



Bird Stamp Society
Founded 1986 - www.birdstampsociety.org

Minutes of Committee Meeting

Venue: ETCV, St Mary's Street, Edinburgh

Date: 12th October 2019

In Attendance:

Tony Statham - Chair

Mel West - General Secretary

Graham Horsman - Treasurer & Membership Secretary

Gilly Christmas - Editor or *Flight*

Item. 1 - Chairs Opening Remarks

The meeting opened with Tony welcoming Committee members and thanking them for the work they have undertaken to date. He then briefly outlined the purposes of the meeting which were specifically to accomplish the following issues:

- i) Complete a number of AGM related issues
- ii) Discuss a proposed new website for the Society
- iii) Review and discuss the current financial position of the Society and the preparation of a future Five Year Plan

Tony concluded his remarks by advising that on behalf of the Society he had agreed to undertake the following activities in 2020:

- i) A talk on bird stamps to the Cambridge Philatelic Society;
- ii) Participate in a display related to birds at Autumn Stampex in London.

Item. 2 - AGM Related Matters

2.1 AGM Reports

It was noted from the feedback provided by members that all reports, and most notably the financial statement had been welcomed and accepted.

2.2 Re-election of Committee

No members had expressed a wish to step down and no new names had been put forward. It was therefore agreed that the current Committee was duly re-elected.

2.3 Feedback from Members

Committee were greatly encouraged by the number of comments received from members following a request for their views in the last edition of Flight. A summary of those comments had been prepared and were circulated at the meeting and is now also attached to these minutes. (See Appendix: A).

Comments covered five main topic areas, many of which helpfully fed into the two main papers discussed later in the meeting. The views can be briefly summarised as follows:-

- i) Subscriptions - there was a fairly even balance of views between keeping subscriptions as they are and increasing them to cover the cost of Flight magazine.
- ii) Website - a general acceptance that the current website is inadequate and that the focus of any new website should be about Flight magazine.
- iii) Flight - All comments were complimentary and expressed the view that the magazine was an excellent publication. Most members prefer to receive a hard copy.
- iv) Future growth/Five Year Plan - A number of useful suggestions were received concerning what the Society could do to promote and advertise itself more and work with other societies. There was one query over whether we actually needed a Five Year Plan.
- v) Meetings - There was support for a virtual AGM and suggestions that much of the work of the committee could be undertaken electronically.

Item. 3 - Proposed New Website

3.1 Gilly had prepared a detailed and comprehensive discussion paper which had been circulated and read by committee before the meeting. Very briefly, principal topic headings covered issues such as the future purpose of the website, hosting, development and management. A copy of the discussion paper is attached as Appendix: B.

3.2 Discussion during the meeting focused essentially on what the purpose and content of the website should be for the Society.

Committee agreed that the **PURPOSES** of a new website for the Society will be as follows:

- That it should attract new members and help the Society to grow;
- It should be a vehicle for exchanging ideas and information; and,
- It should provide a store for bird stamp information;

It was therefore felt that the **CONTENT** of the website should, for example, include the following:

- An "About" section to say who we are and what we do;
- A contacts page;
- Links to other websites;
- Access to ALL back issues of Flight magazine;
- Archive material for members to access and research;
- A blog area.

- Additionally, it was also felt that there should be dual access with two levels - An initial one for the general public, and then a more detailed one for mebers.

ACTION POINT: 1

To facilitate placing all back copies of Flight magazine on the new website, Gilly will undertake the following:-

- Contact Kjell Scharning and Julian Dempster for PDF's of previous copies of Flight;
- Discuss with Bulpitt printers the potential costs for scanning hard copies of Flight.

3.3 There was also discussion on hosting a new website. It was agreed that subsequent to the considerable problems we had experienced last year with an externally based server location, we would now wish to avoid repeating this and select a host server situated in the UK. Gilly has recommended two established hosting companies: Fasthosts, who have a dedicated UK hosting centre, and 1&1 Ionos who, whilst not UK based, have a UK data centre. It was noted that the packages and annual costs of both hosting companies cited in the paper were very similar and it was agreed that we should now proceed with a managed website and explore their services more thoroughly.

ACTION POINT: 2

- Gilly will examine the services and costs of both hosting companies more fully and then feedback to committee for a decision to select and proceed.

3.4 In respect of a managed website, it was accepted that this should be developed in WordPress and that it should be sufficiently user-friendly to pass on to someone else at a future date.

3.5 Gilly advised that the domain name Birdstampsociety.org.uk is available and it was agreed that this should be the name to adopt.

ACTION POINT: 3

- Gilly to undertake the initial development in WordPress and open a test site.

