



Bird Stamp Society
Founded 1986

VIRTUAL Annual General Meeting

Held via WhatsApp Conferencing

Wednesday, 3rd November 2021

MINUTES

Attending via WhatsApp video:

Tony Statham – Chair
Mel West – General Secretary
Graham Horsman – Treasurer/Membership Secretary
Gilly Christmas – Flight & Website Editor

Apologies:

Apologies were received from Philip Cant, Packet Secretary, who was unable to attend.

1. Chair's Opening Statement

In his opening statement, the Chair advised that he was pleased to see that the Society remained financially viable, on an even footing and continuing to attract new members. He extended his thanks to the Committee for their work in supporting the Society. A brief written annual report was presented, and this is attached as Appendix A below.

2. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting

2.1 The minutes of the AGM held on 21st October 2020 via WhatsApp video were noted and agreed as a true record.

2.2 It was further noted that the main points from those minutes had also been circulated to all members via the December 2020 edition of *Flight* magazine, that a full copy of the minutes were available to members on the Society's website and that future copies of minutes would be placed on the website as well.

3. Any Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Election of Committee

It was noted that to date, there have been no other members enquiring about supporting or taking on a role within the Society. It was agreed that we should nevertheless continue to encourage participation in whatever capacity. The Chair proposed that all existing officers continue in post and this was agreed.

5. End of Financial Year Accounts & financial report

5.1 The end of year accounts for the financial year 2020/2021 were presented by our Treasurer, Graham Horsman, and agreed as a true record of our financial situation.

5.2 It was noted that a full statement for this financial year had also been presented to members and published in the September edition of *Flight* magazine. Graham reported that there had been no feedback from members following the publication.

5.3 Graham prepared a note concerning the Society's Packet accounts subsequent to the recent receipt of them.

6. Membership & subscriptions increase report

6.1 Membership Secretary Graham Horsman, reported that following the hard rate subscription increase in August, most members had responded positively and renewed their membership. He advised that disappointingly, ten had still not paid their subscription or contacted the Society. However, only four of these received hard copy *Flight* and would have needed to increase their subscription, while the remainder were on the electronic rate and therefore unaffected by the increase. He confirmed that memberships with unpaid subscriptions would be officially closed in December if there was no further contact.

6.2 He reported that one member had continued to pay at the original rate and will therefore receive only three copies of *Flight* magazine.

6.3 He noted that only 6 members had formally resigned, only two of whom had been on the hard copy rate. Three had terminated their membership because they had either stopped collecting or had other commitments, while the others had not provided reasons.

7. Confirmation of life membership

Life membership was formally approved for Gilly Christmas. This was in recognition of her editorship of *Flight* magazine and producing it to its current high standard, in addition to her extensive work on developing and launching the Society's successful new website.

8. Flight Magazine & Website Editor's report

Gilly confirmed that a number of future development issues were continuing with the new website and highlighted the following matters:

8.1 Back copies of Flight magazine

She advised that currently copies on the website only went back as far as September 1995 and that the remaining editions now needed to be scanned and loaded. It was agreed that we would approach Bulpitt's (printers) to see if they were able to undertake the scanning and provide a quotation of costs and, if acceptable, then ask them to proceed with the work. In the event that this was not possible,

copies could potentially be scanned at home but, that this would be a much slower and lengthier process.

8.2 Flight for email users

Gilly advised that currently batching and distributing Flight editions by email is a lengthy and labour intensive activity. She noted that to distribute Flight pdf's at present she needed to parcel the mailing into eight or nine groups due to the large file size. The membership of each group also had to be managed as details changed. It was proposed that any new member who joined the Society at the electronic rate should be asked to download the Flight pdf from the website themselves. She noted that this would also entail a small amendment to the current membership application form.

- **The proposal was agreed and Graham undertook to amend the application form and forward to Gilly to place on the website.**

Gilly advised that she would also like to ask existing members on the electronic rate if they could directly download Flight from the website when advised that a new edition was available.

