



SHEFFIELD BIRD STUDY GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**LT2 – THE DIAMOND – UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD
AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
WEDNESDAY 13 MARCH 2024 – 7.30PM**

AGENDA

1. Opening remarks of the SBSG Chair – see Annual Chair's Statement
2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 8 March 2023 – see Minutes attached
3. Report of the Honorary Secretary for the year ending 31 December 2023 – see Secretary's Report
4. Report of the Honorary Treasurer – see Annual Accounts for 2023
5. Report of the Recording Team – see Annual Review of the Year 2023
6. Elections to the Committee
7. Any Other Business

Welcome to this year's SBSG Annual General Meeting, which following last year's inaugural success, will once again be conducted both in person and remotely via Microsoft Teams – this will ensure we reach as many of the Group's members as possible and give you a chance to share your views and opinions on how things are run. As is now customary, the SBSG Committee hope that by providing everything in advance of the AGM, we can move quickly through the agenda to cover off our annual obligations to you as members, whilst maintaining the high standards of governance expected from a registered charity.

Throughout the whole of last year, we celebrated our 50th anniversary in fine style, with a memorable indoor programme of speakers, a record number of well-attended field trips, and several other initiatives which currently mark the SBSG out as one of the most progressive bird clubs in the country. We now have an opportunity to build on this good work and redefine how the SBSG will keep delivering for its members over the next decade and how bird clubs in general can meet the needs of local birdwatchers in the future. The Committee hopes that the hybrid AGM format and the pre-circulation of the meeting pack, including statements by the honorary officers, the latest membership statistics and the annual accounts, will provide some evidence of the Group's continued progression towards these aims, although we recognise there is still much to do.

Having now fully streamlined the committee meeting structure through online conferencing and an integrated meeting app, as well as automating the membership renewal process via Membermojo, the next phase of technological development should hopefully see the Group adopt an online banking facility over the coming year to help manage our finances more effectively. Outside of the general running of the Group, we have also provided support to several worthy causes, including a contribution to Sorby Breck Ringing Group for the purchase of a thermal imaging camera for local ringing projects, a collaboration with Spurn Bird Observatory for the first ever SBSG Young Birders' Bursary Award in memory of the late Philip Ridsdale, the welcome establishment of a Women & Non-binary Birders Group, and further progress with the 50th anniversary publication of the *Birds of the Sheffield Area*, which will celebrate the Group's many achievements, as well as the main ornithological highlights over the past five decades.

If you have any queries or concerns on the future direction of the Group from reading through your AGM pack, please do get in touch via the SBSG website and we will endeavor to cover these on the night.

In the meantime, we hope that despite some inevitable increase in our costs due to inflation, our commitment to keeping membership subscriptions at their current levels for yet another year provides some comfort in these financially challenging times. We hope that the 2024 programme of virtual and in-person indoor meetings, field trips, and the publication of the 50th anniversary book and 2021 annual report, will also provide further encouragement to get involved in Sheffield birdwatching over the coming year.

In the meantime, on behalf of the Committee, I would once again like to thank you for your continued support, which is always very much appreciated.

With best birding wishes,



Richard Hill
Chair – Sheffield Bird Study Group

MINUTES OF THE SHEFFIELD BIRD STUDY GROUP – AGM – 8 MARCH 2023

1. *Chair's Statement*

The Chair opened the Annual General Meeting and highlighted the meeting pack circulated to the membership and his annual statement.

2. *Minutes of the AGM on 9 March 2022*

The Minutes were accepted as a true record.

3. *Report of the Honorary Treasurer*

The meeting received the Honorary Treasurer's report, which was supported by the accounts for the year ending 31 December 2022. It was again noted that despite the global pandemic, the Group remains in a healthy financial position, despite the deficit in the current year.

4. *Report of the Honorary Secretary*

The meeting received the Honorary Treasurer's report, following Jill Greenwood's first year in the role. The Secretary was thanked for her excellent presentation.

5. *Report of the Recording Team*

The report of the Recording Team was given by the Chair by way of the Annual Review of the Year. The Chair was thanked for another outstanding presentation.

6. *Elections to the Committee*

John Reilly had indicated that he no longer wished to be on the Committee and was not seeking re-election. John was thanked for his contribution to the Committee.

It was agreed that the remaining existing members should continue in their current roles for another year.

During the year, the Group had introduced an U25 bursary for a group member to be sponsored to attend Spurn Bird Observatory in September for Migfest, with the member joining the Committee for a year. Stephanie Webb was the first member to take part in the scheme and was duly elected to the Committee by the meeting.

7. *Any Other Business*

It was agreed that the Group should continue to look at ways of constructively utilising its surplus whilst remaining within its charitable objectives.

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed.

