

SANDWICH BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR 2018 HELD AT THE FIELD CENTRE

ON SUNDAY 13th May 2018 AT 2.00 P.M.

1. **Members present:** - Sheila Seed, Bob Dean, Vivian Clifford, Patrick Old, Sue Bennett, Roger Jones, Nick Smith, Mike Sykes, Sally Hunter, Christopher Dent, Vanessa Dent, Ann Stapley, John Stapley, Brian Pitcher, Sue Pitcher, Peter Harrison, Sarah Lane, Liz Spanton, Peter Dean, Kay Lunn, Yvonne Cutt, Mary Rudge, June Jolly, Ian Hunter, John Hollyer, Christine Morgan, Nigel Hefford, Mike Brimson, Margaret Douet, Roger Thomson, Martin Sheppard, Pat Allison, Andrew Lipczynski, Rosemary Lipczynski, Brian Baltera, Liz Baltera, , Karen Hodgson, Mike Briggs, Keith Ellis, John Buckingham, Ken Chapman.
NB One signature indecipherable.
In attendance: Ian Hodgson, Steffan Walton,

2. **Apologies for absence:** - Rebecca Johnson, Eugene Hood, Alastair Henderson, Andy keen, John Tomlinson, Clare Tomlinson, Sue Smith, Sue Morton, Paula Seed, John Websper, John Van De Dol.

3. **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting for 2017 held on 21st May 2017**

(A copy of these minutes are filed in the folder available to members at the back of the main meeting hall of the Field Centre): -

These minutes were taken as read and approved as a true and accurate record subject to **Nick Smith** being amended to **Nick Douet** under Item 13, *Any Other Business*.

4. **Any matters arising from the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 21st May 2017 –**

(1) Nick Douet raised the issue of subscriptions under *Any Other Business* at the AGM of 2017 and queried whether any action had been taken. The Chairman confirmed that the issue had been an agenda item at a meeting subsequent to the AGM (July 2017) at which there was unanimous support to leave subscriptions unchanged.

5. **Chairman's report for 2017**

Reported verbatim

Welcome to all members to the 2018 AGM.

A YEAR IN THE LIFE.....

Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory is such a multi-faceted place. At any given time there are so many things going on, whether it be the routine daily hard work of censusing and recording the birds and other wildlife; developing new interests in branches of natural history that have barely been covered before at the Bay – bees and shield-bugs spring to mind in 2017; helping with all the many and various tasks that need doing around the Observatory itself; supporting social and fund-raising events, classes, walks and talks; going on our organised trips and holidays – and so much more that I could mention.

A look at 2017 through the course of the year might give a little more of a feel for all of this. January and February were cold and wet months with small numbers of Bean Geese and Bearded Tit being some of the highlights, plus some extraordinary counts of Cormorants offshore which led to speculation about the impact of the Thanet wind-farms in providing undisturbed spawning grounds for fish – more small fish, more food for Cormorants. February also saw the Observatory involved in consultation with the developers of the proposed extension to the wind-farm off the coast of Ramsgate and exactly where their cable was to come onshore. Ian and Sally Hunter represented the Observatory at the national Bird Observatories Conference, always a very useful means of keeping in touch with issues facing other Observatories around the country.

In March a large number of members went off on a birding holiday to Costa Rica, ably organised by John Buckingham. Such was the popularity of this venture that two 'end-on' groups had to be taken. A lot of fabulous birding, good company and a welcome addition to Observatory funds. As would be expected from the changing patterns of recent years, March also saw the arrival of the first Spring migrants at the Bay, while the Avocets returned on cue at Backsand Scrape. Steffan Walton started as our full-time Assistant Warden and immediately made a positive difference across a range of Observatory activities.

During the year your Council regularly reviewed its Development Plan and we were pleased to be able to record progress across most areas. The digitisation of our past bird records proceeded steadily and is already showing its potential as a resource for extracting data. The Conservation Team continue to do their tireless work on improving wildlife habitat, as well as access for members, around the Estate. During the year, links to other wildlife organisations continued to improve, including a possible partnership with colleagues from across the Channel in the Pas de Calais. We have always tried to maintain good relationships with local landowners and this continued and strengthened through the year. In particular, our links with the RSPB staff have proved beneficial to both parties.

Back to the year...

