

Rochdale Field Naturalists Society

Annual General Meeting 2023

Date: Thursday 14th December 2023
Venue: Cutgate Baptist Church
Time: 7.30pm
Meeting Chair: Linda Turner
Minutes: Ian Short

Minutes

1 Welcome

Linda Turner, Co-Chair, welcomed members to the meeting and opened proceedings at 7.35pm.

1.1 Members Present

Sheila Carr	Joan Carter	Louise Corlett	Joan Corser	Rosalind Corser
Karen Cowley	Rick Cowley	Pam Crofts	Roger Crofts	Kath Davison
Lucy Doherty	Laura Ettrick	Clare Farrell	Charles Farrell	Christine Fleming
Janet Gerrard	Ruth Hardcastle	Vinny Holt	Pamela Jackson	Jan Kidd
Pete Knowles	Justine Marsh	Celia Miller	Beryl Ormston	Vipul Parkinson
Trevor Parry	Pat Rothwell	Lyndon Savage	Ian Short	Jenny Short
Sheila Simpson	Linda Turner	Paul Whiting	Gill Wrigley	

Non Members present:

Paul Gerrard Amy Gerrard

1.2

Apologies were received from

Ron Powell	Lynn Powell	Pat Culkin	Maggie Culkin	Peter Francis
Dinah Francis	Pauline Howarth	Susan Smith	Colin Bateson	

2 Minutes

The minutes of the 2022 AGM, held on 8th December 2022, had been circulated to members in advance. They were taken as read and accepted as a true record of fact.

Proposed: Pam Crofts Seconded: Joan Corser

Accepted nem con.

3 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4 Co-Chairs' Report

The Annual Report had been circulated to members in advance and was taken as read.
It is attached to these minutes.

Linda Turner highlighted a few matters:

- Linda explained how the Society works, emphasising that we are run *by* members, *for* members.
 - Events and activities are led by individual members, or small groups of members
 - The various activity streams (indoor, outdoor, conservation and education, publicity) all have small teams of members who work together to support event leaders and to deliver events for all of us.
 - The Society is managed by the Steering Group which consists of the elected officers (2 Co-Chairs, Secretary and Treasurer), plus a representative from each of the activity streams
- Some very good things:
 - We currently have 95 members
 - Attendance at meetings and events has increased – the last Con and Ed event on nature diaries was particularly well supported
 - Many thanks to the members who got involved in leading and organising events – the Society wouldn't exist without you!
 - Special thanks to Lucy Doherty for inviting us to her home for seasonal refreshments!
- Looking forward:
 - 2024 is our 150th Anniversary year. We're really proud to be continuing the work of those who came before us.
 - We have some good plans in place for next year already, but we always need to know about good speakers and interesting places to visit.
If you know anyone or have any suggestions, please let us know.
- We have a problem, though. Despite Joan and Jan telling the AGM last year that they intend to step down, as Secretary and Co-Chair respectively, from tonight, there have been no volunteers to replace them. The Society doesn't run itself, and events don't just happen.
We need people to step up and help. What can you do?

There were no questions, and the report was accepted by the meeting, *nem con*.

Proposed: Laura Ettrick

Seconded: Lucy Doherty

5 Finance report

The Financial Report had been circulated to members in advance and was taken as read.

It is attached to these minutes.

Ruth Hardcastle commented:

- We are solvent and finances are stable, with a surplus of £645 over last year
- Our bank has decided to charge us for their services, costing us £138, so we are looking into changing banks. Due to the non-charity, non-incorporated, non-profit structure of the Society, this is proving difficult as we don't fit their standard customer models.
- Thanks to Steve Wrigley for examining the accounts for us again. Steve is stepping down, so we need to find a suitable person to do this job. You don't need financial training, just integrity and the ability to add up!

Ruth invited questions from the members present.

There were no questions, and the report and accounts were accepted by the meeting.

Proposed: Karen Cowley

Seconded: Peter Knowles

Accepted nem con.

6 Election of Officers

As we have only received two nominations:

Linda Turner for Co-Chair

Ruth Hardcastle for Treasurer

they are returned unopposed.

As no nominations for Co-chair and Secretary had been received prior to the AGM, Linda asked for nominations from the floor.

Pete Knowles volunteered for the Co-Chair role and was elected by acclaim, there being no other nominations.

As there were no nominations for Secretary, **we have a vacancy for this role.**

Linda Turner said that, although not ideal, it would be possible to share the Secretary job, and asked anyone interested to speak to her after the meeting.

7 Thank you

- Linda Turner thanked Joan Carter for all her hard work and support as Secretary over the past 8 years.
- Rick Cowley thanked Jan Kidd for all her hard work and leadership as Co-Chair through challenging times.

Each was presented with a small token of our appreciation.

8 Meeting closed

There being no other relevant business, Linda thanked members for coming and closed the meeting at 7.50pm.

Signed as a true statement of fact: _____ Chair

_____ Date

9 Addendum

After the meeting, Vipul Parkinson and Ian Short spoke to Linda Turner and offered to share the Secretary role.

Ian will deal with minutes and correspondence, Vipul will look after the membership list.