The SBSG celebrated its landmark 50th anniversary year in fine style, with another packed programme of well-attended indoor meetings and field trips. The Group continued to act as a focal point for birdwatching in the Sheffield area, with the most notable highlights during an eventful year as follows:

Membership

Membership at the end of the year stood at 395, which represented a small increase on the previous year, but lower than the historic peak of 422 in 2021. The number of young people engaged with the Group fell slightly, with a total of 60 members under the age of 25, which is similar to pre-covid levels.

Once again, the decision was made to freeze membership subscriptions given the Group's healthy financial status. The SBSG Committee benefitted from the roll out of the new membership software system Membermojo, which has significantly reduced the administrative burden of annual renewals, and in time, should make it easier for new members to join and existing members to renew their subscriptions. The Committee owe a debt of gratitude to Martin Hodgson – the SBSG's long-serving Membership Secretary, for his continuing efforts in recruiting and retaining members, as well as successfully helping to roll out the new membership software.

Committee

The year saw the SBSG enter a formal partnership with Spurn Bird Observatory to launch our new Young Birder's Bursary scheme. Named in memory of the late Philip Ridsdale, our first recipient was Stephanie Webb, who joined the Committee for a 12-month term as well as benefitting from a week's residential at Spurn Bird Observatory. The Committee were delighted to see Stephanie pilot this exciting initiative at the 2023 Spurn MigFest week in early September, and we are also grateful for Stephanie's contributions to the Committee. One of these was joining forces with Chet Cunago to set up the SBSG Women and Non-Binary Birders WhatsApp Group, which aims to encourage underrepresented groups to participate in birding chat and field trips across the Sheffield area and wider region. This has been a great success, with around 40 members joining the WhatsApp Group (some of whom have also become full members of the SBSG), as well as organizing several field trips in addition to the main SBSG programme.

There were no other changes to the General Committee during the year. Once again, the Committee is greatly indebted to Ron Blagden – our Honorary Treasurer, who continued to expertly manage the Group's finances in his 31st year in this post and will next look at upgrading our banking capability to include an online account facility. Jill Greenwood continued in the role of Honorary Secretary providing much needed administration support to the Chair at Committee meetings, which continue to operate using Zoom to enable remote access for attendees and the MyCommittee meeting software package for circulating agendas and minute taking.

Donations

The SBSG continues to make contributions to worthy causes, wherever appropriate. This included a contribution to Sorby Breck Ringing Group for the purchase of 'A' rings and a significant donation to their recent purchase of a Thermal Imaging Camera. It should also be noted that several of our guest speakers at indoor meetings donated their fees to other notable and charitable causes including the RSPB, BTO, and the fantastic local Swift Rescue initiative. The Committee continues to investigate ways in which the Group can financially support local birds and other conservation initiatives.

Conservation

The Group continued its involvement in the Stanage Forum and remains committed to other local conservation initiatives, including continued input into the dying embers of the Sheffield Lakeland Partnership at Redmires Reservoirs. The Group also continues to liaise with the expanding network of local Swift groups in a bid to support this welcome grassroots initiative.

The St. George's Peregrines proved to be as popular as ever. With thanks to Committee member, Chris Greenwood who has continued to write the regular blog and liaise with the wider Peregrine network across the country as well as appearing on BBC Radio Sheffield and contributing to a Sheffield Wildlife trust newsletter cover story. The *Sheffield Peregrines Blog* now in its twelfth year attracted 35,096 views from 14,727 individual visitors in 2023, with a global reach stretching from Canada in the west to Australia in the east.

The Committee would again like to thank Bob Croxton for continuing in his role as the Group's Conservation Officer, Paul Leonard for monitoring issues within the Rotherham area, as well as Mark Reeder and David Williams for collating our records for any data requests.

Indoor Meetings

The Committee is again indebted to Roy Twigg and Richard Hill for organizing another superb programme of indoor speakers. In January's meeting, renowned academic, conservation scientist and recently established Peak District birder, Dr Alex Lees explored the topic of his recent book *Vagrancy in Birds* from a global perspective. February saw a highly entertaining talk from Pete Brown on his birding life in *The Northumbrian Garden Parrot*. Following the March AGM, which incorporated Richard Hill's *Annual Review of the Year and 50 Years of Rare Birds in the Sheffield Area*, the Group's membership was treated to Ed Myers inspirational talk on *Swift Conservation* and the premiere of Merve Page's *Every Swift Counts* a fascinating glimpse into the experiences of Chet Cunago's journey hand-rearing and successfully releasing rescued swifts from across the region. The final talk of the spring in May, which saw former Sheffield birder Mark Thomas extoll the virtues of his beloved local East Coast patch and subject of the recent publication *The Birds of Buckton*.