April and May were generally rather quiet for migrant birds, apart from isolated 'good' ones such as Black Kite and Common Crane. A working party from the ringers group completed a smart new walkway leading into the Heligoland Trap in the Haven Stream. A day trip to Marquenterre proved as popular as ever. At the Annual General Meeting various changes were made to up-date the Observatory's Constitution following intensive discussion and preparatory work by Trustees. It was pleasing that almost all of the Trustees opted to stand for re-election for another year, thus assuring good continuity. We did say goodbye, however, to Karen Bartlett after many years of stalwart service across a wide range of activities, with Bob Dean stepping in to replace her.

June saw some peculiarly unseasonal Storm Petrels offshore while in July we confirmed breeding records of Avocets in the area and both Black-headed Gulls and Common Tern nested for the first time, albeit in small numbers. August brought good numbers of Willow Warblers and, later in the month, Blackcaps. The earlier part of Autumn was also very good for uncommon warblers, with single Melodious, Arctic, Blyth's Reed and Western Bonelli's all showing up. A very successful Ringing Course was organised early in the month and complimentary things were said by the external assessor for the course about its organisation, the Observatory's ringers and their practices and procedures. Thanks to Ian Hunter and all of the ringers who did so much to make this course a success. We again held our Open Day on just one day only, but, as in the past, it was a great success. Vanessa Dent did a great job in leading and co-ordinating the range of people involved in running the Open Day, which brings so much good publicity for the Observatory and generally also recruits a few new members.

During the year, we had received Ian Hodgson's announcement that he intended to retire as Warden in August 2018 after many years of sterling service. All members of the Observatory are indebted to Ian for the work that he has put in during his period of office, especially in the vital work of efficiently counting and recording the birds and other wildlife of the area and in so many other ways. Your Council was in the fortunate position of being able to appoint Steffan Walton as the next Observatory Warden and with this smooth transition, we look forward to many years of mutual benefit from his appointment.

Twitter and Facebook continued to surprise those of us who are perhaps a bit past the social media age, with the number of responses ('likes, I believe they are called!) that they generated for the Observatory. Thanks are due to Becky Johnson for keeping older members of Council up-to-date with modern communications and also in efficiently taking over the management of the Observatory web-site. Related to this, we have now adopted a policy statement

on data protection to meet the rigorous requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations, due to come into force in May 2018. Possibly of even more importance at an everyday level, we decided that the kitchen at the Observatory was showing its age and no longer met modern hygiene standards, so plans were put into place for a major up-grade, with the work actually completed in March 2018. Thanks especially to Sally Hunter for project-managing this work, from start to finish.

Contact was made by Andrew Lipczynski with the local landowner to re-establish our permission for access to the land in the Bacsand area and at the time of writing, this initiative appears to have been successful. The Observatory will also be officially involved in monitoring the changes to the wildlife at Bacsand, following on from the Environment Agency's flood-protection work there.

By far the most important development in the 'land' area, however, was the agreement in late Autumn 2017 by Richard and Nigel Daw, our landlords at Restharrow Scrape, to enter into negotiations with the Observatory to sell us the land that we currently only lease from them. By the time that this Annual Report is published, members and friends of the Observatory will have been made fully aware of this exciting development. The acquisition of the Scrape and its surrounding field has been a priority for the Observatory for some time now and its purchase, when we achieve it, will secure this major asset for wildlife for the future and allow further development work there. It should be possible to almost double the size of the Scrape, for example, and to install a second hide. A great deal of work is going to be involved in raising the required funds over the coming months from a wide range of sources. We hope that all members and friends will be as supportive and generous as they possibly can be as we move into this major fund-raising mode. *Anything* that *any* members can do to help raise the necessary funds, will be most appreciated.

Finally, a big 'thank-you', as always, to everyone who, in any way, big or small, has helped the Observatory go from strength to strength in 2017. Our membership has held up, we are financially sound and there are exciting developments in the near future. Congratulations and thanks to all, especially the unsung heroes who work away in the background. Names too numerous to list here, but you are greatly valued and appreciated, every one of you!

6. Secretary's report for 2017

Sue Bennett delivered the following report to the AGM (reported verbatim)

Thank you Ken

My report is quite a bit shorter you will be pleased to hear and I'm afraid rather more prosaic!