Joan Carter has kindly agreed to continue to organise social events.

There will be a meeting in the new year to thrash out the details and members will be informed in a Newsletter.

Rochdale Field Naturalists' Society

Annual Report from the Co-chairs 2023

We are pleased to report that 2023 has been another successful year for the society. We have continued to retain members and have seen 6 new members this year. We currently have 111 members. On a sadder note, we were sorry to hear that two of our long-standing members died this year, Fred Royle and Alan Cross. They both played important roles in the society and will be sadly missed. The society was represented at the funerals. The cost of membership continues to be just £10 per year and the calendar is once again being given to those renewing or taking out new membership.

After the uncertainties of post COVID, the coach trips have been very well supported this year. Our varied programme has seen us visit; Saltholme RSPB reserve in County Durham, Carsington Water in Derbyshire, Woolston Eyes and the Wyre Estuary & Fleetwood in Lancashire, Whisby Country Park in Lincolnshire, Cresswell Crags and the Attenborough Nature Reserve in Nottingham, North Cave Wetlands and Austwick and Oxember Woods in Yorkshire, and Gronant Dunes and the Great Orme in North Wales. Many thanks to all our members who offered their time to lead these trips. Also, thanks to Paul Whiting, Charlie Farrell and Clare Farrell who are on the coach planning part of the Outdoor Team. Clare in particular deserves our thanks for organising and booking all the coaches.

Thanks to organisers Karen Cowley, Pamela Jackson and Sheila Simpson the local recording walks continue to flourish. Over the year we have visited areas and recorded species around the Rochdale canal, Ealees valley, River Roch through Gristlehurst Woods in Heywood, Norden, Blackstone Edge, Piethorne, the Byways of Inner Rochdale, Old Birtle, Turnslack Clough and the Upper Naden Valley. In January we tried a very successful new idea and recorded visiting winter birds on local reservoirs, using cars to get around. None of this would have been possible without the help of all the walk leaders and we would like to thank them very much, whilst also encouraging others to take up the challenge. Jan Kidd has stood down from the Outdoor Team and we are now in need of other members to volunteer to keep this sector of our society flourishing.

We did think that we had seen the last of indoor meetings having to be held via Zoom, although the steering group decided to continue our subscription just in case. That turned out to be a wise decision as in January the church hall was unavailable and the talk on the Work of the Lancashire Wildlife Trust was given via Zoom so avoiding having to cancel the meeting. We were also able to follow up some of the talks with related activities. The talk on owl pellets was followed by a workshop where we dissected some owl pellets to see what the owls had been eating. The talk on Sunart Fields Rewilding project was also by Zoom due to snow but we followed this with a car trip to see for ourselves the work being done. In April we tried a different format for the talk and Linda Turner interviewed Pete Knowles about how Stoneyhill has been transformed from a wasteland to an area which has once again earned an outstanding award from Britain in Bloom. Congratulations to Pete and all those who have helped in this achievement. The new season of indoor meetings started in September with a very well attended talk on preventing raptor persecution. In October our speaker was ill and so at the last minute Ian Short was able to use one of the Zoom meetings we had recorded during Covid on reintroduction of beavers. November saw an interesting talk on the work of Lancashire Badger Group. We would like to thank all those who help make these evenings a success, especially Ian Short for supporting speakers with IT needs and Celia Miller, Jenny Short and Vips Parkinson for baking delicious cakes and serving the refreshments.

The Conservation and Education team led by Gill Wrigley has organised a wide variety of events to help members improve their knowledge and skills. As well as the forementioned owl pellet dissection and trip to Sunart Rewilding Project, we had a field event with Dr Kevin Butt on finding and identifying earthworms. This was a follow up to a very interesting talk we had on Zoom the previous year. In May about twenty members got up very early to join in Dawn Chorus day at Watergrove and were rewarded with a wide variety of birds singing. In June we had a stall at the Manchester Festival of Nature in Heaton Park and many members turned up to help. We intend to do this again in 2024. To celebrate Moth week Lucy Doherty hosted a moth morning and many different moth species were recorded. This month saw us learning how to create a Nature Journal. A big thank you goes to Gill, who is stepping down as team leader, and the rest of the team for organising such interesting events.

An important role of the society is the submission of observations to GMEU and we must thank our recording team, led by Karen Cowley who along with Sheila Simpson and Pamela Jackson, have collated the records and inputted them to the Mapmate database. They could not do this without the members who regularly submit their observations of wildlife in their own gardens and surrounding areas. These records have played a major role in the planning of GMEU's response to the 'State of Nature' and Paul Barrington thanked the society for their help.

Pamela has also continued to organise the monthly Bee Recording Walks in Mandale Park. After many years of supporting the society Pamela is now moving out of the area. We would like to thank her for the immense amount of work she has done in various roles. Luckily Jenny Short has agreed to take over as Bee Recorder.

The Healey Dell Joint Management Committee has been reinstated this year after a break. The society continues to be represented by Sonia Allen and Linda Turner.