Following the summer recess, the annual joint meeting with Sorby Natural History Society in September was an evening with author and broadcaster Stephen Moss on *Avocets to Yellowhammers: how birds got their names*. October saw Juliet Vickery, CEO of the BTO talking about *Citizen Science and Bird Conservation*, which was particularly timely given the BTO's aims of connecting with local bird clubs. In November, we heard about *The State of Sheffield's Birds* from our former Chair Dave Gosney, who shared his findings from extensive tetrad surveys completed in 2020–21 compared with data previous decades. Finally, the year was rounded off with a special evening to commemorate the end of SBSG's 50th Anniversary year with Tim Birkhead on *Birds in Art* which preceded the usual popular wine and mince pies.

The Committee would again like to thank all the speakers who contributed to this year's anniversary programme. Talks throughout the year were well attended, with an increase of nearly 10% noted, although numbers are still slightly down on pre-pandemic levels.

E-Newsletter

The Group's e-newsletter was once again expertly compiled by Pete Garrity and continued to set a very high standard for members with numerous excellent articles, features, images, and videos. The Committee would like to thank Pete and all those who contributed to this valued benefit of membership.

Technology

The Committee continues to investigate and adopt various technological developments to streamline the running of the Group. This included My Committee, Zoom and the newly acquired Membermojo. The SBSG's banking facilities are next in line for an overhaul with online banking, a significant development in the Group's streamlining activities.

Field Meetings

The group enjoyed a full programme of field trips. In February, a small group carried out a trial visit to the *Alfred Denny Museum* within the University of Sheffield campus and the Committee hope to repeat this in the future. Our raptor watch trip to the upper *Derwent Valley* in March was very well attended. Further trips to

Orgreave Lakes in April, *Padley Gorge* in May and the annual *Hallam Moors Crepuscular Creep* saw large numbers of members at dusk in June. Field trips continue to be a very popular part of membership. Finally, our annual visible migration field trip to Redmires Reservoir (now approaching its 30th year) was upgraded for the anniversary to include three separate meetings across the migration season, running from late September to the end of October.

Annual Report

The Group's latest annual report *Birds in the Sheffield Area 2020* was published and distributed to members in December 2023. Contributors continue to work on the 2021 report alongside the Group's anniversary book, which it is hoped, will be published by the end of 2024. The Committee would again like to thank all those involved for another fine team effort, especially given the additional demands on members' spare time, but which showcases the many talents at the Group's disposal.

Records

Once again, the Committee was indebted to both Mark Reeder and David Williams, who continued to manage and update the SBSG databases. David has now fully retired from his role and the SBSG Committee would like to acknowledge his valuable contribution to the Group over many decades. Mark Reeder has agreed to continue this vital work and the Committee would like to thank Mark for taking on this significant commitment. The Recording Team also continued its valuable work behind the scenes in records assessment submitted to the Group's website, which remains vital for conservation and ecological submissions. The Committee are indebted to Richard Dale, Andy Deighton, Paul Leonard, and Mark Reeder for their ongoing efforts, and would like to pay particular thanks to David Williams for his long-standing service.

Website

The Group's website was well-maintained again during the year and the Committee would like to thank Andy Deighton, Pete Garrity, Mark Reeder, and David Williams for their hard work in keeping members updated with information on the Group and the latest sightings in the Sheffield area.

Acknowledgements

Finally, the Committee owe a great debt of gratitude to our Chair, Richard Hill, for successfully steering the SBSG through its 50th anniversary year and hopefully onwards into a secure future. We are grateful to all our members for their continued support, and finally to anyone who gave up their valuable time in support of the Group's activities this year.

Jill Greenwood – Honorary Secretary
Sheffield Bird Study Group

SBSG MEMBERSHIP

Based on renewals for year ended 31 December 2023



	2023 £	2022 £
INCOME		
Membership Subscriptions	4471	4661
Donations	616	393
Sales-Annual Report	61	91
Bank Interest	35	5
Sponsorship- Annual Report	170	0
Consultancy	0	200
Atlas Sales	27	4
Calendars	205	0
Survey Grants	0	1365
	5585	6719
EXPENDITURE		
Contributions to Other Groups	262	1030
Lecturers Fees	1213	383
Hire of Lecture Theatre	1309	936
Publication-Annual Report	1075	1532
Postage and stationery	433	493
Insurance	505	448
Miscellaneous	216	447
Website	378	583
Calendars	259	0
U 25 Bursary	225	0
Anniversary Book	1140	0
Survey costs	0	1096
Capital cost	0	587
	7015	7535
(DEFICIT)	-1430	-816
 Balances at 31 December		
Brought forward at 1 January	23316	24132
Deficit in year	-1430	-816
Carried forward at 31 December	21886	23316

Held as:

Cash in Hand	334	251
Cash at Bank	21542	23394
Investment Account	5591	5556
Fixed Assets	1	1
Amounts Receivable	718	650
Subscriptions in Advance	-1932	-1898
Creditors	-4368	-4638
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	21886	23316

R P BLAGDEN
Honorary Treasurer
13 March 2024