Council meetings continue to be held on the second Monday of each month and minutes and agendas for these are held in a file at the back of the lecture hall. There are also Charity Commission papers and copies of all the Observatory policy statements including our new Data protection policy necessary in view of the new regulations coming into force later this month.

All members are welcomed to read these.

During 2017 the Development Plan was a key item on many agendas and reviews were held concerning its Progress.

Last year there one new Trustee joined the Council, Bob Dean,

Membership in 2017

Membership numbers have remained more or less stable over the past few years with more than half the members in the senior category and very few junior members. Taking into account family and joint memberships the actual number of members was approximately 750.

Visitors & events

There were numerous visitors to the Observatory throughout the year from various RSPB groups including East Grinstead and also local organisations and on 21st April we had a visit of 29, 14 year olds from Hofheim in

Germany. Steffan Walton gave them an introductory talk about the work of the observatory before taking them on a guided walk of the estate.

Other events in the year that I and many members and visitors attended included the Summer Moth nights, with Ian Hunter and Francis Solly, the Wild flower walks in June with Sue Buckingham and the Bat walk in August with Pam Worrall.

In April, Duncan McClean and the WEX group created an excellent Bug Hotel. July saw the re-vamp of the Fishpond which Kay and team oversaw.

Also in July 2017, with the help of WEX funding, the Observatory obtained an interactive white board which has been used extensively for WEX presentations. Margaret Douet & Penny Day were instrumental in this.

Quiz nights continued to be enjoyable popular fund raising events due to the efforts of Margaret Douet Peter Dean.

Library. I would like to say a few words about the progress in the library.

The library's bookshelves are gradually filling up, with books being added throughout the year. Most of the stock came from generous donations from members past and present and also from visitors. Professor John Knowler donated the series *Birds of the World*, and there were numerous items from Chris Cox and from the estate of the late Ted Saxton.

County and Observatory reports from all over the UK have now been added to the catalogue and there is now a small but growing section of multi-media items including DVDs made by Nick Smith on birdlife on Restharrow Scrape throughout the seasons.

The library room is kept locked because it holds valuable stock and records but if anyone hasn't seen the library would like to take a look please see me or any of the trustees.

Janet Green who lives on the Sandwich Bay estate has spent many hours helping me with the cataloguing.

Shop

Finally, a few words about the shop. The shop did well last year.

In 2014 the shop profit was just over £2000 i.e. £2103.

Last year this figure rose to £3820. Quite a big step up!

A big thank you is due to all the shop volunteers who provide a front line service to visitors as well as selling shop items. In 2017 the shop team made and sold early 4000 fatballs. Special mention to Sarah Fawcett!

Over the year the Shop team also helped with the upkeep of the buildings by weather proofing the sheds and window frames. A good example of multi-tasking.

I would also like to express thanks to our treasurer for his efficiency in looking after shop finances for many years.

7. Treasurer's report for 2017

Keith Ellis circulated copies of the Unaudited Accounts for 2017. These had been lodged with the Charity Commission and had been independently checked and agreed.

He then gave a verbal report concerning the current state of the Observatory's finances.

Overall the position was very healthy. The end of year position showed a surplus of approximately £14500 compared to the shortfall of £8000 the previous year. Hostel receipts were up 50% on last year. This was particularly pleasing in view of the extra outgoings of an Assistant Warden's post. Holidays generated £11500 approximately, largely because of the Costa Rica trip.

Outgoings were mimised in view of the fact there were no major maintenance projects and vehicle costs were less than last year. There had been a significant outlay on ringing stocks but these should last for some time to come.

Keith Ellis then indicated that he would be willing to assist the newly appointed treasurer for a couple of months in his new role. He also expressed his willingness to carry out a financial check on accounts for 2018. This would save the Trust about £1000. The Chair took a vote on this and it was passed.

The Treasurer concluded his report by thanking Karen Hodgson for all her help over the years and to all the volunteers in their various roles, too numerous to mention.

8. Warden's report for 2017

The Observatory Warden, Ian Hodgson, delivered the following report on 2017 (reported verbatim)

Winter featured outstanding numbers of Cormorants, up to nearly 3,000 of which were recorded in January, but wildfowl numbers were generally reflective of a pretty mild season. The usual late winter gathering of Great Crested Grebes peaked at a probable record 836 in mid-February, but the undoubted highlight of a dull winter came on Feb.27th when a superb flock of **36 Cranes** flew N in heavy rain early in the afternoon.