The Publicity and Communication team led by Pam Crofts has been busy this year. Laura Ettrick continues to produce an excellent and informative newsletter each month and manages our very successful Facebook page. The WhatsApp group has grown as another way for members to engage with each other. The Website is updated by Ian Short and Jan Kidd to keep members abreast of what is happening in the society. Pam has produced another wonderful calendar for 2024 using some of the maps drawn by Donald Taylor to accompany society walks in the past.

We would like to thank all the people who have contributed to organising these activities over the last year and the officers who keep the administration of the society going. In particular, Ruth Hardcastle who as treasurer has kept our finances in good order. Following the change to the constitution Ian Short has been our safeguarding officer and is pleased to report there have been no issues reported. After eight years in the post Joan Carter is stepping down as secretary and we give a huge thank you for all the work she has done keeping the membership records and we will all remember the lovely annual dinners she organised. Jan Kidd is also stepping down as Co-chair and the society would like to thank her for all the work she does for the society. Without these people giving their time the society would be in a much poorer state. We can only encourage new people to take on these roles and carry the society forward.

We hope that by continuing to provide a varied programme of outings and activities we will continue to attract new members. We would encourage all of you to get involved in the teams which organise these events and contribute your ideas for future activities.

Linda Turner and Jan Kidd Co-Chairs

ROCHDALE FIELD NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

Treasurer's Report For The Year Ending 31st August 2023

I have the pleasure of presenting the Treasurer's Report for 2022/23 to the members of Rochdale Field Naturalists' Society.

The Financial Position At The End Of 2022/23

The Society's total income for the year was £7,375 and the expenditure £6,730, giving a surplus of £645. The bank balance on 31st August 2023 was £7,371 plus petty cash of £75. Covid-19 pandemic did not appear to affect the numbers at indoor meetings and on coach trips for the financial year. It is difficult to compare some of the income and expenditure streams with 2021/22 as these were still being affected.

Other features of the accounts are as follows.

Indoor Meetings

There were eight meetings during the financial year. The January meeting was held over zoom. The Society received a rent rebate for the January meeting as the church were unable to rent it to us.

Admissions, rent and speaker fees returned to pre pandemic level.

Refreshments at meetings also resumed and £144 was raised from donations. Thanks to the refreshments team for sourcing and organising refreshments.

Digital costs

Digital costs reduced slightly in the year. Digital Navies, who update and improve the platform did less work for us in the year. Zoom fees increased to £144 from £84.

We continue to subscribe to zoom as a back up in the event any meetings cannot take place in person.

Coach Trips

Coach trips were run monthly with the exception of December which is no longer provided. There was a small surplus of £600 on trips during the financial year

Publicity

30 posters were produced during the year at a cost of £10.

Conservation and Education

A number of events were run through the year. Workshop costs included a worm expert for the Queens Park survey.

Calendar and Sale Of Goods

The Steering Group decided to give every member who renewed their subscription and new members a free calendar for 2023. This was a way of thanking all members for their support. The calendars and envelopes cost a total of £386. 25 remained and were sold to members of the Society for £5 each giving an income of £125. Thanks and gratitude goes to Pam for all her hard work in producing, distributing and selling the 2023 calendar.

Sale of goods relates to sales of wax cap books, the proceeds being donated to the Society.

Other Income and Expenditure Of Note

Postage reduced by £108 in the year as membership receipts are being sent to members digitally. Insurance increased by £96 to £215.

The bank started to charge for their services during the financial year which cost the Society £138. As this is felt to be unsustainable alternative banks, with no monthly charge, are being looked for the Society to switch to.

Auditing Of The Accounts

Finally, I must record my personal and very grateful thanks to Steve Wrigley, who has kindly audited the Society's accounts for 2022/23

Rochdale Field Naturalist account year ending 31st August 2023

	2021 - 2022		2022-2023	
Income				
Coach trips		2,025		5,560
Subscriptions		1,220		1,010
Meetings		-		470
Sale of Goods		40		8
Donations and Funding		74		43
Calendars		95		125
Refreshments		-		144
Sundries		-		15
Total		3,454		7,375
Expenditure				
Coach Hire	1,915		4,960	
Coach trip Expenses	18	1,933	-	4,960
Room Hire		131		245
Refreshments		10		31
Lecture Fees		220		280
Postage		178		70
Subs and Affiliation Fees		48		30
Calendar		338		386
Insurance		119		215
Workshops		26		40
Mapmate		18		24
Bank expenses				134
Digital costs				
Domain renewal	14		-	
Mcafee	90		30	
Digital Navvies	130		40	
Zoom Fees	84		144	
Laptop maintainance	67	385	-	214
Printing and Stationary		22		33
Sundries		45		67
Capital Expenditure		-		-
Total		3,472		6,730
Surplus/(deficit)		- 18		645

Balance Sheet 31st August 2023

		Opening Balance	6,801
Bank	7371	Income	7,375
Cash	75	Expenditure	6,730
	7,446		
Closing Balance	7,446		7,446

R Hardcastle (Treasurer)

I have examined the above balance sheet and Income and Expenditure Accounts and can report they are in accordance with the books, vouchers, and information supplied.

S Wrigley (Auditor)