3.6 In terms of the next steps, it was agreed that to take the project forward a further short paper on development issues was required.

ACTION POINT: 4

- Gilly to prepare a short development paper on what will be done and ask for ideas/feedback in addition for a decision from committee to proceed further.

3.7 Committee thanked Gilly for preparing an excellent and thorough paper on an issue that is felt to be important for the future growth of the Society.

Item. 4 - Financial Projections & Five Year Plan

4.1 Graham presented to Committee a thorough and fully updated paper on income and expenditure. This is attached as Appendix: C.

4.2 The main points arising concerning the forecast for the financial year 2019/20 can be summarised as follows:-

a. Income

- i) Subscriptions - The subscription renewal process will be completed by the 1st December 2019. Given the current outstanding renewals, the report indicates that the maximum amount the Society could receive is £1445 and the minimum £1398. Graham advised that the likely final figure arising from outstanding renewals would be **£1403**.
- ii) Donations - These arise in part from the subscription renewal process. The total for this financial year will be circa **£86**.
- iii) The Packet - Whilst the packet is wholly reliant on the number of books being made up and circulated, in addition to the quality of the stamps they contain, it has continued to be successful and bring income to the Society. Notwithstanding a current running balance on the packet account of £3893, Philip has indicated that overall sales in the region of £5k could be realised before payment to vendors. It is now estimated that the excess of income over expenditure for this financial year will be about **£500**.
- iv) The sum of all the above sources of income suggest that the overall estimated income will be **circa £2k**.

b. Expenditure

- i) Flight Magazine - The point was made that it is difficult to predict whether printing costs would remain as they are or indeed whether Flight will remain without VAT, but it is suggested that the minimum cost of Flight for the next financial year will be **£1112**.
- ii) Postage - Taking into account the fall in the number of members receiving hard copies of Flight but allowing for a small increase in postal rates this has been estimated as likely to be in the region of **£500**. Taken together, the production and distribution of hard copies of the magazine are therefore projected to be **circa £1612** for 2019/20.

- iii) Other expenditure costs - the paper detailed a number of items, including current website fees, general postage, committee costs and sundry other items which are estimated to be in the region of **£700**.
- iv) These, when combined with the total Flight costs indicate an estimated total expenditure for the Society of **£2320**, which in turn suggests a potential excess of expenditure over income of about **£300** in this financial year.

4.3 Given this projected shortfall, committee then considered how this might be managed within a financial plan.

4.4 It was noted and accepted that the current bank balance remains healthy at approximately £15k, and that therefore without increasing subscriptions from the current rates, a loss of circa £300 per annum would take a considerable while to have a significant impact on the financial viability of the Society.

4.5 However, committee also acknowledged that there were a number of other factors to take into account. The costs of establishing and running the new website are currently unclear. Future postage rate are likely to increase and inflationary costs of producing Flight may have impact.

4.6 Accordingly, committee agreed that our financial plan would be as follows:-

- i) Committee are conscious that ideally we should increase subscriptions, but because of the current healthy balance have nevertheless decided not to do so. However, we will continue to closely review income and expenditure annually and report to members.
- ii) Feedback from members on the issue of subscription increases was finely balanced, but it was accepted that the financial impact on some could be detrimental and contribute to a further loss of membership.
- iii) In addition, whilst UK based members receiving hard copies of Flight are currently subsidised at the rate of £3 per annum per member, the Society's net day to day running expenses actually cover this amount.
- iv) However, it was noted that the current cost of Flight (production and postage) compared to two of the overseas membership rates - Europe (7 members) and Zone 1 (2 members) - are substantially above the actual subscription rates received. Committee have therefore decided that from August 2020 these rates will be increased as follows:-

Membership Area	Current Subscription Rate	Current Costs	Subscription Rate From August 2020
Europe	£22.00	£28.36	£30.00
Zone 1	£27.00	£32.36	£35.00

- v) It is believed that over the next five years there could be an increase in postage of approximately £0.60 per annum and this, coupled with a likely increase in printing costs, will eventually result in this new subscription rate being subsidised

at about the same rate as for UK based members. It was therefore felt that this was a fairer arrangement to adopt.

ACTION POINT: 5

- Members who receive hard copies of Flight in the two overseas areas indicated - Europe and Zone 1 - will be notified at the appropriate time of an agreed increase in subscription rates, effective from August 2020.
- Subscription rates for all areas will be reviewed annually by Committee and adjusted as appropriate in line with the Society's Financial Plan.

Minutes agreed & signed:

Tony Statham - Chair	
Mel West - General Secretary	