Unusually for the last few years spring was pleasantly warm, though it also set the tone for a very dry year. March featured decent numbers of departing Starlings and Fieldfares, spiced with records of Black-necked Grebe and Osprey. April began with a movement of 28 Red Kites on the 6th, then picked up with an Alpine Swift along the Ancient Highway on the 16th. Two more Cranes appeared on May 2nd, followed by a Black Kite on the 7th and a series of Honey-buzzard records from the 12th, augmented on the 14th by ten Hobbies hawking over Worth, while the 24th produced the memorable sight of a kettle of 23 Red Kites and three Common Buzzards over the North Stream. Early June brought an unprecedented influx of at least nine Storm Petrels into the bay, with two Balearic Shearwaters the next day, and later in the month an adult male Red-footed Falcon was found on Worth and another Honey-buzzard flew over the Elms.

A Great White Egret, ringed from a nest on the Somerset Levels, showed up on New Downs on July 18th and a Wood Warbler showed up on schedule on the 31st. The ensuing autumn was a bit of a curate's egg, featuring record numbers of Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs, the best passage of Willow Warblers for some time and some notable rarities, particularly warblers, against a background of very poor visible migration and low numbers of waders. A Melodious Warbler on Worth on Aug.13th preceded the second SBBO record of Western Bonelli's Warbler over the Bank Holiday and a long-staying Stone-curlew remained in Pegwell. September didn't disappoint those who view it as the best month of the birding year, with continuing huge arrivals of Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs and, on the 10th, the Bay's third ever Arctic Warbler, discovered in the nets. The first Yellow-browed Warbler of autumn showed up on the 17th and on the 19th came the news that a **BLYTH'S REED WARBLER** had been trapped - the first SBBO record. The next day brought a huge movement of 100,000 House Martins and 40,000 Swallows that even stopped local residents in their tracks and a Hoopoe was discovered in Pegwell on the 24th.

Although visible migration failed to get going during October, there was some compensation offshore, with Sooty and Balearic Shearwaters in the first week and a Dusky Warbler in the nets and a Richard's Pipit on Worth on the 15th. We finally got in on the Hawfinch invasion of the east coast with a flock of eight that flew south over Pegwell, with small numbers appearing for the fortunate few for the rest of the month. 4,700 Chaffinches flying N on the 25th was the vis.mig. highlight of the month

Eight Dartford Warblers were found along the beach in early November, which also featured a brilliant day on the 3rd on which Dusky Warbler, Pallas's Warbler and Yellow-browed Warbler were seen within a few hundred yards of each other near the Chequers. A Red-necked Phalarope appeared for a three-day stay in Pegwell on the 15th and the second Pallas's Warbler of the autumn appeared in the Heligoland on the 19th.

No fewer than six Dartford Warblers remained along the beach in December and water levels began to creep up at last, though still about three feet below an average winter. Up to 2,700 Cormorants had been going to roost in the

Stour Valley in the evening and on the 18th skeins of them flew over Worth and the Estate and out to sea in a quarter of an hour from around 0815, totalling much the same number.

For butterflies, it was the second best year in 11 years of study, bettered only by the Painted Lady year of 2009. In terms of numbers of species recorded it was probably the best year on record at the Bay, with the first record of Ringlet since 1983, a Long-tailed Blue in September and a full hand of other species, including the less than annual Green Hairstreak. In a very warm year, a remarkable ten species remained on the wing in the first week of November.

Three Norfolk Hawkers in July were the most obvious migrant dragonflies with only one previous record though Red-veined Darters were widespread with 22 different records totaling 51 'dragonfly-days'. There was also a huge expansion in Willow Emerald Damselfly.

A total of 358 species of macro moths were recorded, including two species new to the Sandwich Bay recording area list, **Double Kidney** *I. retusa* and **Oak Rustic** *D. labecula*. At the smaller end of the scale, a focus on leaf-mines and other early stages proved extremely productive and added over 30 new micro species to the area. It was not the most productive of years for immigrants, however, with only a handful of unusual records. The year was more notable for a series of unusually early emergences and then subsequently late lingering records well into autumn and winter.