- **It was agreed that these members would be asked in a proposed future questionnaire.**

8.3 Member Questionnaire

Gilly proposed a simple questionnaire for members to ascertain usage of the website, aspects of interest in Flight and whether members would like to be placed on/remain on a membership list for sharing collecting interests.

- **It was agreed that the purpose of the questionnaire was sound and that one should be prepared and issued in March.**

9. Packet Secretary's report

A report on Packet sales was provided by Philip Cant in absentia. It indicated that during the last financial year 50 members (about a third of membership) participated across six active circuits.

He noted that due to COVID the operation of the packets had understandably been severely disrupted and that issuings were substantially reduced. However, despite these issues, packet sales still contributed £347 (net) to Society funds during the period.

A copy of the complete report is provided in Appendix B. In addition, there is a note with comments to this report from Graham Horsman in Appendix C.

10. Additional matters:-

There was brief discussion on three additional matters.

10.1 Charging Paypal fees

Graham Horsman proposed that the following should be recorded:

1. It was brought to our attention that we should not be charging extra to cover Paypal fees.
2. On further investigation it was ascertained that businesses cannot charge extra for Paypal commission & Bank charges because they are both tax deductible.
3. The Society is not a business and we do not have to keep tax records as they are totally inapplicable.

4. The subscription is set at the current rates so that all members pay an appropriate & equal rate which covers the costs of Flight and the day to day running expenses. Adding an amount to cover Paypal Commission for those who cannot use the 'Pay Family of Friends' option and Bank charges for overseas members who pay by bank transfer from a non-UK bank is appropriate and in keeping with the Society's policy on subscriptions.

- **The proposal was agreed.**

10.2 Bourse for collection disposals

Mel West advised that the Bird Stamp Society had been unable to run auctions for some while and that it was possible some members have surplus stamps which they wish to dispose of. In the absence of an auction secretary to facilitate auctions for the disposal of stock, it was suggested that a potential alternative might be for the Society to consider a "market place" or "Bourse," where members could advertise items for sale. This could operate either via the website or quarterly in Flight

It was stressed that all the work would have to be undertaken by the members wishing to sell material and basic guidelines on how this could be achieved would be laid down. A copy of proposed ground rules as suggested by the Pacific Islands Study Circle was provided as an example (see Appendix D). He noted that whilst these particular guidelines seemed over elaborate, they could be simplified and a version then tailored for members of the Society if the proposal were adopted.

- **It was agreed that a piece introducing the proposal would be prepared for December Flight.**

10.3 Collaborative work with PAGO

Committee acknowledged that the Society had recently been approached by Philatistische Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ornithologie (PAGO), a bird stamp society based in Germany, with a view to future collaborative working. PAGO had proposed to exchange articles for each organisation's journals and additionally, has invited BSS members to attend a future PAGO conference at Garmisch in perhaps either 2022 or 2023.

Committee welcomed the approach and Tony has agreed to prepare a piece introducing the Bird Stamp Society to PAGO members in Germany. Tino Mischler for PAGO, has been asked to prepare a piece for their organisation.

APPENDIX A

Chairs' Annual Report

Writing notes or reports for any society can be a challenge and sometimes when nothing seems to happen or nothing appears to have changed makes it even more of a task to create something meaningful. If the world in general hasn't changed much then no progress will be acceptable to most people; if the overall perception of events is positive, a no progress verdict will be adversely critical whereas holding steady in an unfavourable environment will be seen as beneficial. I write these perhaps trite remarks against another year of everyone struggling to handle the COVID virus, many public events being cancelled and a string of on/off lockdown experiences.

However, I am positive, as many others are, since the very successful vaccination programme around the world but especially in the UK and restoration of many everyday practices coming back to our lives. In addition, while our society's ship has remained pretty steady in choppy waters, we have made good progress, in particular with the positive outcomes of the web site that has encouraged many new members to join us and once again I am delighted to thank our editor Gilly Christmas for all her hard work in developing and maintaining the website as well as still producing the quarterly Flight magazine to such a high standard. I am equally grateful to Mel West for maintaining a positive status quo and Graham Horsman for his control of finances and keeping membership records up to date. Thanks must also be given to Philip and Paula Cant for keeping a flag flying for the society's packet scheme as well as offering members access to their electronic system giving many members both here and overseas the opportunity to add material to their collections for much of the year.

