an initiative by Jan and Dave Goodwin were able to reach out to 90 youngsters at Jessie Gray School this spring helping them in the development of a nature garden. We hope this may be the first of other opportunities of this kind.

The membership were requested to continue staunch support for the group, assurance was given they could be confident of her own and that of the committee's efforts to continue to steer us into a positive future.

Penny then thanked Terry Adams for his methodical efforts in keeping the accounts straight and asked him to present the financial report:

## **7. TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Terry Adams referred to his full report circulated to those present. This reflected a growing trend of increasing expenditure and falling income due to reduction in membership numbers,

less nest boxes to sell, higher fuel costs and increased postage charges. We had made a relatively small loss. The deficit will be met by drawing on reserves. Thanks were offered to David Plant for producing nest boxes, to Dave Goodwin for income from talks and those individual members who offer help fund raising. Despite the loss we have been able to donate the same amount of £3100 to HQ for lowland grassland projects but we may not be able to donate this amount in the future. He had recommended membership fees remain at £5 for 2012 but as indoor meetings are running at a loss, it was considered we have no option but to increase the entrance fee to £2.50 adults, £1.50 juniors as of September 2011. Those present were asked to support this. Terry offered to take questions. Barry Nelson asked if the expenditure has increased on the meetings, why were we donating £3100, why was this not reflected?

The response was if we do not make enough there is no penalty but there is an expectation. If we want decent speakers we will need to pay the going rate, there is a limit to the number of local speakers available. Penny Cross pointed out we need to try to keep meetings self funding. Income generated from core funding is sent to HQ which is why she had suggested alternative events such as members evenings, quizzes, etc.

Tony Wardell referred to the budget statement, even if the entrance fee is raised to £2.50 this will still not be sufficient to cover the deficit.

Brian Smith asked if we had considered increasing the membership fee? TA stated he did not wish to do this at present as it was not long since the subs had increased.

Robert Pratt enquired how long the entrance fee had stood at £2? It was two years.

Tony Wardell asked about the income from collections. Doreen Markam confirmed money from this source was included in the £3100 whilst Pin Badge collection money was accounted for separately. PC acknowledged we had collected nearly £7000 from pin badges.

PC concluded by requesting a show of hands to vote on increasing entrance costs to those stated. The majority voted to accept, this was proposed by Barry Nelson and seconded by Tony Wardell. TA pointed out the increase will take effect as of September this year.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm. After the interval and drawing of the raffle, Dave Goodwin gave another entertaining talk on visits to his local patch and showed scenes from a selection of group outings.

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