So, after 11 years, this is my final Warden's Report, having decided to retire from my position on my birthday in August. I can honestly say that I have enjoyed the bulk of my time here and, in particular, the remarkable biodiversity of this excellent area. I am also proud of the fact that the Observatory is in much better shape than it was in March 2007 and that the recording once again includes a wide and expanding range of non-avian taxa. Whilst Sandwich might not be the equal of The Downs for butterflies, it has a hugely impressive range of moths, dragonflies and bees, not to mention plants, a fact not lost on the increasing number of visitors coming to Sandwich to see for themselves. I could not have introduced the recording systems that are now in place to allow this level of recording to continue without the help of Karen, now Mrs Hodgson, and I am hugely grateful to her for the time she has spent in helping to make the last 11 years as productive as they have been.

I am also more than happy to pass the baton to Steffan Walton, our refugee from Bardsey (and Luton), who I am certain will prove to be an effective and popular replacement and I am sure we all wish him well for his time here as SBBO Warden.

The Chairman expressed support and thanks to the Warden for his contribution over many years. The Treasurer explained that the Observatory had been transformed by the Warden's work and expressed gratitude for the impact he had made in recording and the production of the Annual report.

9. Ringing report for 2017

The Observatory's Senior Ringer, Ian Hunter, delivered the following report on ringing activities in 2017 (reported verbatim)

In 2017 10,855 birds were processed of which 8424 were new birds.

1. Blackcap 2563
2. Chiffchaff 1463
3. Willow Warbler 600.

Blyth's Reed Warbler and Arctic Warbler were new species. Highlights from the repaired Heligoland included 2 Grey partridges and a Pallas' Warbler. The fact that there were 223 new chaffinches but only 15 Greenfinches reflects the differing fortunes of these two species. In fact there were more Yellowhammers (19) than Greenfinches.

Other more unusual species included 2 adult Stock Doves, 1 Turtle Dove, 1 Dusky Warbler, 2 Siberian Chiffchaffs and 2 Common Redpoll.

Notable absences were Wagtails, Tree Sparrows and Chats such as Stonechats, Whinchats and Wheatears. Some of these reflect national trends and others reflect changes in habitat here.

A number of interesting records resulted from colour ring sightings and it is good to know that there is a small but increasing group of non-ringers contributing records as well. records include the Great White Egret, (the ringing of this bird in Somerset was shown on Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall 's documentary of the *Wild West* on BBC2) Avocet, Stone Curlew, Black-Tailed Godwit, Curlew, Lesser Black-Backed Gull and Herring Gull. The latter is the most frequently sighted but colour ring studies include a bird from a project in Holland which involved thousands of gulls with less than ten coming to the U.K.

The Ringing group ran a very successful ringing course over a weekend in August which was fully booked. Some members have moved on but we have managed to attract several new trainees.

Existing members continue to advance their permits with John Buckingham gaining his trainer endorsement and Rebecca Johnson her Nest Box and Open Nest endorsement.

We contribute records to the *National Nest Record* and *Re-trapping Adults for Survival* schemes.

We also collected a large number of specimens for a *Public Health England Investigation* into a tick born haemorrhagic fever.

The Ringers also participated in the Cross-Channel project.

Thank you to the land owners who allow us to use their land: Royal St George's Golf Club, the Daw family, Tim Laughlin and Thanet District Council.

The Chairman thanked Ian Hunter for his interesting and informative report

10. Tim Garland award for 2017

The Chairman started by describing the origin of the award to those unfamiliar with the history. He then went on to explain that the winner is voted for by previous award winners, and it was also explained that non-Council members can nominate members for the award.

There were many worthy nominations but this year's winner was Keith Ellis. This was due to both his service and efficiency as Treasurer since 1985 and also as Ringing Secretary. Although he was standing down as Treasurer and also as a Trustee he expressed the wish to continue in the role of Ringing Secretary.

Karen Hodgson gave an additional vote of thanks which was endorsed by members present.

11. Election of officers and trustees for 2018 – 2019

At this point the Chairman stood down, and the Vice Chairman informed those present that Ken Chapman would be standing for re-election (proposed by Sarah Fawcett and seconded by Sue Bennett). Those present were then asked to vote on this; his re-election carried by a unanimous show of hands.

The Chairman then explained to the meeting that nominations, duly proposed and seconded had been received to fill the Trust's honorary posts.

Mike Briggs had expressed his wish to resign as Vice Chair but would continue as a Trustee. Sally Hunter was proposed for this role by Ken Chapman and seconded by Keith Ellis. This was approved by a show of hands.