I am looking forward to another positive year and the restoration of what we considered normal albeit adjusted where wanted, need or desirable.

APPENDIX B

Packet Secretary Report

There are still 6 circuits, with a current total of 50 members, following a recent resignation.

There have been significant interruptions with the packet because of COVID in the last 12 months, so sales have been down on what might normally be expected. Just 3 sendings (18 packets) went out instead of the normal 6-8. Sales were £3499, which earned the Society £333 commission. Vendors were also charged £83 for insurance. Expenses were £85, almost all of which was postage, either of packets, or returns to vendors. There was about £3 of losses (unsigned spaces that couldn't be accounted for). There were no insurance claims. (No doubt I shouldn't have said that!!!). The packet contributed £347 to club funds, net.

Commission is currently charged at 8% (previously 10%), and we no longer deduct return postage on vendor material. Insurance is only deducted when books are returned to vendors. Books are returned to Vendors when they have completed all circuits, or are 65% depleted.

We look forward to a better year, 2021-2022, with fingers crossed!

Philip Cant
Packet Secretary

14th October 2021

APPENDIX C

Treasurer's Note to the Packet Secretary's Report

Members will note that the packet has incurred postage expenditure to send packets back to members and packets to the first person on each circuit.

Philip made the following statement:

"Expenses were £85, almost all of which was postage, either of packets, or returns to vendors. There was about £3 of losses (unsigned spaces that couldn't be accounted for). There were no insurance claims."

Since Philip took over running our packets he has incurred postage in each year and I have not accounted for this within our accounts. Philip buys stamps from the packet and offsets his purchases against the postage he incurs for our packets/books. At the end of each financial year he either is owed or owes a minimal amount.

Philip is duty bound to pay vendors for the amount that is owed as a result of members who fail to sign the spaces when they remove stamps. During this period this amounted to £3. This is treated as additional sales on the one hand and a write off on the other.

I have therefore understated Packet sales in the accounts and I have not included postage in the accounts either. Having now had an explanation from Philip, I have taken the necessary action within this year's accounts for previous year's additional sales & postage which Philip has agreed now rectifies the omissions.

Graham Horsman

Treasurer

3rd November 2021

APPENDIX D

An "Example" of Basic Rules for a Society Bourse:

- 1 The header must state "Items for Sale" *
2. The name of the member and their private email address.*
3. Description of what the member has for sale in general terms. Do not attach any lists or photos to the email.
4. Have an end date*, say 6 weeks, from the email distribution date. This should be stated in the email.
5. Not for single items, but a few items or country collection, etc.
6. Information on any lists available, and whether at a fixed price, buy or bid per the sellers list. Note this list must not be attached to the Distribution Notice.
7. That it is restricted in size.
8. Contain any instructions re the email header that potential buyers want included in their direct email.
9. Contain this sentence at the end: "I hereby authorise the Bird Stamp Society (BSS) to provide the above information, including my email address and any other contact details I have specified, to other BSS members so that they may contact me directly".* (This sentence must appear in the

message otherwise it will not be sent. It may be first or last.)

*** Means it is a mandatory requirement.**

Requirements:

- A) - Sellers would prepare their own lists (and scans should they wish) of the items for sale to send to potential buyers.
- B) - Buyers would contact the seller direct per the advertised email address, requesting any further information from the seller.
- C) - Any item sold/bought would be agreed directly between the two individuals who would be solely responsible for agreeing price, method of payment and delivery including who pays the postage and packaging costs.
- D) – The Society would not be responsible for any liability for any transaction entered into where Buyer or Seller finds that the transaction has not been completed satisfactorily.

Potential advantages:

1. No need for an auctioneer.
2. No commission for the society on any sales.
3. Members do the work by having to prepare the list of items they wish to sell.
4. Members gain by not paying any auctioneers fees.
5. Lots only need be scanned if requested by a potential buyer.