Keith Ellis had announced his intention to resign as Treasurer at last year's AGM and Bob Dean was proposed by Ken Chapman and seconded by Sarah Fawcett for this role. This was also carried.

Sue Bennett would continue as Secretary, proposed by Bob Dean and seconded by Ken Chapman. This was approved.

All other existing Trustees except for Alastair Henderson and Andrew Lipcynski were standing for re-election. It was proposed to elect all of the nominated persons *en bloc*, and this was duly carried by a unanimous show of hands.

The Observatory's Honorary Officers for 2018 – 2019 therefore are:

President: - Bill Oddie

Vice Presidents: - Mike Sykes & John Websper

The Observatory Council for 2018 – 2019 are: -

Chairman: - Ken Chapman

Vice Chair: - Sally Hunter

Treasurer:- Bob Dean

Secretary:- Sue Bennett

Trustees: Mike Briggs, John Buckingham, Peter Dean, Vanessa Dent, Sarah Fawcett, Nigel Hefford, Eugene Hood, Ian Hunter, Rebecca Johnson, Andy Keen, Nick Smith.

12. Restharrow Scrape Appeal. Sally Hunter .

Reported verbatim

Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory has been developing ever since its inception in 1952 when it first became accredited as a Bird Observatory. A Bird Observatory is a place which conducts long-term monitoring of bird populations and migration through the daily observation census and ringing studies over a defined recording area. Many of the people involved over the years are still involved in the Observatory in some way and may even be here today.

The vision then, as now, was to ensure the key work of the Observatory to record and monitor the wildlife of the area continues and develops. Amongst many other milestones, in 1987 Restharrow Dunes nature reserve was purchased. In the 2000s the building we are in today was built and Restharrow Scrape field was leased. It has been recognized that in order to protect species and ensure that the work of recording and monitoring has a sustainable future the Observatory needed to create the wherewithal to generate a greater annual income. One of the ways the Observatory has enabled better coverage has been to employ a warden. Ever since the manpower services scheme in the 80s, which included paying for a warden, ended, the Observatory has found the resources to ensure that we are one of the wardened Bird Observatories. No mean feat.

Since then we have been building on our financial reserves for two main purposes- to create a fund for land acquisition and to meet charity commission requirements to hold sufficient reserves to ensure the continuation of the charity in the event of difficult circumstances.

As you know we are now in the position to be able to buy the Restharrow Scrape field of some 12.5 acres. We took independent professional advice as to the current value of the land. We are working on the Restharrow Scrape Development Project in two main ways. One group is looking into the physical developments we want to make and another group is working on the financing of the project.

The project has two main phases:

- The purchase of the land £185,000
- The development of the land and other aspects of the project c£115,000

The main thrust for fundraising is an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £100,000.

We are approaching other grant-making bodies and...

We are involving our members.

Adopt-a-plot – this was also used successfully in the purchase of Restharrow Dunes. We have drawn up a notional grid of 400 plots and are asking for donations of £250 for each plot. This could raise £100,000. Details are on the board at the side of the hall. One plot has already been reserved as a memorial to Dorothy Appleton who sadly died recently. This has been funded by funeral donations and her family.

We have already raised about £500 in various other donations as a result of the email and letters that have gone out so far and some even before that so we are encouraged that this appeal is close to our members' hearts.

Please also see on the side boards some other activities which are planned in the near future and a representation of the early stages of the physical development plan. We welcome your participation in any way that you feel you can.

Thank you for listening and please consider adopting a plot.

Questions taken from the floor:

Brian Pitcher expressed concern over the apparently high cost of the land and whether it was too much. Sally Hunter explained the background to the valuation. It was decided to have a vote to see if members were in agreement with the purchase of the land. This was proposed by Nick Douet and seconded by Nick Smith. It was carried almost unanimously.

Brian Pitcher also asked about water level of the Scrape in dry conditions. Peter Dean affirmed that there were plans to deepen it.

The importance of the questionnaire was highlighted for evidence gathering.

The Chairman concluded the discussion with stressing the importance of working with other organisations such as the RSPB and the Kent Wildlife Trust.

12. Any Other Business

No items had been submitted.

The Chairman thanked all those present for attending and the meeting closed at 3-45pm